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## **COVID-19: Important Update from the Provincial Health Officer** **April 24, 2020**

Dear physicians, midwives, and nurses:

As we begin to see a decrease in the number of new COVID-19 cases, lowering our threshold for testing and increasing our capacity for case finding and contact tracing is essential as we enter this next phase of the pandemic in BC.

To that end I am asking physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, registered psychiatric nurses, licensed practical nurses and midwives to begin testing all individuals/clients with new respiratory or systemic symptoms compatible with COVID-19, however mild. Please see the lab testing guidance on the BCCDC website [here](#).

Symptoms may include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, odynophagia, rhinorrhea, nasal congestion, loss of sense of smell, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, or loss of appetite.

Testing is especially important for groups that are more vulnerable to complications due to COVID-19, people who care for these individuals/clients, and for people for whom a diagnosis will change the public health management or care they receive.

This testing can take place at any number of locations including, but not limited to, physician offices, nurse practitioner offices, emergency rooms, and [health authority dedicated assessment centres](#).

When performing a COVID-19 test it is important that health-care providers use appropriate [infection prevention and control practices and personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) including hand hygiene, eye protection, a surgical mask, gloves, and a gown.

Thank you for your continued efforts to promptly test patients for COVID-19 and your engagement in the provincial health-care system response.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Henry  
MD, MPH, FRCPC  
Provincial Health Officer