

**Office of the
Chief Medical**

Health Officer

NORTH ISLAND

250.331.8591
Charmaine Enns
MD, MHSc, FRCPC
355-11th Street
Courtenay, BC V9N 1S4

CENTRAL ISLAND

250.739.6304
Paul Hasselback
MD, MSc, FRCPC
3rd Floor 6475 Metral Drive
Nanaimo, BC V9T 2L9

COWICHAN AREA

250.850.2100
Local 45528
Shannon Waters
MD MHSc FRCPC
601-222 Cowichan Way
Duncan, BC V9L 6P4

SOUTH ISLAND

250.519.3406
Richard Stanwick, CMHO
MD, MSc, FRCPC, FAAP

Murray Fyfe
MD, MSc, FRCPC

Dee Hoyano
MD, FRCPC

430 –1900 Richmond Ave.
Victoria, BC V8R 4R2

**After Hours On Call
1.800.204.6166**

COVID-19 Update #5

Thank you for your continued work caring for patients as we move through this COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Changes to COVID-19 Testing Recommendations

We are expecting changes to testing criteria from the Provincial Health Officer and will update you as soon as they are announced.

Please DO NOT test asymptomatic patients NOR patients without a relevant exposure or international travel.

Be aware that patients admitted to hospital with Influenza like illness ARE being tested for COVID-19 regardless of exposure history or travel.

We need judicious use of swabs in the outpatient and community setting because of potential shortages.

2. Primary Care COVID-19 Testing Strategy

Island Health and the Divisions of Family Practice are working to develop community-specific COVID-19 testing strategies that will address the issues with PPE and appropriate focused testing locations for non-hospitalized patients. Please check the Island Health Medical Staff coronavirus website and watch for information that will be coming from your local Division of Family Practice regarding developments in your community.

3. BC Provincial Health Officer Measures & Recommendations Announced March 12, 2020

Dr. Henry announced the following public measures and recommendations to limit spread of COVID-19 in BC:

- Recommending against all non-essential travel outside of Canada, including to the United States. Effective March 13, 2020, **anyone who chooses to travel outside of Canada will be asked to stay away from work or school for 14 days upon their return.** We know that this is a voluntary measure, but it is our expectation that people will follow this direction as part of their civic duty. This does NOT apply retroactively to people who have recently returned to BC, but all returned travellers should be closely monitoring for symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and seeking care if ill.
- All event organizers to cancel any gathering larger than 250 people. This includes indoor and outdoor sporting events, conferences, meetings, religious gatherings or other similar events. This threshold has been selected, as it is much easier to maintain important social distancing to prevent transmission of COVID-19.
- Employers to excuse staff for sick leave without requiring a doctor's note, if their employees are ill or required to self-isolate.
- Additional measures for schools will be developed over the spring break.

For further details on this statement, please consult the BC Government website at news.gov.bc.ca

4. Do not order imaging studies to screen for COVID-19

Imaging studies (chest x-ray and CT chest) are NOT part of the Island Health diagnostic algorithm for COVID-19, as imaging findings are non-specific. Please DO NOT send patients to medical imaging for COVID-19 screening. Imaging can be considered for the monitoring of known COVID-19 disease, when patient management could be altered. If there is a patient with suspected or diagnosed COVID-19 referred for imaging, please call the medical imaging department IN ADVANCE so that appropriate measures can be taken.

5. COVID-19 Information for Community Physicians and Nurse Practitioners

The latest consolidated COVID-19 information and resources for primary care providers can now be found on the public Island Health coronavirus updates website:

<https://medicalstaff.islandhealth.ca/> This public site does not require you to sign in to an Island Health account.

Additional information and tools specifically for primary care and family physicians will be found in the sections **Discipline-specific** (scroll down on main page) and **Primary Care Package**.

Island Health's Drs. William Cunningham and Steve Goodchild will be hosting a **teleconference on March 17th from 7:30 - 8:30am** where family physicians and nurse practitioners will have an opportunity to participate in a Q&A discussion with Medical Health Officers. There may be a limit of lines on the teleconference, so where possible sharing of lines will allow more people to join. The session will also be recorded and a written summary prepared. There will be an opportunity to submit questions in advance via Slido <https://app.sli.do/event/01a8xxv0> or <https://www.sli.do/> #PrimaryCOVID

Toll-free number: 1-855-703-8985

Meeting ID: 474-260-7544

Yours in Health,

Dee Hoyano, MD, FRCPC Medical Health Officer

