



INFORMATION BULLETIN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 18, 2020

Island Health COVID-19 referral-only screening clinics open in Port Hardy and Port McNeill

North Island — Island Health is working in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) to respond to COVID-19. The situation is evolving quickly and our strategies are evolving to keep people in the communities we serve safe.

To increase our ability to test those whom health officials deem a high priority, Island Health is actively working to open more COVID-19 referral-only screening clinics across Vancouver Island in the coming days.

The **referral-only** clinics in Port Hardy and Port McNeill will begin taking **appointments** on March 18, 2020.

It is important that people **do not call or attend** a screening clinic unless referred by a primary care provider or an 8-1-1 nurse. Testing will be prioritized for people who meet the criteria set out below.

According to the latest guidance from the BCCDC, people who **should** be tested are those with respiratory symptoms who are:

- Hospitalized, or likely to be hospitalized
- Health Care Workers
- Residents of long-term care facilities
- Part of an investigation of a cluster or outbreak

People who do **not** need to be tested include:

- People without symptoms (The exception is health care workers with COVID-19 infection who require a negative test after symptom resolution to return to work)
- People with mild respiratory symptoms who can be managed at home. This includes returning travellers with an onset of illness within 14 days of return to Canada

If you are experiencing symptoms (such as new fever, dry cough, difficulty breathing) or are concerned you have been exposed to COVID-19, the BCCDC has an online self-assessment tool: <https://covid19.thrive.health/>.

People can also contact their primary care provider or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 to be assessed. People living in a region with a screening clinic who are assessed as meeting testing criteria and requiring follow-up will be directed to call their local screening clinic. A triage nurse at the clinic will then assess **referred patients** over the phone to determine if an **appointment** for testing is needed.

Health authorities across B.C. are being asked to set up referral-only screening clinics in a way that makes sense for the unique communities they serve and Island Health will continue to actively assess the need in communities across our region.

The British Columbia Centre for Disease Control is the recommended resource for provincial information that is accurate and current: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>. Information is being updated frequently on the site at this time and individuals are encouraged to check back regularly (eg. daily).

Island Health also has frequently updated information on our website: islandhealth.ca/COVID19.

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This Island Health notice has been sent to media, MPs, MLAs, mayors, Island Health leaders, foundations and regional hospital district chairs on Vancouver Island. View online at www.islandhealth.ca/news

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