

News

## News Release

Health

Office of the Premier

### **REVISED / Update on COVID-19**

21 March 2020

FREDERICTON (GNB) – Public Health has updated the number of confirmed and presumptive cases of COVID-19 in the province.

Testing has identified six new presumptive cases and confirmed two previous presumptive cases of COVID-19, bringing the total number of cases in New Brunswick to 17: **eight confirmed and nine presumptive**. There have been 771 tests administered to date in the province.

Dr. Jennifer Russell, chief medical officer of health, continues to urge people to stay home, maintain social distance and wash their hands frequently.

“It is critical that everyone do their part to stop the spread of COVID-19,” said Russell. “This can and will save lives.”

Premier Blaine Higgs acknowledged that the increase in cases is not surprising.

“Based on what we have seen in other jurisdictions, we know that the numbers will continue to rise,” said Higgs. “We have put measures in place here in New Brunswick to try to slow down the rising number of cases. With our province under a state of emergency, I am imploring people to continue to take this situation seriously.”

The six new cases are:

- a male, between 40 and 50, in zone 2 (south), who had been on a cruise;
- a female, between 50 and 60 in zone 3 (central), who is a direct contact of a previously identified presumptive case;
- a female, between 40 and 50, in zone 2 (south), who had been on a cruise;
- a male, between 60 and 70, in zone 2 (south), who had been on a cruise;
- a female, between 50 and 60, in zone 2 (south), who had been on a cruise; and
- a female, between 20 and 30, in zone 2 (south), who is a close contact to a travel-related presumptive case.

Additional testing to confirm the cases will take place at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg.

A new online self-assessment tool is now in use and Russell is pleased with the public response.

“Yesterday, almost 5,500 individuals used the self-assessment tool,” said Russell. “This has led to a reduction in the number of calls to the 811 line, which has allowed our health-care professionals to assist callers more promptly.”

Effective immediately, and for the duration of the emergency, patients with drug coverage under New Brunswick’s public drug plans will only be responsible for the initial co-payment on a prescription fill or refill. For example, a patient with a 90-day prescription will only have a co-payment for the first 30-day fill. There will be no co-payment required for the second and third 30-day fills on the same 90-day prescription. This applies to all New Brunswickers that are on the public drug plan, including many seniors and low-income individuals.

Among the steps being taken to address the pandemic is closing off non-essential travel between Canada and the United States, effective today.

“I want New Brunswickers to know government is doing its part to make sure returning travellers know what is expected of them,” said Higgs.

The premier added that travellers with symptoms are not being allowed to board airplanes. Everyone who arrives, by air or by land, is being screened at the border. If they have symptoms, they will be separated from others and Public Health will conduct isolation and testing. If they do not have symptoms, they will receive detailed information on what is expected of them. As well, all travellers must isolate themselves for 14 days after returning home. Anyone transporting these travellers from the airport, or those who mingle with them in other ways, must also self-isolate.

Up-to-date information about COVID-19 is available online.

21-03-20

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