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**HIGH PRIORITY  
HEALTH ALERT**

**March 26, 2020**

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

## **Increasing COVID-19 Cases: Advice for Health Care Providers**

SWPH has had an increase in cases, both lab-confirmed and probable (those with symptoms and exposure to a lab confirmed case or travel to a high-risk area). Most exposures have occurred in large workplaces and healthcare facilities inside and outside of our region. We strongly recommend health care providers develop contingency plans for staff shortages, conduct active screening for all patient visits, and follow PPE guidelines for all patient consultations and specimen collection. Additional guidance is found on the [Ministry's website](#).

As well, when sending specimen collections to the lab, ensure to note if the source is a critical service worker, specifically a health care, police, fire or EMS worker. This will expedite the test results.

SWPH has also experienced increased call volumes related to COVID-19 from the general public. If you need assistance from our call centre, you are advised to call us at 1-800-922-0096 ext. 9 and leave a message indicating you are a health care provider for priority triage. After hours (11 p.m. on), press '0' to reach the on-call team.

Please continue to report any suspected case of COVID-19 using the report form sent out with the March 25<sup>th</sup> health care provider newsletter. The form may also be downloaded from [our website](#).

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