

April 14, 2020

COVID-19 COMMUNITY UPDATE AND ALERT

The Health Centres involvement on the Community Control Group

The Kettle and Stony Point Health Services (KSPHS) are utmost concerned with the public health and safety of community members during the pandemic phase of the COVID-19 Virus. As such, it is within our scope to share updated and accurate information with community members on the advancement of the virus. Notices were delivered door to door, through social media, and included within the Chiefs briefings. Acting within the parameters of our Community Emergency Response Plan, in response to the World Health Organization's announcement of a pandemic, KSPHS provides an important voice in relation to matters of the health and safety of Kettle and Stony Point community members. Information and data are collected on an ongoing basis from reliable sources including the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, the Public Health Agency of Ontario, Indigenous Services Canada, the Middlesex-London Public Health Unit, and the Lambton Public Health Unit. KSPHS representatives are included in daily and weekly information calls on local and national updates on the virus.

What we know about the transmission of COVID-19

Although there is limited research on the COVID-19 virus, health professionals are now advising the main form of transmission is through body fluid droplets usually spread by people in close contact with others (less than 6 feet apart). Tiny micro droplets spray out of people's mouths as they breathe and talk. These droplets can disperse even farther when a carrier of the virus yells, sneezes, or coughs. The virus can stay on surfaces for three days. This means that the virus can also be transferred to people who touch an infected surface then touch their own face. The virus enters into the body through three points of entry on the face: mouth, nose, and eyes. Individuals have become infected with COVID-19 by contact with other individuals who are symptomatic (they have cold or flu like symptoms) and also by contact with people who are asymptomatic (they appear healthy but the virus is in their system). There have been cases around the world where individuals began showing symptoms within one day after being infected and cases where the symptoms took longer to occur. The virus runs its course over a 14-day period and that is why Health officials recommend a two-week isolation period after any potential exposure.

Our involvement with community safety check-points

KSPHS originally supported the Community Control Groups staged establishment of community checkpoints at the main entrances to our First Nation but not without strong cautions to health and safety issues regarding the spread of the virus. The checkpoints were originally intended to provide awareness to community members about signs and symptoms of the virus, to deter tourists, and to ask non-residents to return home due to the serious nature of the virus and the vulnerability of our population. Individuals maintaining the checkpoints were asked to attend a training session at the Health Centre to learn about the transmission of the virus and important questions that should be asked at each checkpoint. Because there is a worldwide shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including a shortage here in Kettle and Stony Point, all individuals were advised not to approach vehicles or other individuals

short of the recommended six-foot distance. Volunteers were advised not to hand out information, registration sheets, or pamphlets to occupants of the vehicles as this can be another means of transfer of the COVID-19 virus (i.e. droplets can land on these items from any source and then be transferred into the vehicles and homes within the community). Despite a PPE shortage, KSPHS did share boxes of surgical masks with the checkpoints as a precaution while volunteers became accustomed to social distancing techniques.

Our decision to support the dismantling of the safety check-points

Representatives of the Health Services and other departments who either visited or passed through the Safety Check-points reported back some serious health and safety concerns regarding the safe operation of those check-points. There were a number of alarming issues that had the potential to initiate the spread of the COVID-19 virus into our community member's homes and infect families. While we see the potential use for the check-points in limiting people who are not residents into the community if done in a safe manner, our utmost concern is always for the community at large. While we seen some individuals operating the check-points safely, some of the alarming issues that were witnessed include:

- Some individuals operating the check-points without proper training by Health Services
- Some individuals leaning directly into vehicles
- Some individuals not keeping at least a six-foot distance from vehicles while conversing with drivers
- Although not recommend by KSPHS, some individuals were passing clipboards and pens to occupants of vehicles without protective equipment and not sanitizing those clipboards and pens between each use
- Although not recommended by KSPHS, some individuals were obtaining identification from drivers without proper protective equipment
- Some individuals were standing in front of vehicles to prevent them from driving forward
- Despite training, many vehicles were not being screened/educated properly by some
- Gathering of large groups (more than 5 people) at check-points without social distance protocols

Lambton Public Health had advised all communities that, due to the lack of testing in our area, we are to proceed as though anyone can be a potential carrier of the virus. There is no way of knowing who is a carrier at this point so we must assume everyone is infected. If everyone takes extreme precautions including social distancing, we can slow the spread of the virus. The Director-General of the World Health Organization announced that this virus spreads fast, its ten-times more deadly than the 2009 Flu Pandemic, and the virus can spread more easily in crowded environments.

Alert to Community about possible means of spread of COVID-19 Virus

Kettle and Stony Point Health Services have learned that a large community gathering took place at the corner of Indian Lane and West Ipperwash Beach Road (formerly 14th Concession) on Saturday, April 11, 2020. Those who gathered during this time need to be aware that not everyone was practicing safe social distancing protocol. Health experts say the quickest route for community spread of the virus is through community gatherings and people not practicing safe social distancing.

If you were at the gathering on April 11, we recommend you begin to self-isolate immediately for a 14-day period and to self-monitor for any symptoms of the COVID-19 virus throughout that period. Please remember that the virus incubation time varies for each individual. You could be a potential carrier of the virus and have no symptoms. For your convenience, we are attaching information to this notice on:

- 1. How to Self-Isolate, and,**
- 2. How to Self-Monitor**

If you do begin to develop symptoms, including a cough, fever, and difficulty breathing, please consult your doctor immediately or telephone telehealth at 1-866-797-0000. They will contact Public Health and you will be referred to a testing site. For individuals who may test positive for the COVID-19 virus, Lambton Public Health will contact you to initiate a trace investigation. This means you would need to recall all the people with whom you came into contact within three to five days prior to becoming symptomatic with the virus.

We hope that all community members do take this alert very serious and that you take steps to keep your family members safe.

Miigwech,

Doug George
A/Health Director
Kettle and Stony Point Health Services