Approach to Suspect COVID-19 Cases (Novel Coronavirus) Presenting in a Community Setting

**Does the patient have any of the following symptoms?**
- Fever (temp > 37.5 degrees Celsius)
- Cough (new onset or exacerbation of chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing/shortness of breath

**AND**

**Does the patient have relevant exposure history?**
- Travel outside of Canada to a country known to have local transmission (based on Table 2 in the daily World Health Organization Situation Report) of COVID-19 in the 14 days before onset of illness, **OR**
- Close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 within 14 days before onset of illness, **OR**
- Severe respiratory infection of unknown etiology, likely requiring ICU care.


Put a procedure mask on the patient immediately and place the patient in a private room with the door closed. Initiate contact and droplet precautions using procedure mask, eye protection gloves and gown when caring for the patient and collecting specimens.

If testing for COVID-19, the following specimen must be collected using contact and droplet precautions:

**Nasopharyngeal (NP) (red top) swab for Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 PCR testing**

Send samples through your regular process to the BCCDC Provincial Laboratory and ensure that the requisition indicates testing for “Novel Coronavirus PCR”

Any physician may now order COVID-19 testing in Interior Health without consulting the local Medical Health Officer (MHO).

If you decide to test for COVID-19, please advise the patient to self-isolate until they receive a negative test result. Patients may access their test results by calling the BC Centre for Disease Control COVID results hotline at 1-833-707-2792 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm).

If your office is unable to obtain specimens **OR** the person requires urgent care for clinical symptoms prior to sending them to the emergency department please CALL AHEAD and speak with receiving nurse/doctor, so appropriate infection control practices can be ensured.

If specimen collection is successful **AND** client can be safely cared for at home:
- Discharge the patient with surgical mask and advise the patient to isolate at home until they receive a test result. **Please give the patient the COVID-19 Patient Handout**;
- If results are positive, IHA Public Health will be notified immediately and will follow up directly with the patient and any contacts.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Communicable Disease Unit (CDU) or On-call Medical Health Officer (MHO)
- Communicable Disease Unit (CDU) 1-866-778-7736 (M-F 8:30 to 16:30) **OR**
- On-call Medical Health Officer (MHO) 1-866-457-5648 (after hours and weekends)

The CDU or On call MHO can assist with the risk assessment for COVID-19 for your patient if needed.