

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

As many of you are aware, we had some positive news from our Public Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry yesterday, indicating that we may be starting to flatten the COVID-19 curve. While this is encouraging, it is still much too early to change what we have been doing and it will be a few more weeks before we will really know whether our current measures are being effective.

In this respect, our recommendations remain the same: wash your hands thoroughly and frequently; don't touch your face unless you have just washed your hands (and wash your hands after touching your face); practice social distancing; and stay home unless you have an essential reason to be out in public. We do encourage everyone to get outside for fresh air and sunshine; just make sure to maintain social distancing and avoid groups larger than five people.

A recent report by the Public Health Agency of Canada indicates that almost fifty percent of known COVID-19 cases in Canada are the result of community transmission or spread. With our current testing policies, we have no way of knowing if or how much community spread is happening on the Sunshine Coast, but we should continue to assume that it has happened, and will continue to happen unless we continue to practice preventive measures.

Although widespread testing with our current methods is not feasible, we are continuing to advocate for the prioritization of widespread rapid point of care testing at the local, regional health authority, provincial and federal levels. In combination with aggressive social distancing measures such as we are practicing now, widespread testing and the testing of known contacts still has the potential to stop COVID-19 from devastating our community and other communities across Canada.

If you are looking for ways to get involved, please keep an eye on the SCRD, Gibsons and Sechelt websites for more information. We need all the help that we can get!

For those of you who develop cold or flu-like symptoms that are severe enough to feel you need to see a doctor, but not severe enough to call 911, please call or text our new Respiratory Assessment Clinic at 604-740-1252 or email <mailto:coastrespclinic@gmail.com>.

The Respiratory Assessment Clinic is open seven days a week from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Please note that this clinic is only for people living on the Sunshine Coast and that it is by appointment only.

Please check the Coast Reporter and the Local Weekly websites regularly for updates on COVID-19 in our community, and tune in daily on Eastlink Community TV at 5:30, 7:30 and 10:00 PM. Also stay tuned to Coast FM for breaking news on COVID-19.

Keep well, wash your hands, keep your distance, and stay at home unless you have a medical emergency or another essential task!

The Sunshine Coast COVID Physician Task Force

-Dr Jennifer Baxter
-Dr Herman Mentz
-Dr Daren Spithoff

-Dr Ted Krickan
-Dr Brian Nelson