

April 29, 2020

Dear Employer,

British Columbia has declared a public health emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) advises any individual who is experiencing respiratory symptoms to stay in self-isolation for 10 days from the onset of symptoms (as of March 23, 2020). The Government of Canada requires a mandatory 14-day quarantine for anyone returning to Canada from international travel (as of March 25, 2020).

Please excuse your employees from work or accommodate alternative work arrangements (if an employee is well enough and able to work from home) under the following circumstances:

1. Any employee who has travelled outside of Canada, including the United States of America, is ordered to self-isolate at home for 14 days upon their return.
2. Any employee who lives with, provides care for, or has had contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is suspected to have COVID-19 is ordered to self-isolate for 14 days from the last time they were in close contact without appropriate personal protective equipment.
3. Any employee who has respiratory symptoms (fever, cough, chills, shortness of breath, sore throat, painful swallowing, runny nose, nasal congestion, loss of sense of smell, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, or loss of appetite) is ordered to self-isolate for 10 days.

Updated BCCDC guidelines (April 23, 2020) recommend testing for COVID-19 for patients with cold, influenza or COVID-19-like symptoms, however mild. Individuals with no symptoms, even if they are a contact of a confirmed case or a returning traveler and self-isolating at home, do not require a test.

Patients with mild symptoms that can be managed at home are ordered to self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days, or 14 days for travelers returning to Canada, after the onset of symptoms. Individuals can return to routine activities after 10 days if their temperature is normal and they feel better. Coughing may persist for several weeks but does not mean the individual is infectious.

BC Health Minister Adrian Dix stated “**there is no need – none - for sick notes at this time**” (Mar. 16, 2020). Sick notes place an unnecessary burden on the health care system at a time when physicians are addressing the biggest public health challenge of our time. For further information, see the Doctors of BC statement [urging employers to stop asking for sick notes](#).

Please treat this letter as a sick note based on BC provincial health guidance. Individualized sick notes will not be provided to confirm if your employee has been tested for COVID-19 or to confirm recovery from illness. It is our civic responsibility to each other and to our communities to follow the guidance of the Provincial Health Officer. Learn more at the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#).

Thank you,



Dr. Karen E Forgie
President – BC Family Doctors

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