

March 25, 2020

Dear Employer,

British Columbia has declared a public health emergency due to the rising number of cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). On March 23, 2020, the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) advised any individual who is experiencing respiratory symptoms to stay in self-isolation for 10 days from the onset of symptoms. In addition, on March 25, 2020, the Government of Canada issued a mandatory 14-day quarantine for anyone returning to Canada from international travel.

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 is ordered to self-isolate for 14 days 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.
3. Any employee who has respiratory symptoms (fever, cough, or shortness of breath) is ordered to self-isolate for 10 days.

In accordance with updated BCCDC guidelines, asymptomatic patients and those with mild symptoms are not being tested. Patients with mild symptoms have been ordered to self-isolate for 10 days. 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 at a press conference on March 16, 2020 **“there is no need – none - for sick notes at this time.”** Sick notes place an unnecessary burden on the health care system at a time when physicians are addressing one of the biggest public health challenges of our time. We agree with Doctors of BC president, Dr. Kathleen Ross, who stated: “When patients come into the office to get sick notes, they are putting physicians, their staff and other patients at risk.” For further information, see the statement issued by the Doctors of BC [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.

Please check the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) for more information and guidance.

Thank you,



Dr. Karen E Forgie
President
BC Family Doctors

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