

Joint Media Release
Friday, March 13, 2020

HKPR District Health Unit Reports First Positive Case of COVID-19

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit today confirmed the first positive case of COVID-19 in the region. The affected individual is a woman in her 60s who is a resident of Northumberland County.

The individual was seen at the Northumberland Hills Hospital on Wednesday, March 11 after presenting with symptoms of upper respiratory tract infection and travel to Spain and Portugal. The woman had travelled on Air Transat flight 337 from Lisbon, Portugal to Toronto on March 6, 2020.

The patient was discharged home and remains in self-isolation with follow up from the HKPR District Health Unit. Health Unit nurses have been in contact with the woman and are working with her to identify anyone she may have been in contact with while ill as well as any passengers on that flight who were seated near the woman. If anyone who travelled on Air Transat 337 on that date develops symptoms, they are asked to call their local public health unit.

“We have been working very closely with our hospitals and health care providers in anticipation of a local case and pre-emptive measures were in place for this type of situation,” says Dr. Lynn Noseworthy, Medical Officer of Health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit. “Staff at NHH had the appropriate measures in place to isolate this woman when she came into the emergency department and there was no risk to anyone else at the hospital at that time.”

With a local case, Dr. Noseworthy says it’s important for people to remember the following to help stop the spread of illness:

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose as much as possible;
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands;
- If you don’t have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve or arm;
- Stay home if you or a family member are ill;
- If you are ill and must visit a healthcare provider, clinic, or hospital emergency department, call ahead or tell them right away when you arrive that you have a respiratory illness and wear a mask while waiting to be seen; and
- Avoid visiting people in hospitals or long-term care homes if you are sick.

If residents have travelled outside of Canada, they are asked to monitor their health for flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, difficulty breathing) for 14 days. If they have returned from China, Iran or Italy, they are asked to self-isolate for 14 days.

If you have travelled and develop symptoms, here are local options available to you:

- Contact the Health Unit at 1-866-888-4577, ext. 5020
- Contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.

If symptoms are severe, call 911 and alert the dispatcher to the potential concern regarding COVID-19 so they can be appropriately prepared.

“NHH anticipates that the need for screening will continue to rise,” said Linda Davis, President and CEO, Northumberland Hills Hospital. “As such, NHH will be opening a new COVID-19 Assessment Centre. We are working toward the opening of this Centre within the next 24 hours and will share further details with our community via local media and our website as this work proceeds. Patients will notice additional active screening enhancements at our entry ways as well as visitor restrictions and we thank everyone in advance for their cooperation and patience as our team works to meet the needs of this rapidly evolving situation.”

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