

GOVERNMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK UPDATE

Bulletin #3 f: COVID-19 GNB news releases from March 16

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Update on COVID-19

FREDERICTON (GNB) – The following update on COVID-19 (the novel coronavirus) was issued today by Dr. Jennifer Russell, chief medical officer of health:

She recommends that:

- the provincial government focus its efforts on providing critical services, with all employees working from home wherever feasible and redeploying staff to focus on the most critical activities.
- private sector companies encourage their employees to work from home wherever feasible and focus on critical activities.
- child-care providers close with the exception of those that provide services to essential service workers such as health-care workers.
- the following businesses and public spaces be closed effective tomorrow, Tuesday, March 17, until further notice:
 - o libraries;
 - o museums;
 - o theatres;
 - o performance spaces;
 - o swimming pools, spas, saunas and water parks;
 - o recreational sites such as ski resorts, amusement parks, trampoline centres, etc.;
 - o cinemas and arcades;
 - o training centres and dance, spinning, zumba and yoga centres;
 - o arenas;
 - o indoor soccer centres;
 - o zoos;
 - o aquariums;
 - o bars and discotheques;
 - o restaurants that offer buffets;
 - o sugar bush operations open to the public.

Public Health is also asking restaurant owners to limit the number of customers to 50 per cent of the capacity of their dining areas. Take-out orders, deliveries and drive-through services are permitted.

“It is imperative that everyone keep a distance of two metres (six feet) between themselves and others at all times,” said Russell. “Everyone must practise social distancing in all their interactions with neighbours, co-workers and fellow residents.”

Russell said there is one additional presumptive case of COVID-19 in the province, bringing the number of presumptive or positive cases in New Brunswick to seven.

The new case is a female, between 20 and 30 years old in Zone 2 (in the southern part of the province). The patient was screened, her recent travel history to Greece was confirmed and the patient was treated, tested and is in self-isolation.

Diagnostic testing confirmed the case as presumptive. Additional testing to confirm the case as a positive COVID-19 case will take place at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg.

“Active contact tracing is being conducted by regional public health officials. These individuals are already isolating, and Public Health officials have already taken swift action to implement effective precautions to prevent the infection from spreading,” said Russell.

The regional health authorities will be opening community assessment centres to allow those who have been identified as high risk to be tested, without going to an Emergency Department.

Individuals who are experiencing mild to moderate symptoms will be directed to the assessment centres by Tele-Care 811. Once the individual has been assessed by Tele-Care, and if they require an in-person assessment, a referral will be provided to the Community Assessment Centre in their area.

It is important to note that these centres are not walk-in clinics. They are appointment based and all appointments are made through Tele-Care 811.

Non-essential government services to shut down until further notice

FREDERICTON (GNB) – The provincial government announced today that, based upon recommendations by Dr. Jennifer Russell, the chief medical officer of health, to address the impact of COVID-19 (the novel coronavirus), all non-essential government services will be shut down starting Tuesday, March 17, until further notice.

“We are taking action to implement the recommendations we have received from the experts,” said Premier Blaine Higgs. “We know that the best and safest place for our workers and their children is at home.”

Russell recommended today that the provincial government focus its efforts on providing critical services and said that all employees should work from home wherever feasible.

Based upon this recommendation, only those public-sector workers who work in critical functions or areas that support critical functions will remain on the job. They may work on site or from home, depending on the nature of their job. Those workers sent home will remain on the payroll.

Higgs said employees sent home are required to remain on standby to be available to be deployed to help in critical service areas, either because critical staff are sick or because additional staff is needed.

In response to today's recommendation by Russell to close daycares, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Education has developed a response plan to ensure child care is provided to essential workers across the province.

Information for essential service workers will be available through the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's [Parent Portal](#) or by calling 1-833-221-9339.

"We continue to ask New Brunswickers to come together and support one another," Higgs said. "Families, neighbours and friends who are not in high-risk categories are encouraged to work together to ensure child care options are available for our essential services workers."

Higgs also announced that the all-party cabinet committee on COVID-19 has decided that only a quorum of 15 members will meet at the legislative assembly on Tuesday, March 17, to limit the potential spread of illness.

New Brunswickers are reminded to limit visits to nursing homes to help protect the most vulnerable residents. Those over 70 years old are at the highest risk of becoming infected with COVID-19. These residents are advised to stay at home and limit contact with others as much as possible.

Essential service workers can still obtain child care services

Information for essential service workers on how to access child care services is now available through the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's [Parent Portal](#) or by calling 1-833-221-9339.

“This response plan is critical to ensuring our essential service workers can continue to serve New Brunswickers in the coming days and weeks,” said Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Dominic Cardy. “We continue to encourage everyone who is not high-risk to support their friends, families and neighbours by coming together to care for our children and youth.”

Facilities remaining open to support essential service workers will follow the advice set out by the chief medical officer, including reduced group sizes, and social distancing. In addition, they will continue to follow strict health and safety directives.

The directive relating to individuals who have travelled internationally on or after March 9 continues to apply and such travellers are to avoid early learning and childcare centres for a period of 14 days.