

Good afternoon,

Today, the Saskatchewan Health Authority released a [public service announcement](#) that provides more information to the public regarding the expanded testing criteria recently announced by the Ministry of Health. This message is to clarify how we anticipate expanded testing will roll-out, and assure you that this is an endeavor that will involve all of us working together to determine how to achieve this plan in a safe and reliable manner. Further information will be provided as we roll out the plan, so it's important to note that regular clinical practices are not to be changed at this time.

Beginning May 25, 2020, Saskatchewan residents can call HealthLine 811 to determine if they are eligible for testing based not only on existing guidelines, but also on the new criteria which includes having testing available for those who work outside the home (whether already working or returning to work). Testing will also be available for health care workers caring for immunocompromised patients and for those working in high volume work settings such as industries or factories on a voluntary basis. We will continue our work to increase testing for people who face homelessness or others living in vulnerable situations. Patients entering an acute care facility for a stay greater than 24 hours, including expectant mothers will also be tested at the time of admission as part of asymptomatic surveillance.

We understand that the expanded testing criteria present new challenges and questions as we work to operationalize these requirements. Standard work, algorithms and educational supports need to be developed or adjusted. There will be some expansion to testing that will be relatively easier to accomplish by May 25, 2020, such as the testing algorithms and scripts used by our HealthLine 811 team in their evaluation of whether callers will be eligible to receive testing and a referral. Other expansions to testing require further evaluation and planning such as the testing of patients either prior to or on admission to an acute care hospital for care including the birth of a baby. It is these sorts of considerations that necessitate a phased in approach leading to full implementation by early June 2020. Again, please note that further information will be provided as planning moves forward, so regular clinical practices are not to be changed at this time.

Many of you may already be involved in planning for the new expanded testing. Others of you may be pulled into these conversations, as required. We will continue with this work to determine how to best implement the new testing criteria, understanding the need to do this well. In the interim, we continue to urge the public to monitor for symptoms and utilize the self-assessment tool on [saskatchewan.ca/COVID19](https://saskatchewan.ca/COVID19).

Thank you for your ongoing patience and support as we tackle these challenges together as a team.

Dr. Susan Shaw

Chief Medical Officer