

All Nations Health Partners – Ontario Health Team – Kenora Region



For Immediate Release
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All Nations Health Partners COVID-19 Assessment Centre Expands Service

On Monday March 30th the Lake of the Woods District Hospital (LWDH) opened the central site drive-through COVID-19 Assessment Centre in partnership with Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU), the Sunset Country Family Health Team (SCFHT), Kenora District Services Board (KDSB), Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'yewigamig (WNHAC), and Kenora Chiefs Advisory (KCA). To date, 198 swabs have been collected locally with 118 pending and 80 negative results returned.

On Thursday, April 9th, 2020, the COVID-19 Assessment Centre will progressively expand mobile COVID-19 testing services to Kenora and regional First Nations communities. “The expansion of testing services is essential for residents of this area and will help us to better understand the extent of the pandemic in our region”, said Dr. Ian Gemmill, Acting Medical officer of Health at NWHU. This expansion will occur through the coordinated effort of WNHAC/KCA and the KDSB, and will enable patients to be assessed in the community by a mobile team of travelling health care professionals. Joe Barnes, Co-chair of the All Nations Health Partners, said “I am proud to see our partners work collaboratively to ensure that everyone in the Kenora Area has access to appropriate assessment and testing. The mobile team expansion will ensure that our First Nations communities have equitable access to assessments and testing. Kenora Chiefs Advisory will be providing a mobile team to support First Nations communities in coordination with our partners at WNHAC.”

Community members with potential COVID-19 symptoms (fever, or any new or worsening acute respiratory illness including cough, shortness of breath at rest, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, runny nose, and joint aches) **who feel they should be assessed for COVID-19 can either contact their primary care provider or phone the Northwestern Health Unit Hotline 1-866-468-2240** to determine if they meet the eligibility criteria. If eligible, the Assessment Centre will be notified and the individual will then be contacted to schedule an appointment, either at the drive-through central site at the LWDH, or in the individual’s residence or community.

The Assessment Centre’s key role is to assess people and take a specimen for subsequent testing for COVID-19 by an approved health laboratory. A sample is taken from the back of the nasal cavity with a swab. Offering this type of service through mobile testing will significantly increase the access to COVID-19 testing, and will reduce the need for patients to seek this service through the LWDH Emergency Department and thereby avoid unnecessary possible exposure.

People who do not require medical intervention and can safely manage independently will be provided with contact and health management information. People who require medical intervention will be directed to the most appropriate service.

The Kenora COVID-19 Assessment Centre is approved and funded by the Ministry of Health. The Assessment Centre, developed and operated by the Lake of the Woods District Hospital, the Northwestern Health Unit, the Sunset Country Family Health Team, Kenora District Services Board, Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'yewigamig and Kenora Chiefs Advisory, reflects the strength

and unity of the All Nations Health Partners coalition. Chief Lorraine Cobiness stated “KCA and area leadership are pleased with the collaborative efforts of all partners. In times like these we need to work together and ensure that pandemic response plans are in place to support all of our population and groups. Through our channels, the indigenous community partners, have been able to secure a substantial amount of test Kits. These test kits are going to significantly change our areas capacity to monitor Covid-19. Kenora and surrounding communities have an increased risk due to poorer health status and we need to ensure we are doing everything to be responsive to our entire population. And a reminder to everyone, do your part by social distancing and wash your hands!”

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