

COVID 2019 Preparedness

Ministry of Health

During the week of February 24, novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) transmission outside of the centre of the outbreak of Hubei, China resulted in the World Health Organization (WHO) recommending global public health agencies prepare for widespread transmission in any country while continuing all containment efforts.

While the risk of COVID-19 within Saskatchewan is currently low, the experiences from Italy and South Korea show that any jurisdiction can go from no cases to a few hundred in a week and a few thousand within a month. All Canadian jurisdictions are working with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to continue to detect, limit and mitigate against the spread of COVID-19 and the Ministry and the Saskatchewan Health Authority have begun planning to prepare our health system should the transmission increase in the province.

The Ministry of Health has a pandemic preparedness plan developed to address influenza. Since COVID -19 is a respiratory illness, this plan will be adapted to respond to COVID-19. The Government of Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Health and the Saskatchewan Health Authority have all begun the process to activate emergency operations centres to coordinate communication and planning. Health sector planning includes:

- Updated guidance to care providers on the case definition and testing procedures to increase surveillance;
- Enhanced testing capability with Roy Romanow Provincial Laboratory (RRPL);
- Reviewing acute care capacity and contingency planning; and
- Ensuring necessary supplies of personal protective equipment.

It is best practice for workplaces to have business continuity plans to support staff and work functions through an event like pandemic influenza. It is recommended that workplaces ensure these plans are current and ready, in the event that cases increase in the province.

COVID-19 may still be contained and mitigated in Canada and Saskatchewan, reducing the impact to individuals and the health system through individual action. COVID-19 is a respiratory illness and the best protection is every day preventive actions, including proper and frequent hand washing, cleaning high-traffic surfaces often with disinfectants, and staying home when sick.

Information on COVID-19 including travel guidance, best practices for prevention, and case management guidelines for care providers are available at [Saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus](https://saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus). Public health risk is continually reassessed and new information will be posted to this site as it becomes available.