

Media Release



Services de santé du
TIMISKAMING
Health Unit

Timiskaming Health Unit announces a situation of concern in the north part of the district

March 19, 2020 - For immediate release

The Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) is announcing a situation of concern in the north part of the district. The health unit is announcing four new cases, a hospital outbreak, one COVID-19 swab that has tested positive for a variant of concern, and a low-risk exposure at Tweedsmuir Complex in Kirkland Lake.

Four new cases (#110-113) are being announced. All cases are in the north part of the district and are under investigation. Two individuals are self-isolating and two are hospitalized. Contact tracing is underway and those who have been identified as close contacts have been, or are in the process of being notified.

The low-risk exposure at Tweedsmuir Complex is associated with a variant of concern. The concern with these variants is that they are highly contagious, which means they spread more easily. In light of the variant of concern, mobile testing will be available to all residents of Tweedsmuir Complex on Saturday, March 20.

The additional positive COVID-19 tests are still pending screening results for variants of concern (VOC). There are currently three different variants of concern in Canada. In Ontario, over 90% of VOC positive cases have been identified as the variant from the United Kingdom.

“With variants of concern, everyone must use extreme caution because spread can happen very quickly,” said Dr. Glenn Corneil, acting Medical Officer of Health and CEO for the Timiskaming Health Unit. “If you have even one symptom, please reach out to your local Assessment Centre for testing.”

A COVID-19 outbreak has been declared at the Kirkland Lake location of Blanche River Health. Provincial guidance defines a hospital outbreak as two or more laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases (patients and/or staff) within a specified area (unit/floor/service) within a 14-day period where both cases could have reasonably acquired their infection in the hospital.

“Our Kirkland Lake site continues to be impacted by the community spread of COVID-19. A broad testing initiative is already underway that will encompass all our staff at our Kirkland Lake site, and we have implemented additional restrictions at this time in accordance with our Pandemic Plan. I want to thank our staff, physicians and management team for their ongoing dedication to the care and safety of our patients as we navigate the current situation,” said Blanche River Health President and CEO Sean Conroy.

District residents are reminded to follow public health measures:

- Continue practicing physical distancing
- Wear a mask or face covering in public indoor spaces
- Wash hands with soap and warm water or use alcohol-based sanitizers and do not touch your face
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow
- Avoid gatherings with people outside of your household
- Avoid non-essential travel outside of our district, especially to high transmission areas
- Stay home if you feel sick and contact your local Assessment Centre (AC) to schedule an appointment for testing
- Respect public health and any additional safety measures businesses have put in place
- Reach out to vulnerable people in your community who may need support

For more information on COVID-19, visit the [Timiskaming Health Unit website](#) and the [Ontario Coronavirus website](#).

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