

April 28, 2020

**PROVINCE INCREASES COVID-19 TESTING
CRITERIA AND CAPACITY**

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**A Crucial Step in the Process
To Restart the Economy: Pallister**

The province is expanding COVID-19 testing criteria while also ramping up its testing capacity, a crucial step before beginning to loosen public health measures and safely restarting Manitoba's economy, Premier Brian Pallister announced today.

"Through good planning, Manitoba has been able to get ahead of COVID-19 and flatten the curve," said Pallister. "We want to stay ahead of this virus and not chase it. With increased levels of tracking, testing and isolation, we will have a better understanding of how we are doing as a province in flattening the COVID curve. This is crucial as we carefully and slowly work toward expanding services safely in the coming weeks and months."

Effective immediately, the province is expanding testing criteria to any Manitoban with symptoms of COVID-19, even mild symptoms including a cough, runny nose, sore throat and/or fever, to be tested to better determine the spread of the virus in Manitoba, the premier noted.

In order to facilitate enhanced testing provincewide, Dynacare will begin significantly increasing COVID-19 testing alongside Manitoba's primary public health lab, Cadham Provincial Lab (CPL).

Dynacare has been performing COVID-19 tests since early April out of its Ontario-based laboratory to supplement the capacity of CPL and, as of April 27, has completed 557 tests. The Manitoba government and Dynacare have entered into a partnership that

will see up to 2,000 tests a day before the end of summer.

With CPL's capacity at over 1,000 tests daily, the province expects to have testing capacity of well over 3,000 tests a day, tripling the provinces current testing capacity, the premier noted. In addition, Dynacare will work toward establishing a second COVID testing lab in Winnipeg, assisting the province with faster processing times.

Shared Health's diagnostic services is also supporting the province's enhanced testing capacity, performing some COVID-19 testing for patients at HSC Winnipeg prior to surgery and producing quantities of the viral medium needed to transport testing swabs to laboratories.

In addition to testing, Dynacare call centre staff have been communicating negative test results to Manitobans and delivering COVID-19 test specimens from screening and assessment centres to CPL. They have also established specimen collection centres for patients with compromised immune systems.

Manitobans are reminded that if they are showing symptoms of COVID-19 and meet testing criteria, they can call Health Links–Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or (toll-free) at 1-888-315-9257 for more information.

For up-to-date information on testing criteria and community screening sites, visit www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/locations.html. For more information and to access the online screening tool for COVID-19, visit www.manitoba.ca/covid19.

A comprehensive list of Manitoba government COVID-19 measures can be found at: <https://manitoba.ca/bg/2020/04/covid19.html>.

For more information:

- Public information, contact Manitoba Government Inquiry: 1-866-626-4862 or 204-945-3744.
- Media requests for general information, contact Communications Services Manitoba: 204-945-3765.
- Media requests for ministerial comment, contact Communications and Stakeholder Relations: 204-945-4916.