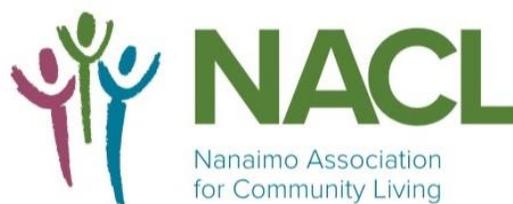


memo



To: Agency-Wide/NACL Board of Directors
From: Randy Humchitt, Deputy Executive Director
Date: January 6, 2022
Re: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATE

Current Situation

Tuesday's COVID-19 update from Dr. Bonnie Henry and Health Minister Adrian Dix brought disconcerting information about the infiltration of the Omicron variant into BC. Not only is it more transmissible than previous variants, but we expect that, with cases on the rise, we are exposed at NACL more than ever. Here are the latest numbers as of yesterday (January 5, 2022):

- There are 3,798 new cases of COVID-19 in BC, 566 of which are on Vancouver Island.
- There are currently 29,967 active cases of COVID-19 province-wide, 3,631 of which are on the Island.
- Hospitalizations from COVID-19 in BC are rising rapidly; increasing over 25% in less than a week.

Since our last update, four staff have tested positive for COVID-19, all working at different NACL sites. No persons served have contracted COVID during this period. I am pleased to report that none of these situations resulted in an outbreak. I attribute this in large part to our high vaccination rates and all your diligence in following the guidelines of the Exposure and Control Plan (ECP). When Dr. Henry said that businesses need to “reactivate those safety plans,” I felt secure in the fact that we have never let up on ours.

Still, we know that we may be more heavily impacted in this fifth wave; and so, we need to anticipate critical staffing shortages should there be a high number of staff falling ill.

Here are some examples of what we are doing:

- Continuing to orientate members of the administrative team to programs for backup coverage;
- Expanding program assignments for casuals (thank you to those who have added programs already); and
- Continuing to refine hiring practices to onboard new staff as quickly as possible.

In addition, we are looking at any ideas to ensure coverage in all NACL programs through the pandemic, and will provide updates ongoingly. Your input is welcome.

The due date for staff to provide proof of the COVID-19 vaccination dose two is **January 13, 2022**, to be able to work from January 14th onwards. The majority of staff who had provided dose one proof by the first due date have since provided proof of dose two, and we expect the majority of remaining staff to provide theirs in time.

Looking Ahead

N95 Masks

Regarding the use of N95 masks, these are still recommended for aerosol and nebulizer care; the mask guidelines in the current ECP meet health requirements (3-layer face/procedure masks).

At-Home PCR Tests

Considering “at-home PCR tests,” there are no official PHO orders for the use of these in our sector. We are, however, looking into the availability of these, as well as their potential use in our programs, as a pre-emptive/protective measure against COVID-19. If/when that time comes, we will develop a consistent practice via a written procedure. For now, we will follow the guidelines of Health in circumstances where at-home PCR tests are provided to persons served.

COVID-19 Booster Doses

At present, there is no mandate for getting the COVID-19 booster shot, though it is a recommendation that everyone eligible get this shot as soon as they can register for it. In the continued spirit of doing everything possible to mitigate the risk this pandemic presents, we encourage everyone to get the booster shot and provide proof of such to NACL.

COVID-19 Exposure and Control Plan

Look forward to another refresh of this plan coming to you by the end of the week. Thank you for consistently reviewing it and adhering to it.

Providing Proof of Vaccination

For those still acquiring their second dose, please continue to submit proof of vaccination either directly to Randy Humchitt via e-mail at randy.humchitt@nanaimoacl.com or by texting to (250) 802-3832, to Cindy Bryant via cindy.bryant@nanaimoacl.com or in person at Head Office, or through your Program Supervisor. QR codes are welcomed, along with hard copies or screenshots of vaccination cards.

As mentioned above, the next “milestone” date is submitting proof of **second dose** of a COVID-19 vaccine by **January 13, 2022**.

In Conclusion...

Wave after wave, guideline after guideline, update after update...it’s been “go time” for almost two years. Thank you...for everything.

E-mail: randy.humchitt@nanaimoacl.org
Cell: (250) 802-3832