

## Working together to prevent spread of seasonal illness and novel coronavirus

Healthcare partners in our community, including the health unit, hospitals, primary care providers, and Emergency Medicine Services, are working with each other and with the Ministry of Health to ensure residents are protected from the potential spread of the 2019-Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

"The Health Unit has always worked with our local hospitals regarding the implementation of infection prevention and control measures and case and contact management related to reportable diseases," said Dr. Lynn Noseworthy, Medical Officer of Health for the HKPR District Health Unit, in a joint media release issued January 30<sup>th</sup> with all hospitals in the Health Unit's catchment area. "With the introduction of the novel coronavirus, and Ontario's identification of it as a new reportable disease, we have heightened our communication to ensure we continue to share the information and resources needed to protect the public's health."

At this time of year, there are many respiratory viruses and other illnesses circulating in our community, and the steps to protect yourself from those illnesses are also effective protection against 2019-nCoV.

### What is the 2019-nCoV?

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses. They can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to more severe illnesses such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). Human coronaviruses are common throughout the world. In rare cases, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then spread between people. This was the case with SARS and MERS and with the 2019-nCoV novel coronavirus that originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.

### How are local healthcare partners prepared?

Although the risk continues to be low, staff from the HKPR District Health Unit, Northumberland Hills Hospital, Ross Memorial Hospital, Campbellford Memorial Hospital, Haliburton Highlands Health Services and primary care partners have implemented precautionary measures required to ensure the safety of patients, visitors, and health care workers, including thorough symptom and travel screenings.

As a reportable disease, healthcare partners are now required to report a suspected case of the novel coronavirus to their local medical officer of health. If a suspected case of novel coronavirus was to be identified in this area, the Health Unit would work with the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario Laboratory, and local hospitals in the management of the case and potential contacts.

### What to do if feeling ill, with recent travel history to China

Be prepared to identify your travel history and/or potential contact history with novel coronavirus so that paramedics and/or the health care provider are appropriately prepared to assist you.

- Call your local health unit or health care provider if you become sick with a cough and fever AND have returned from Hubei province in China in the past 14 days or have had close contact with an ill person who is either under investigation for novel coronavirus or is a confirmed case.
- If you have severe respiratory symptoms, call 911 and explain both your travel history and symptoms to arrange swift and safe transport.

### Where can you find the most reliable and up-to-date information?

It's important to check credible sources of information about 2019-nCoV, including daily updates on:

- [ontario.ca/coronavirus](http://ontario.ca/coronavirus)
- [canada.ca/coronavirus](http://canada.ca/coronavirus)

The Health Unit is monitoring the situation and sharing information with its partners and the public through its website. Residents with questions can visit the Health Unit's website at [hkpr.on.ca](http://hkpr.on.ca) or call 1-866-888-4577.

### Flu season

A number of respiratory illnesses, including some common coronaviruses, are circulating at this time of year and it is peak flu season. Most people with common coronavirus illness will recover on their own. Your health care provider may recommend steps you can take to relieve symptoms.

The best way to protect yourself and others from circulating respiratory illnesses:

- Get your flu shot
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or arm if you don't have a tissue
- Stay home if you or a family member are ill. Avoid visiting people in the hospital or long-term care homes if you are ill.

## Panel discussion on integrative medicine focus of next Northumberland PACE talk

Join the Northumberland PACE partners on Wednesday, February 19, for what promises to be another thought-provoking discussion. This month's talk will feature a panel of speakers who will highlight their expertise in a variety of disciplines—naturopathy, chiropractic, ayurvedic medicine and allopathic cardiology—for an exploration of 'integrative medicine.' Integrative medicine is an approach to health care that incorporates a mind-body-spirit connection to examine the patient as a whole through the integrated use of conventional and complementary practices and therapies for healing.

Held monthly, on the third Wednesday of the month, PACE talks rotate between the Community Health Centres of Northumberland, 99 Toronto Road, Port Hope, and Northumberland Hills Hospital, in Cobourg. The February session will take place in the Education Centre at NHH, 1000 DePalma Drive, at 5:30 PM, with Dr. Mukesh Bhargava moderating.

Now in its third year, PACE (which stands for Personalized Assessment and Change Education) is a partnership between community health-care providers, the NHH Foundation, local residents and students at Loyalist College. The talks are offered free of charge, but space is limited and pre-registration is required to manage room capacity.

Register for the February talk and find recordings of past talks at the PACE website, [pacetalks.com](http://pacetalks.com). Questions? Contact Jennifer Gillard at 905-377-7757 or [jgillard@nhh.ca](mailto:jgillard@nhh.ca).



## Applications for 2020 Health Professions Scholarships due this month

Do you know a local student pursuing post-secondary education in a health-related field? Please pass this on!

Applications for Northumberland Hills Hospital's 2020 Health Professions Scholarships are due this year on **Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup>**.

Introduced by Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) in 2003, the purpose of the scholarship program is to provide financial assistance to students from west Northumberland who are pursuing a career in the health care sector. Applicants are evaluated on the basis of their academic achievements, extra-curricular activities, a testimonial explaining their interest in a health-care field and written references. All applicants must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a full-time study program.

By supporting local students early in their academic studies, NHH hopes to encourage area youth to consider NHH in their career path when the time comes to select an employer.

The 2020 scholarships (\$1,000 for each student selected) will be presented this spring. Full details, including a downloadable Application Form, are available year round on the **Careers** tab of the hospital website at [nhh.ca/Careers/StudentScholarship](http://nhh.ca/Careers/StudentScholarship).