

GOVERNMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK UPDATE
Bulletin #14e: COVID-19 GNB news release from March 30
Distributed: March 30, 2020

The following update on COVID-19 (the novel coronavirus) was issued today:

First community transmission case of COVID-19 confirmed

FREDERICTON (GNB) – Public Health has updated the number of COVID-19 cases in New Brunswick and confirmed that community transmission is now present in the province.

Two new cases have been confirmed, bringing the total number of cases to 68; two of those people have since fully recovered. The new confirmed cases are:

- an individual aged 30-40 in Zone 2 (Saint John region)
- an individual aged 60-70 in Zone 3 (Fredericton region)

Public Health is advising people who visited Shoppers Drug Mart at 175 Old Hampton Rd. in Quispamsis on the dates below that they were potentially exposed to COVID-19:

- March 18 – 3:30 p.m. to midnight
- March 19 – 11:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- March 26 – 8:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

In addition, individuals who visited Shoppers Drug Mart at 57 Lansdowne Ave. in Saint John on the date below were potentially exposed to COVID-19:

- March 20 – 10 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Anyone who was in those stores during those times should self-monitor and call 811 if they have any symptoms.

Dr. Jennifer Russell, the province's chief medical officer of health, confirmed that incidents of community transmission are now present in New Brunswick; these are cases that cannot be directly traced back to an infection which took place outside the province. There are confirmed cases of community transmission in zones 1 (Moncton region), 2

(Saint John region) and 4 (Edmundston region). There are additional cases being investigated in other regions.

“This follows the trend we have seen in other parts of Canada. We have been expecting this and preparing for it,” said Russell. “People everywhere in New Brunswick have to act as if the virus is in their community whether it is confirmed or not.”

Russell said the potential for community transmission was the reason the province took proactive measures, such as directing people to stay at home, asking people to maintain physical distancing with others, limiting travel, and cancelling events where crowds may gather. These actions will limit the spread of the virus and the disease it carries, said Russell.

With community transmission now a reality, Russell said further changes are being made to the province’s testing protocols to ensure protection for those in greatest need. Testing will now focus on:

- symptomatic health-care workers and staff of long-term care facilities and prisons
- hospitalized patients with respiratory symptoms and no alternative diagnosis
- residents of long-term care facilities and other vulnerable communities

Symptomatic travellers from outside New Brunswick will continue to be tested.

Russell emphasized the continued importance of New Brunswickers being on alert for COVID-19 symptoms – a new or exacerbation of a chronic cough or a fever – among themselves and their families. People should use the self-assessment tool at the www.gnb.ca website for guidance and contact 811 if they have symptoms.

“If you have the symptoms of COVID-19, you must act as if you have COVID-19,” said Russell. “That means isolating yourself immediately for at least 14 days. Do not put others at risk by behaving as if you do not have this disease.

“More than ever, what you do matters. What each of us does matters. It remains within our capability to slow the progress and limit the severity of the COVID-19 outbreak.”

Entering the third week of emergency

Premier Blaine Higgs thanked all New Brunswickers for their quick action and innovation to address the pandemic.

Higgs said the government made difficult decisions early to flatten the curve and reduce the spread of COVID-19 by closing schools, government offices, businesses and all non-essential services. Higgs said he anticipates these decisions will have a positive effect in the days and weeks ahead.

“Taking action before we were experiencing the full impact of the pandemic may have seemed extreme at the time, but I am confident it was the right thing to do,” said Higgs. “We took these actions earlier than some jurisdictions because we saw what happened all around the world in places that waited too long to react.”

Emphasis on physical distancing

New Brunswickers are being reminded of the importance of physical distancing and self-isolation, particularly following stories in the media over the past week about people engaging in unacceptable behaviour that puts residents, essential workers and first responders in danger.

“The more successful we are at flattening the curve now, the quicker we can all get back to our regular lives,” said Higgs. “Many people and businesses have taken this situation seriously from the beginning, and they have done their part to help keep us all safe. We have to continue to do our part by staying at home and maintaining physical distance from others. There are still people disobeying the emergency order and putting us all at risk.”

New Brunswick Workers Emergency Income Benefit

Applications are now available for the \$900 income benefit for workers or self-employed people in New Brunswick who have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 situation.

Applications may be [completed online](#) or by calling the Red Cross at [1-800-863-6582](tel:1-800-863-6582) (toll free) from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week.

Border checkpoints

Since March 25, restrictions have been in place for all people arriving in New Brunswick from outside the province. Interprovincial travellers, like international travellers, need to self-isolate for 14 days.

All unnecessary travel into New Brunswick is prohibited, and peace officers are authorized to turn away visitors when they attempt to enter. People who have arrived in New Brunswick since the introduction of control points at interprovincial borders can expect a followup from law enforcement officials.

Playgrounds

The provincial government ordered all municipal authorities to close their respective playgrounds as of Sunday, March 29.

Low-Income Seniors' Benefit

Applications for the 2020 Low-Income Seniors' Benefit will be available on April 1. The benefit is an annual \$400 cheque to assist low-income seniors in New Brunswick.

Those eligible will be able to apply online or by calling a phone number. More information about the program, and on how to apply, [is available online](#).

The application deadline is Dec. 31, 2020.

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