

# memo



**To:** Agency-Wide/NACL Board of Directors

**From:** Graham Morry, Executive Director

**Date:** April 8, 2020

**Re:** CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19 UPDATE

## Current Situation

As always, we are monitoring the number of COVID-19 cases on Vancouver Island daily. There are currently 81 known cases of the virus on the Island, as of the latest report.

While there are some subtle signs of things levelling out to a certain extent, these are still early days – and we will need to remain diligent in following the strict protocols set forth by the authorities that will help keep us all safe and healthy for the weeks and months to come.

I cannot thank you all enough for your unwavering commitment and dedication to NACL and the people we serve. We simply couldn't get through this without you.

## Mask Use

In our efforts to keep everyone as safe as possible, we have discussed the best use of our current supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); more specifically, masks.

The question is whether or not to hold the majority of masks as a strategic reserve in case of a presumptive or actual diagnosis when the need is critical, or let staff have access to masks now, with the hope that this will be an effective preventative measure? If we had ready access to supplies it would be an easier decision; however, given the scarcity of masks and now the recommendation from the Federal Health Officer that any facial protection may be helpful, this decision is more difficult.

At this time, we will maintain our current practice in regard to not wearing masks if there has been no sign or symptoms of infection. However, the following will take place:

- Masks will be readily distributed at the first sign of symptoms; and
- Medical supplies will continue to be actively sourced.

An internal initiative creating our own non-medical, reusable masks is commencing immediately. This will enable any staff to make their own decision as to whether they wear a mask or not, while keeping the procedural face masks as backup. We feel this is the best choice in a very difficult situation and, as always, we would like to hear your thoughts and feedback.

## Good News Stories

It's been a challenging time for all of us, but it's been great to see and know of things to help lift our spirits within our NACL circle. For example:

- Several of our programs are participating in the #HeartsInTheWindow campaign, which is an initiative to spread cheer and show solidarity while many people are staying home to help flatten the curve of COVID-19.
- One person served in NACL Employment Services had initially been laid off as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Not long after, through a bit of creativity, the employer enabled this person to start working again from home.
- We have a few staff eager to help out with the homemade masks project noted above – this is very much appreciated.

### These Communiques

We know we've been providing a lot of information to you over the past few weeks, since the pandemic started. Please note that all of NACL's official communiques re COVID-19 can be found on the Happenings page of our website, accessible for you to reference at any time:

<http://www.nanaimoacl.com/event>

### In Conclusion...

I mentioned it earlier, but I cannot stress enough how grateful we are for each and every one of you. I wish you all a very happy Easter, and I want you to know that we continue to stand with you as this crisis unfolds.

As always, please contact me anytime if you have any questions or concerns.

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