

March 4th, 2020

RE: UPDATE ON COVID-19 RESPONSE

I am writing to provide you and your organization with an update about the most recent recommendations related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The situation is still evolving, and new cases globally are being reported daily. It is important to note that to date there are no reported cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Hamilton. The risk of contracting COVID-19 in Hamilton, like the rest of Canada, remains low.

Symptoms of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) infection include fever or cough and/or breathing difficulty. Please note the returning travellers' criteria has been updated as of March 3, 2020 and the changes are **bolded** below for awareness purposes. If you or someone you know has recently returned from China **or Iran**, please follow the revised travel recommendations below.

Returning travellers from Hubei Province **or Iran** - Individuals who have returned from Hubei province (including Wuhan) **or Iran** in the last 14 days should:

- ☐ Stay at home and avoid close contact with others, including those in their home, for a total of 14 days from the date they left Hubei province **or Iran**;
- ☐ Contact Hamilton Public Health Services within 24 hours of arriving in Canada.

Returning travellers from Mainland China, **Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Singapore and South Korea** in the last 14 days should:

- ☐ Self-monitor for symptoms of the novel coronavirus for 14 days after leaving China, **Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Singapore and South Korea**;
- ☐ Contact Hamilton Public Health Services if they develop any symptoms.

Anyone with severe illness should seek immediate medical attention by calling 911 and inform paramedics of their travel history.

## How to Prevent the Spread of Respiratory Viruses

Hamilton Public Health Services recommends people take these everyday actions to prevent all types of respiratory illness:

- ☐ washing your hands often with soap and water,
- ☐ avoiding close contact with people who are sick,
- ☐ staying home when you are sick,
- ☐ covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue,
- ☐ avoid touching your face, eyes, mouth,
- ☐ cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces; and,
- ☐ getting your flu shot, if you have not already done so.

Also, the Public Health Agency of Canada has released a [guidance](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html) document for schools (K-12) and childcare programs regarding COVID-19 available at the following website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html>

School and daycare administrators are encouraged to review the document referenced above, as the strategy outlined in this guidance relates to containment (i.e. to reduce opportunities for transmission) and is based on the Canadian context and [public health assumptions](#) that reflect the currently available scientific evidence and expert opinion.

### Choose solidarity


The City of Hamilton values equity and inclusion and works to ensure Hamilton is a place where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities are accepted and celebrated. Although the novel coronavirus outbreak originated in China, this virus is not racially oriented - it is geographically oriented. This means that it does not discriminate among people who can be affected. Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 outbreak, persons of Chinese heritage (and other Asian countries) have voiced concerns about the potential for discrimination. During times like this, people need to support each other and speak out against any instances of discrimination.

Recent updates on the novel coronavirus are available on the Hamilton website at: <https://www.hamilton.ca/public-health/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>.

Additionally, for more information on the current COVID-19 situation and the Provincial response please visit the Ontario website at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>.

To reach Hamilton Public Health Services for information related to coronavirus/COVID-19, please call the Infectious Diseases Program at (905) 546-2424 ext. 7970.

Sincerely,



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