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From the Office of Dr. Joyce Lock, Medical Officer of Health, Southwestern Public Health

Managing Health Worker Illness and Return to Work

On the morning of March 19, 2020, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams, sent out an updated bulletin with recommendations for health care workers who have recently returned from international travel.

The intention of the bulletin is to clarify the province's position on this issue in a manner that balance's the protection of the health system and the continued operation of health system settings.

Highlights:

- Immediately cease all non-essential business travel outside of Canada until further notice and likewise discourage employee travel.
- Health Care Workers who have travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days self-isolate for a period of 14 days starting from their arrival in Ontario.
- *If there are particular workers who are deemed critical, by all parties, to continued operations, I recommend that these workers undergo regular screening, use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the 14 days and undertake active self-monitoring, including taking their temperature twice daily for fever, and immediately self-isolate if symptoms develop and self-identify to their occupational health and safety department.*

- Everyone in Ontario should be practicing social distance of 2 meters to reduce exposure to other people.
- Where there may be an opportunity, for all health system employers to facilitate work arrangement that enable appropriate employees to work from home or to work virtually, if not re-deployable.
- Health system employers should also consider a review of their services and practices to identify how they can provide services to patient groups virtually or remotely.
- Health care workers who work in multiple locations should identify themselves to their managers and develop an individualized plan to manage their employment across these settings over the course of the pandemic.
- All health sector organizations should have a Continuity of Operations plan to redeployment resources whether human resources, equipment or space, to protect critical services. This may include cross training, cross credentialing or formal redeployment to different functions.
- Health care workers should consult their local public health unit and their manager/occupational health and safety department to plan their safe return to work.

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COVID 19 Line

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