

# Bulletin #113: COVID-19 Information

## January 27, 2021



### **In This Issue: COVID-19 Bulletin**

[You're invited to a COVID-19 update with Horizon's President and CEO](#)

[Patient and visitor personal items](#)

[GeneXpert rapid testing](#)

[REVISED Phase Orange – Rapid COVID testing](#)

[Public input sought on health care review](#)

[Individuals recognized for stepping up for New Brunswick](#)

[GNB Updates](#)

[Horizon Dashboard Data from January 26](#)

### **COVID-19 Bulletin**

#### **You're invited to a COVID-19 update with Horizon's President and CEO**

When: **Thursday, Jan. 28** at **either** [10 a.m.](#) or [3 p.m.](#)

Where: Zoom (click above times for Zoom meeting links)

What: Karen McGrath, Horizon's President and CEO, will provide an update on Horizon's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and take questions.

Note: You do not need to RSVP. Each Zoom meeting has the capacity to welcome 500 participants.

#### **Patient and visitor personal items**

The Infectious Disease and Infection, Prevention and Control (ID-IPC) COVID-19 Committee has updated the chart which outlines personal items that will be accepted into facilities. The update is in relation to clothing.

Clothing arrangements can be made with health care staff in advance if clothing is required for discharge.

If needed, the chart can be printed from Pages 3 and 4 from memo, [here](#), in either English or French.

#### **GeneXpert rapid testing**

The level of GeneXpert stock for rapid COVID-19 testing in the province is depleting rapidly. At the current rate of use, the NB rapid testing supply could be completely exhausted within seven days.

## Bulletin #113: COVID-19 Information

### January 27, 2021

In an effort to reduce this rapid depletion of stock, the Task Force wishes to advise that:

- 1) Criteria for ordering GeneXpert testing are well-established and should be followed. All exceptions require phone consultation with a medical microbiologist for adjudication.
- 2) When GeneXpert testing is used for initial outbreak investigation in long-term care facilities, testing should be limited where possible to two individuals.
- 3) The Regional Health Authorities have developed an accountability framework for the use of GeneXpert. On a daily basis inventory and use of GeneXpert will be reported to the Vice Presidents of Professional Services and the NB COVID-19 Laboratory Working Group. The daily report will include, but is not limited to, the following information:

- Name of ordering physicians
- The daily number of GeneXpert tests ordered per zone
- The daily number of GeneXpert tests ordered that do not follow the established criteria
- Pre-surgery orders that require GeneXpert, including type of surgery and date of surgery
- Reason(s) for exceptional use outside of established criteria
- Confirmation that a Medical / Clinical Microbiologist was consulted for orders outside of established criteria



If GeneXpert stock continues to decline rapidly, changes to the established usage criteria could be implemented immediately.

These measures aim to preserve the province's GeneXpert stock. GeneXpert is an important tool in combatting COVID-19.

#### REVISED Phase Orange – Rapid COVID Testing

New Brunswick laboratories offer rapid COVID-19 testing using the GeneXpert platform for patients meeting the following criteria:

- Clinically suspected Covid-19 in a patient currently admitted in an ICU or being admitted to the ICU
- Clinically suspected Covid-19 in a pregnant patient currently in labor and being admitted for delivery
- Clinically suspected Covid-19 cases or outbreaks being investigated by New Brunswick Public Health - **Limit of 2 GeneXpert tests per outbreak**
- Clinically suspected Covid-19 cases in patients who cannot reasonably comply with isolation requirements (e.g.: homeless persons or persons with unpredictable living situations)
- Clinically suspected Covid-19 cases (adults and children) requiring admission to a designated psychiatric unit

## Bulletin #113: COVID-19 Information

### January 27, 2021

- Clinically suspected Covid-19 cases at addiction treatment centers

In addition to the above criteria, rapid COVID-19 testing is being expanded to include

- Clinically suspected COVID-19 in patients being admitted to hospital in phase orange and red zones only.
- Symptomatic patients requiring admission to a facility in a yellow zone who have recently been to an orange or red zone.

The use of the rapid testing will be adjusted as necessary based on a biweekly review of the provincial inventory of GeneXpert test kits by the Provincial COVID-19 Laboratory Working Group. Changes to the criteria will be communicated to providers.

As per current process -requests for use of rapid testing outside of the predefined criteria will require consultation with a microbiologist.

There is a limited inventory of test kits available, therefore judicious use of this important testing resource is required.



### Public input sought on health care review

In preparation for a provincial engagement tour, the Department of Health has created a discussion paper outlining the province's current health care challenges and the vision for what a sustainable health care system could look like.

"In my short time as minister, one thing has become very clear to me: the demands being placed on our health care system and on the people working in it are extraordinary," said Health Minister Dorothy Shephard. "I am committed to creating a better health care system and to listening to any and all ideas about how that can be accomplished."

New Brunswickers are encouraged to share their feedback on the questions posed in [Striving for Dependable Public Health Care: A discussion paper on the future of health care in New Brunswick](#) by emailing [healthplansante@gnb.ca](mailto:healthplansante@gnb.ca). The feedback received will be factored into the development of a new five-year provincial health plan.

The Department of Health will conduct a virtual provincial engagement tour to talk about the challenges facing the province's health-care system and receive input from medical professionals, community leaders and the public.

## Bulletin #113: COVID-19 Information

### January 27, 2021

Shephard will make virtual stops in about a dozen communities around the province. These stops will include the six communities impacted by the proposed changes last winter. There will also be separate sessions held for First Nations communities, front-line health-care workers, and professional associations.

“We are currently living the reality that comes from not taking action: a system that does not meet the needs of patients, is a frustrating place to work for health professionals and one that most certainly will decline without improvement,” said Shephard. “The future of our health-care system depends upon the actions we take in the coming months.”

In order to respect the current COVID-19 situation, all community sessions will be held online using Zoom. Anyone interested in attending a virtual session will be able to register to attend. The engagement tour schedule will be released in the coming weeks.

#### **Individuals recognized for stepping up for New Brunswick**

A total of 89 New Brunswickers have been recognized for exemplary acts of service since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Through the program Stepping up for my New Brunswick, members of the public had until the end of the year 2020 to nominate individuals they felt had stepped up in various and meaningful ways to minimize the impact of the pandemic in the province.

“Over the course of the year, New Brunswickers have demonstrated resilience, leadership, generosity and support for one another,” said Premier Blaine Higgs. “From all regions of New Brunswick, individuals went above and beyond, for their neighbours, friends, family members and their communities. On behalf of all New Brunswickers, it is with great honour and admiration, that I sincerely thank each of the individuals who have been stepping up for our province, as well as the people who submitted their nominations.”

The 89 individuals recognized were selected because they stepped up in different ways, such as:

- shopping for groceries and delivering them to seniors or to people in quarantine;
- working hard to provide medical care, nursing home services and education for both children and adults;
- taking steps to ensure the health and safety of their employees and customers;
- providing canine therapy to first responders;
- organizing fundraisers for charitable groups; and

## Bulletin #113: COVID-19 Information

### January 27, 2021

- helping to ease isolation for those at home through online fitness classes, music shows and more.

A list of the recipients with descriptions of their contributions [is available online](#).

#### **[GNB Updates](#)**

When available, the Government of New Brunswick's news release can be accessed [here](#).

