

Memorandum

March 3, 2020

Dear Alberta School Superintendents/Colleagues,

Subject: Novel Coronavirus

I am writing again to provide an update on novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). We know that Albertans, including school staff and parents, are concerned about this particular coronavirus, but it is important to remember that the current risk of exposure in Alberta is low. **There are no confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19 in Alberta at this time.**

As this is an evolving situation, further updates can be found at Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services websites:

- www.alberta.ca/coronavirus
- www.ahs.ca/covid

Our knowledge of COVID-19 continues to grow as new information becomes available, and this new evidence informs adjustments to our public health actions.

Based on our evolving knowledge we, along with other provinces in Canada, are now recommending that **individuals who have been in Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea or Italy in the past 14 days** monitor themselves daily for symptoms such as fever or cough (with students getting help from their parents) for 14 days **after** their return. If the student develops symptoms such as cough or fever, their parents are advised to keep the student home and call Health Link 811. This is the same advice we previously provided to those returning from mainland China, outside Hubei province. If these individuals are feeling well, self-isolation is **not** recommended at this time.

We are also recommending that those who are returning from **Iran or Hubei Province, China** voluntarily self-isolate until 14 days have passed since they last visited the area. This is recommended even if they are feeling well.

For persons who have travelled anywhere outside Canada in the last 14 days, and were in contact with someone who was suspected or confirmed to have the novel coronavirus or if they were in a health-care facility while travelling, they or their parents are advised to call Health Link 811, even if feeling well, to discuss additional precautions.

Recommendations in the attached Letter for Parents/Guardians/Staff are provided for you to distribute within your school communities. **These recommendations are made out of an abundance of caution and contain only voluntary measures. You and your staff are not expected to enforce or monitor them.** Please help support your school communities by not making any assumptions about the risk of students or staff based on their ethnicity or country of origin.

We also advise schools to continue to follow your standard processes for any illnesses in your school, including monitoring and reporting of unusual cases of illness and clusters of illness using their established Zone Public Health contacts. Staff, students and parents may call Health Link at 811 for any COVID-19 questions.

Finally, while the current risk is low, it is important that we are prepared in case that changes. We are making plans in the health system, should COVID-19 come to Alberta, and you can prepare in your schools as well. Please see guidance at the link below on what you can do now: (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html>) We will continue to update guidance and preparedness recommendations as the situation and knowledge evolves.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Deena', followed by a large, stylized flourish.

Deena Hinshaw, BSc, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCP
Chief Medical Officer of Health