

**Public Health Officer statement:
Use of COVID-19 diagnostic equipment in Nunavut**

As many are aware, Agnico Eagle Mine has brought COVID-19 diagnostic equipment to Rankin Inlet. This equipment will be used to test mine staff for COVID-19.

At this time there is no evidence that screening in this fashion is a substitute for 14 days of isolation. This is why Nunavut, and every other Canadian jurisdiction, is using 14 days of isolation after exposure or travel. As a result, I have informed management of Agnico Eagle Mines that these tests do not change the current requirement for mine staff to stay out of the town of Rankin Inlet.

The Department of Health is committed to improving and protecting the health of all Nunavummiut. For COVID-19 this means having testing equipment that meets Canadian standards and can be deployed to every community in Nunavut. The equipment used by AEM does not meet these criteria. If the Department of Health were to commit to using devices like this, we would not improve access to COVID testing for all Nunavummiut.

The Department of Health continues to work on acquiring diagnostic capability that can be rapidly deployed and will provide quick access to results for all Nunavummiut.

The combination of machines we continue to pursue will not only allow testing in all communities but will also improve our ability to rapidly diagnose a number of other infectious diseases that threaten Nunavummiut on a regular basis.

Testing for COVID-19 at the wrong time can produce incorrect results and create a false sense of reassurance.



As part of the Government of Nunavut's (GN) effort to protect Nunavummiut against the risk of COVID-19, GN Departments are implementing the following:

Department of Health Services

The Public Health Emergency has been extended until April 16.

Isolation Sites

Those in isolation have access to cable, internet, three meals a day, fresh linens and cleaning supplies. Garbage is picked up daily. These costs are covered by the Government of Nunavut. The GN will pay for diapers, baby formula and feminine products. Guests are responsible to order these products through the provided delivery services, but they will not be charged for the items.

The welcome package has been updated to include information on grocery orders and take out. Both can be delivered to the hotel. These deliveries and related costs are not covered by the GN.

Total (All Isolation Locations)	
Traveler Type	Guests in Isolation as of April 4
Medical Travel	235
Public	113
Students	60
Total	408

Requests for travel

As of April 5, there are 408 requests, 313 of which are critical worker requests.

Request Status	#	%
Approved	305	74.8%
Denied	44	10.7%
Pending	59	14.5%
Total	408	100%

For the latest COVID-19 information and GN Departments updates in all languages:
<https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>; <https://www.gov.nu.ca>



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Ongoing services:

Access to health care services will remain available in all communities seven days a week. All non-urgent requests will be triaged daily. Immediate access to urgent and emergent health care services are and will continue to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All clients are asked to call before presenting at a health facility.

- In Iqaluit, public health, the emergency room and inpatient unit will remain open.
- Well baby clinics, prenatal visits and immunizations are continuing across Nunavut.
- Physicians will continue community visits. If this is not possible, the visits will be conducted by telehealth or by phone.

Adjusted services:

Appointments at health facilities are being triaged, which means the appointment may be over the phone or in person.

Medical travel services have been reduced to urgent medical travel only. Clients will be advised of these changes and involved in discussions.

In Iqaluit, outpatient clinics and rehab are triaging all appointments and conducting appointments. Lab and Diagnostic Imaging services at QGH are on reduced services. All upcoming appointments are being triaged.

Mental Health and Addictions has moved to telephone check-in and support for some clients. Scheduled appointments for medication pick-up and administration remain the same. If you are in crisis, present to the health centre. Home visits to administer medications will be treated on a case-by-case basis.

Closed /Cancelled/Suspended services:

Only emergency dental services will be provided until further notice.

Specialty clinics have been cancelled. Work is underway to determine which clients can be seen by phone/virtual care.

All non-essential travel for mental health clients and families is cancelled. All non-essential travel for families visiting clients in care is cancelled.

No visitors will be allowed at long-term care facilities in Nunavut – Continuing Care Centres (CCCs) and Elders' Homes.

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Department of Family Services

Income Assistance Services across Nunavut

- As of March 23, 2020, the department is providing services to clients by phone.
- April Income Support payments will be made using March income support assessments.
- April cheques have been printed and appointments have been set for clients to pick them up. Appointments are scheduled so that there is only one person in the office at a time.

Nunavummiut's health is our shared responsibility! Remember: wash your hands and surfaces, practice social distancing, listen to the advice of health officials, and stay home if you're sick.

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