



COVID-19

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

March 13, 2020

COVID-19 impact to staff

What's happening?

The focus in BC continues to be to contain the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and at a provincial level. As the COVID-19 situation continues to develop, here is what we currently know about the impact to PHC staff, staff travel arrangements, self-isolation, vacation cancellation and implications to compensation.

Staff travel

We are asking all staff not to travel abroad at this time following government's travel advisory on travel outside of Canada announced yesterday, March 12, 2020.

Self-isolation

All PHC staff who do not have symptoms are required to self-isolate at home for 14 days as a precautionary measure when they:

- ✓ Return from travel at any time from the Hubei Province in China, Iran or Italy
- ✓ Have had close contact with a presumptive or confirmed case and have been instructed by a qualified medical practitioner
- ✓ Are otherwise instructed by a qualified medical practitioner

***New* Please be advised that self-isolation does not apply to health-care workers who travel outside of Canada and provide direct patient care (e.g. physicians, nurses, care aides, etc.) unless they have travelled to Hubei Province in China, Italy, or Iran.**

Non-health care providers who are currently travelling outside of Canada and return from travel after 4pm on Thursday, March 12 are required to self-isolate at home for 14 days.

In addition, non-health care providers who willingly choose to travel outside of Canada after 4pm on March 12 will be required to self-isolate for 14 days upon return; these staff should not expect to be paid during this time of self-isolation. More information on this will be forthcoming.

However, all health-care providers who have travelled outside of Canada are required to self-monitor daily and use appropriate PPE when providing care. If a health-care worker develops symptoms, they should self-isolate and contact the regional medical health officer for Vancouver Coastal at 1-604-527-4893.

If a health-care provider develops symptoms while providing care, they should immediately put on a mask and finish any essential services they are providing before self-isolating.

Employees may not unilaterally choose to self-isolate.

Who can direct staff to self-isolate?

Staff may be directed to self-isolate by a qualified medical practitioner or through public health officials.

Staff who are asymptomatic, but believe they have been exposed to a case of COVID-19 should contact 811 or Medical Health Officer/Population and Public Health and follow the direction provided by those sources.

Return to work after self-isolation or illness

Staff will be cleared to return-to-work if they remain asymptomatic during the self-isolation period.

Staff who are confirmed positive for COVID-19 will be cleared to return-to-work after they receive two negative test results from a qualified medical health practitioner and as per direction from the Provincial Workplace Health Call Centre.

Working from home during isolation

Asymptomatic employees who have been directed to self-isolate by a qualified medical health practitioner are not to attend work. Managers should consider whether it is feasible for any such employee to work from home and, where it is, facilitate such arrangements.

Reporting and coding of self-isolation and/or illness

If staff are required to self-isolate they must:

- Call EARL and use “other” as a reason for absence
- Contact their manager regarding any direction they have received to self-isolate
- Provide electronic documentation confirming any requirement to self-isolate, when applicable.

Managers who have staff who are required to self-isolate will advise their timekeepers to code in the following ways:

- If self-isolation is required for asymptomatic staff irrespective of travel due to direction from a qualified medical practitioner, it is coded paid general leave.
- If self-isolation is required due to travel prior to 4pm on March 12, it is coded paid general leave.
- If self-isolation is required due to current international travel where staff departed Canada before 4pm on March 12, it is coded paid general leave.
- If self-isolation is required due to international travel where staff departed Canada after 4pm on March 12 and who are non-health care providers, it is coded unpaid general leave unless those staff can work from home.
- If self-isolation is required due to illness, it is sick leave.
- If self-isolation is required due to exposure at work, it is a WorkSafeBC claim.

Casual staff will be coded, as per the above, for any shifts they have accepted and were scheduled to work during the isolation period. Casual staff who are required to self-isolate should be marked unavailable in ESP for the duration of their isolation.

Vacation cancellation

What you need to know as a leader regarding vacation cancellation:

- PHC is supportive of staff who wish to cancel their approved vacations that are scheduled to occur within the next 60 days. We encourage all staff canceling vacation within this 60-day period to submit alternate vacation dates as rescheduled vacation will be based solely on

operational requirements.

- To cancel an approved vacation that is scheduled to occur from March 12, 2020 to May 10, 2020, managers will not need to engage HR in the approval process.
- Please inform your staffing clerk directly of the cancellation.
- Cancellations will be permitted even when a unit has scheduled other staff to replace the employee on vacation.
- All Nurses' Bargaining Association (NBA) & regular part-time Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA) employees who are scheduled to provide back-fill may be re-deployed; their shifts will not be cancelled.
- To reschedule approved vacation after May 11, staff should continue to use the Approved Leave or Vacation Change Request Process.

Exposure at work

Employees asked to self-isolate through the Provincial Workplace Health Call Centre as a result of a confirmed exposure **while at work** will be given instructions to self-isolation and will be monitored by the Call Centre through the 14-day period. Managers will be informed of both the decision regarding potential exposures and the decision to release employees from self-isolation after 14 days.

- In these cases, the staff member will be placed on **paid general leave** for any scheduled shifts during the self-isolation period.
- Staff showing symptoms of COVID-19 and are being tested or have tested positive for COVID-19 will be placed on sick leave until their recovery and should be coded as **sick time**.
- Staff showing influenza like symptoms and are not being tested for COVID-19 are required to call EARL and be placed on sick leave until their recovery and should be coded as **sick time**.

Staff who are confirmed to have been exposed while working and are confirmed positive will have a WSBC claim filed on their behalf by the Provincial Workplace Health Centre.

Staff are required to follow proper personal protective equipment protocols. Please ensure your units are familiar with the protocols and equipped with sufficient resources.

Questions?

If you have questions or concerns, please email COVID-19@providencehealth.bc.ca

Information and resource links:

PHC has launched a website for staff, medical staff, and researchers to address concerns, questions, protocols and guidelines around sick-leave and compensation-in-lieu for COVID-19. [Click here](#) to view the website. This website will be updated daily and is accessible from work and home on your mobile or desktop devices.

Please refer to the attached letter for health care workers from Dr. Bonnie Henry for more information.