



March 16 2020

To Our Valued Membership;

2020 is proving to be a test for all of us, first with the snow storm and now this ever changing situation with the Coronavirus COVID-19. I've been watching closely, sifting through all angles of the information and trying to stay on the right side of panic. I do, however think it's time to self reflect and not only think about ourselves and our families, but our client community, and personal and professional neighbourhoods.

Our work is hands on, with close contact that our clients need. Some may argue we have closer contact than front line workers in the health care system, especially considering we do not use the personal protective gear that the hospitals do. What does that mean? We have a high risk of contamination and spread. It's as simple as that.

### **How does Covid-19 spread?**

- respiratory droplets generated when you cough or sneeze
- close, prolonged personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands.

**The incubation period for COVID-19 is up to 14 days.**

**Current estimates of the incubation period range from 0-14 days with median estimates of 5-6 days between infection and the onset of clinical symptoms of the disease. Based on information from other coronavirus diseases, such as MERS and SARS, the incubation period of COVID-19 could be up to 14 days. WHO recommends that the follow-up of contacts of confirmed cases is 14 days**

(source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/assumptions.html#a2>)

While right now the risk remains low in Canada, we want to keep it that way. I encourage all RMT's to consider the following:

- 1.Stay informed – Today alone there were news conferences from the province (premier and health officials), the federal government (Prime Minister and Health officials) which outlined the rapidly changing landscape, with an emphasis on 'social distancing' and the phrase 'flattening the curve'. **Use only reputable sources (stay away from FaceBook/Social Media unless following official accounts)**, some good sources to keep in mind are:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/>

[https://twitter.com/CPHO\\_Canada](https://twitter.com/CPHO_Canada)

2. Follow the CMTNL Guidelines that were sent out over the weekend. Main points are posting notices in the clinic space, hygiene practices, both physical and environmental (highly touched surfaces and objects). Screening clients before their appointments via email or phone (*suggestion to reach out to clients who have appointments books to inform them of any extra precautions and reschedule anyone who has travelled abroad/within Canada within 14 days, irregardless of symptoms.*) This also means knowing that clients may cancel and being compassionate with cancellation fees. Some clients will come in regardless on how they feel to avoid paying cancellation fees. **Have you been in contact with someone who has travelled abroad? Stay informed on the countries that are 'hot spots' and take the proper precautions. RMT's are not immune to COVID-19.**

3. Self reflect on how to deal with this in your personal/professional context. A harder decision may need to be considered to protect yourself and those around you. The Chief Public Health Officer of Canada (Dr. Theresa Tam) spoke today that the next two weeks are crucial to 'flatten the curve' so if that means closing your clinic for this short period of time, that may be the answer. If you control the shut down – it shows your clients that you are forward thinking, compassionate, and health conscious which RMT's promote ourselves to be.

**Concerned about livelihood?** We all are. The country is. This is not meant to inspire fear or panic - It's a calculated, compassionate move to help the RMT community as a whole stay on the healthy side of this virus. **The NLMTA cannot mandate any RMT to react in any way to this ever evolving situation. We are asking for self-reflection, precaution and to not brush this off or 'wait and see'. Make a plan, ask the questions and be informed. Let's do our part to help support our health care system, by staying out of the health care system.**

Stay Healthy and know we're all in this together.



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President - NLMTA