



Weeneebayko Area Health Authority

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January 31, 2020

Re: The Novel Coronavirus-2019 originating in Wuhan, China

Dear James and Hudson Bay communities:

Yesterday (January 30, 2020), the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a *public health emergency of international concern*. The Novel Coronavirus originated in Wuhan, China in late December 2019.

WAHA is fully engaged with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Public Health Ontario and the Porcupine Health Unit regarding any developments related to the Novel Coronavirus 2019 (2019-nCoV).

Corona viruses typically cause mild symptoms like the common cold, but this specific virus has impacted 7,000 people mainly in China. The virus has caused approximately 170 deaths worldwide, with a low mortality rate of 2%.

In comparison there have been estimated 8,000-20,000 flu deaths in the USA alone this flu season. (Centre for Disease Control, January 30, 2020).

In Canada, the **risk level remains low** (Toronto: 2 confirmed cases; Vancouver: 1 confirmed case). **Persons at risk remain only those who have travelled to/from Hubei Province, China.**

WAHA planning and response plan:

Communications:

1. WAHA Leadership and Management continues to engage in regular communications with the Porcupine Health Unit as part of the provincial system of monitoring and preparedness. We receive and relay the most up-to-date information to our staff and our coastal community leaders.
2. On Wednesday, January 29, 2020 we sent an informational email to Community Health Directors and posted community notifications on WAHA's Facebook page (@waha.on.ca) and website (www.waha.ca).
3. We will continue to update communities via Facebook and direct emails to community health leaders.
4. At this point in time, the **risk level remains low** for Canadians. There are two confirmed cases in Toronto and one in Vancouver.

Preparedness:

1. We have implemented enhanced surveillance and screening measures for all patients accessing our facilities. (Began January 25, 2020)
2. Our staff are well prepared in communicable disease control and manage communicable respiratory illnesses routinely, like annual influenza (flu).
3. Managers and Directors have ensured their staff are up to date on the key preparedness activities, educational essentials and related best practices.
4. WAHA employees are prepared to receive any patients with respiratory illnesses of any kind, including Influenza or Novel Coronavirus 2019.
5. Patients at risk presenting with the following symptoms will be assessed and isolated immediately:
 - Respiratory symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) **AND**
 - Travel to/from Hubei Province, China in the 14 days before the onset of illness **OR**
 - Close contact with a confirmed or probable case of 2019-nCoV **OR**
 - Close contact with a person with acute respiratory illness who has been to/from Hubei Province, China in the 14 days before their symptoms.

We strongly encourage community leaders and members to seek information from legitimate, evidence-based websites. You can get updates from WAHA's [Facebook page](#) and [website](#).

For up to date 2019-nCoV information visit Ontario Public Health's dedicated page to [Novel Coronavirus updates](#).

Best regards,

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