

MEDIA RELEASE

Second and Third Cases of COVID-19 in the Porcupine Health Unit Area

For Immediate Release – Monday, March 23, 2020

Timmins, Ontario —Today, Dr. Lianne Catton, Medical Officer of Health of the Porcupine Health Unit (PHU), reported the PHU is investigating the second and third cases of COVID-19 in the area. Currently, there is no link to international travel however the investigation is ongoing.

The two individuals presented themselves to the Emergency Department at Timmins and District Hospital (TADH) the evening of Thursday, March 19, 2020, where they were assessed and tested. Timmins and District Hospital continues to work with the PHU and other partners to respond to COVID-19 in our community.

The first individual is a male in his fifties who resides in Timmins. The other is a female in her fifties who also resides in Timmins and is a close contact of the male. Neither one of the individuals travelled outside of Canada, however the investigation is ongoing. We are reaching out to the close contacts of these cases as appropriate and will provide updates, as appropriate, once more is known.

The male was tested then sent home in stable condition by TADH staff and advised to self-isolate. He remains at home in self-isolation, being followed by the PHU and supporting the public health investigation process. The female remains in hospital in isolation in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in stable condition. Dr. Catton asks that the public respects the privacy and confidentiality of these individuals, as we all hope for a full recovery.

Most COVID-19 cases are mild in nature and do not require that you go to the hospital. “While we do not want to see any community member unwell, it’s important that the emergency department and hospital have the capacity to deal with extremely sick individuals. Most people do well and don’t need any medical attention.” Dr. Harry Voogjarv, Chief of Staff at TADH says, “TADH and other community partners such have been working together to support options for COVID-19 assessments outside of the hospital setting.”

The PHU conducts case and contact management with all cases to help identify anyone who may be a close contact. If you are considered a close contact of any COVID-19 case, Dr. Catton says you will be called by PHU staff and provided with follow-up and direction. The health unit will also share information with the public if there is potential exposure of community members that requires any follow-up, as appropriate.

At this point in time, Dr. Catton says we need to act with the assumption that COVID-19 is circulating in our communities. “We’re all in this together.” Each community member needs to

follow preventative measures to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. “I cannot stress enough the importance for travelers returning to our communities to stay home and isolate themselves physically from others for 14 days after arrival to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus,” emphasizes Dr. Catton. Social distancing is also critical at this time. She states: “We can expect to see more cases and we need everyone to stay home as much as possible.”

The Porcupine Health Unit is located in Northeastern Ontario, serving the entire Cochrane District and Hornepayne, in Algoma District. The main office is located in Timmins, Ontario, with branch offices in Cochrane, Hearst, Hornepayne, Iroquois Falls, Kapuskasing, Matheson, Moosonee and Smooth Rock Falls.

Visit Ontario’s [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.

The Porcupine Health Unit COVID-19 Information Line

- If you are experiencing fever, dry cough and/or shortness of breath, call the PHU COVID-19 Info Line at 1-800-461-1818 extension 2919.
- Available Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
- Callers can leave messages and PHU staff will call back within 24 hours.
- At times, call volumes are high, and your patience is appreciated.

COVID-19 Assessment Centre: Intrepid Place in Timmins

- Further assessment and testing.
- Referrals by health care providers required.
- By appointment only. Walk-ins will not be seen.
- Not everyone who attends the clinic will be tested.

Prevention Measures

Take the necessary precautions to protect yourself and others to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer often
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
- Cough into your sleeve or tissue
- Stay home if you are sick
- Practice social distancing – stay home as much as possible, limit visitors to your home.
- Do your best to keep at least two metres away from others

Symptoms of COVID-19

- Fever, cough and difficulty breathing
- Complications can include serious conditions, like pneumonia or kidney failure, and in some cases, death.

IMPORTANT: If you suspect you have symptoms of COVID-19

- Call the Porcupine Health Unit at 705-267-1181 or toll-free 1-800-461-1818.
- Be sure to mention your symptoms and your travel history, including the countries you visited.
- If you are ill and must visit a health care professional, call ahead and tell them if you have a respiratory illness.
- If you need immediate medical attention, call 911 and mention your travel history and symptoms.

For further information, please contact:

Jaye Gorman

Communications Coordinator
Timmins and District Hospital
705-267-6331
jameunier@tadh.com

Gary Schelling

Communications Specialist
Porcupine Health Unit
705-267-1181, ext. 2413
gary.schelling@porcupinehu.on.ca