

GOVERNMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK UPDATE
Bulletin #12f: COVID-19 GNB news release from March 26
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The following update on COVID-19 (the novel coronavirus) was issued today:

Seven new cases of COVID-19; financial support for impacted workers and businesses

FREDERICTON (GNB) – Public Health has updated the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the province.

Testing at the microbiology laboratory at the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre in Moncton has identified seven new cases, bringing the total number of confirmed cases in New Brunswick to 33.

The new cases are:

- An individual aged 20-30, in Zone 1 (southeast), whose case is travel-related.
- An individual aged 60-70, in Zone 1 (southeast), whose case is travel-related.
- An individual aged 60-70, in Zone 1 (southeast), whose case is travel-related.
- An individual aged 30-40, in Zone 2 (south), whose case is travel-related.
- An individual aged 50-60, in Zone 3 (central west), whose case is travel-related.
- An individual aged 60-70, in Zone 3 (central west), whose case is travel-related.
- An individual aged 60-70, in Zone 3 (central west), whose case is travel-related.

Dr. Jennifer Russell, chief medical officer of health, emphasized the rapidly changing nature and course of the pandemic, and said New Brunswick's public health strategies are shifting to meet this challenge.

"By practicing physical distancing, we are depriving the virus of the opportunity to spread more widely," Russell said. "By doing this, we are improving our chances of lessening the severity of this outbreak."

Premier Blaine Higgs outlined economic support measures to help alleviate financial pressures faced by residents and business owners.

“We are facing a situation unlike anything we have experienced before, and we are acting swiftly to help families with their immediate needs and to bridge the financial gap for employers,” said Higgs. “While the federal government has announced comprehensive measures to support employers, gaps exist in the immediate term for businesses to access the working capital needed to address cash-flow shortages.”

To provide emergency-income benefits to the estimated 25,000 to 35,000 New Brunswickers who have found themselves suddenly unemployed, the provincial government will assist in the following ways:

Income support for workers

Announced earlier this week, this will be a \$4.5 million investment for workers who have recently become unemployed. The benefit will help to bridge the gap between when a person lost their job or closed their business after March 15, to when the national benefit takes effect. The objective will be to provide access to the benefit before the end of March. The benefit will end on April 30.

Job protection for workers

Legislative and regulatory amendments will be introduced to provide job protection for workers who must take a leave of absence due to COVID-19. It will allow an unpaid leave of up to 15 weeks to New Brunswickers who have COVID-19 or are caring for someone with the virus.

To support the province’s economy, keep workers employed, and help businesses continue to operate, a total of \$50 million in assistance is being made available, including:

Elimination of interest on WorkSafeNB assessment premiums

WorkSafeNB is deferring the collection of assessment premiums for three months. The current interest rate is prime plus three per cent. The rate will be reduced to zero per cent to align with the three-month deferral.

Deferring interest and principal payments on existing Government of New Brunswick loans

On a case-by-case basis, the provincial government will defer loan and interest repayments for existing business loans with government departments for up to six months. Businesses can request deferrals by contacting the department that issued the loan.

Up to \$25 million in working capital for New Brunswick small business owners

Small business owners will be eligible for loans up to \$200,000. They will not be required to pay principal on their loan for up to 12 months.

Up to \$25 million in working capital for medium-sized to large employers

The province will provide working capital of more than \$200,000 to help medium-sized to large employers manage the effects of COVID-19 on their operations. Businesses can apply directly to Opportunities NB for this support.

Information about the assistance for business [is available online](#) and application details will be made available in the coming days.

"We will continue to closely monitor and assess the economic situation," said Higgs. "If additional actions are required in the future, we will respond accordingly."

Interprovincial border restrictions

Higgs welcomed the co-operation of travellers being screened upon entering New Brunswick. Since the restrictions went into effect yesterday, peace officers have been collecting contact information of travellers and details about their intended destinations.

"I am very encouraged by how people have reacted to the entry changes at border crossings," said Higgs. "We know this is an inconvenience, but these measures are essential to protecting New Brunswickers. Everyone's continued co-operation is appreciated."

Up-to-date information about COVID-19 [is available online](#).