

Bulletin #71: COVID-19 Information

September 17, 2020



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COVID-19 Bulletin

Proper Wear and Care of Masks

COVID-19 can spread from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.

Non-medical masks or facial coverings, combined with frequent hand hygiene and physical distancing, is an effective way to prevent the spread of respiratory infections.

It is important to properly put on and take off your mask, and to clean it after each use.

An infographic outlining the gold standard of mask wear and care is now available on the [Coronavirus Resources Skyline page](#) and our [website](#).

Telephone fees for hospital patient services will be reinstated effective Sept. 28

Horizon has received notification from Bell Aliant that it will now be reverting to a pay-as-you-go format for all inpatient phone lines beginning Monday, Sept. 28.

In the interim, Bell Aliant has confirmed that free service is being reactivated for patients whose bedside phone lines were disconnected in error by the utility last week ([Bulletin #70a – COVID-19 – Patient Telephone Service – Sept. 10 2020](#)).

This will allow staff an appropriate amount of time to communicate the incoming change to patients prior to Sept. 28.

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Fees for inpatient phone services were waived on March 26 ([Bulletin #13c – COVID-19 – Hospital Patient Phone Service – Mar 27 2020](#)).

Once the change takes effect, inpatients wishing to activate their telephone will need to follow the regular process.

While we regret not being able to continue this service for our patients, we do appreciate the cooperation of our service provider on this matter.

Self-service option for COVID-19 testing now available

Please see below for a self-service option to be referred for COVID-19 testing.

This process bypasses Tele-Care 811 and allows the individual to fill out the requisition form and send to their preferred assessment centre. The assessment centre will then process the request and schedule the appointment for testing.

We have been asked to circulate to staff that unless there are other specific concerns, RHA staff may bypass 811 to self-refer to an assessment center.

Eligible workers without symptoms: What is the process to get a COVID-19 test if I do not have any symptoms? If an eligible worker would like a COVID-19 test, they can register for a test online by clicking [Get tested](#) on the GNB Coronavirus website or they can call 1-833-475-0724 to get an appointment.

General public, with symptoms: What is the process to get a COVID-19 test if I do have symptoms? You can register for a test online by clicking [Get tested](#) on the GNB Coronavirus website or you can call Tele-Care 811 to get an appointment.

Accessing Employee Health and Wellness from home

All staff and physicians should be familiar with the screening criteria prior to entering a Horizon facility, accessible [here](#).

If you begin to exhibit symptoms during the evening, or over the weekend, as an employee, the directive remains to contact Employee Health and Wellness at 1-833-978-2580. This is to reduce the number of calls to Tele-Care 811, and to give priority testing to health care workers.

Please note: you can find the contact number on Horizon's public [website](#), scrolling to the bottom of the page, and clicking on Employee Access.

Staff from Employee Health and Wellness are available daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to answer any questions or concerns. Please leave a voicemail and your call will be returned within two hours.

Screening criteria for employees and physicians entering facilities – Yellow Phase

Please review the questions and remain familiar with them prior to entering a Horizon facility.

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The updated questions and signage can be accessed [here](#). All updated posters are available on the [Coronavirus Skyline page](#).

All employees and physicians must self-screen, clean their hands, and follow protocols related to appropriate physical distancing and wearing of procedural masks in all Horizon facilities.

If you answer **yes** to any of the screening questions, do not enter the building. Instead, you are to:

- Contact Employee Health and Wellness at 1-833-978-2580 (available daily between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.)
- Self-isolate
- Follow the appropriate absence notification process

[Patient care and Infection Prevention & Control \(IPC\) guidelines for Quebec twinned communities](#)

Residents of twinned communities in Quebec (Avignon Municipal Regional County, Listuguj First Nation and Temiscouata Municipal Regional County) who travel into New Brunswick as part of same-day travel only with no overnight stays will not need to self-isolate when they enter New Brunswick.

New Brunswick residents who travel into, but not beyond, Avignon Municipal Regional County, Listuguj First Nation and Temiscouata Municipal Regional County as part of same day

travel with no overnight stays, will not need to self-isolate when they return to New Brunswick.

IPC guidelines

Residents from the above twinned communities in Quebec seeking health care services at Horizon facilities will be placed under **droplet / contact precautions** regardless of same-day travel or overnight stay.

This will apply to the Emergency Department, Ambulatory Care services and hospitalized patients.

Residents of the Atlantic provinces who travel to the twinned communities in Quebec and have an **overnight stay** will also be placed under **droplet / contact precautions** when seeking health care services at Horizon.

[Pandemic Plans and Cohorting](#)

Social Development is offering information and resources to help further the development of facilities' plans related to cohorting of nursing home residents. More information is available [here](#).

[Use of nasopharyngeal swabs in children under 12](#)

Nasopharyngeal swabs remain the **first choice and the gold standard** for COVID-19 sample collection, whether for rapid testing (GeneXpert) or standard PCR.

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Our current large stock of nasopharygeal swabs are the Minitip variety, which can already mitigate some discomfort during collection. As we transition into return to school, the frequency of COVID-19 compatible symptoms is likely to increase particularly among children, including the need for repeated swabs over time. Anxiety and non-compliance may in some cases lead to difficulties in properly collecting a NP swab specimen.

Nasopharyngeal swabs should continue to be collected for all adults and for children for whom compliance can be reasonably obtained.

A limited supply of marked nares/throat swabs are being distributed to COVID-19 assessment centres for use in children under 12 years only where compliance may lead to a sub-optimal NP sample. Please use these at your discretion when required, keeping in mind that there are much lower numbers of these kits.