

Saturday, March 14, 2020

Perth Probus Announcement: Update on COVID-19

The situation with regards to the spread of COVID-19 is changing rapidly and we would like to update you on the current recommendations. The World Health Organization classified the situation as a global pandemic on March 11. Ontario now has 101 confirmed cases. Most are in the Toronto area, with several now in Ottawa, including Sophie Gregoire Trudeau and the self-isolation of Prime Minister Trudeau. There are 29 known cases in Alberta, 64 in BC and 21 in Quebec. There is rapid spread of infection in Europe and the US.

Canada, with a total of 224 cases (218 confirmed, 6 presumptive and 11 cases resolved), is at a critical point for controlling the rate of spread of this infection. The BC provincial officer of health, Dr. Bonnie Henry, yesterday recommended that all gatherings of more than 250 people be cancelled. She also recommended cancelling all non-essential travel outside of Canada, and a 14-day quarantine for anyone who travels outside of the country. In Ontario, we appear to be following these BC trends.

In Perth and Smiths Falls, all hospital volunteers have been cancelled until further notice. Visitors will be restricted to family members of critically ill patients, patients receiving palliative care and maternity patients. Mandatory screening of these restricted visitors has been implemented.

All publicly funded schools and daycares have been closed until April 5, 2020. Universities are preparing to shut down classes and shift teaching online. Many employees have been asked to work from home. A number of inconveniences are now being felt by many. However, the goal in Canada is to slow the rate of COVID-19 and avoid the crisis with which Italy is currently struggling. The more we slow the spread, the better the odds that our medical system will be able to look after you should you become ill enough to require hospitalization. Please keep washing your hands frequently and practice social distancing as much as possible. It is stressful and very inconvenient, but this is a unique situation. We can all do our part to keep our community safe.

Who do I contact if I think I have the virus:

Telehealth by phone 1-866-797-0000 Your first contact if you think you might have the virus.
Leeds, Lanark and Grenville Health Unit 613-283-2740
Call your doctor ahead. DO NOT just arrive at a medical facility when you are exhibiting symptoms.
DO NOT visit the emergency department of the Royal Victoria Hospital.
911 - for immediate medical attention

Be prepared to share your symptoms, recent travel/countries visited, where you are living.

Should you be instructed to go in you **must** wear a mask. If you refuse to wear a mask you will be turned away. This is to protect you, the medical folks who care for you, your families, your friends, and your neighbours.

For additional information:

Telehealth Unit website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>
Public Health Unit website: <https://healthunit.org/coronavirus>
Ministry of Health Update website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-health>
World Health Organization updates: <https://www.who.int>
Gov't of Canada updates: <https://canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>