

January 30, 2020

Statement from Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health, Toronto Public Health:

Today, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) a public health emergency of international concern. This type of emergency describes an extraordinary event which is determined to constitute a public health risk through the international spread of disease.

At this time the situation in Toronto has not changed and the risk to our community remains low. I will let you know directly if this changes. Upon the first reports of 2019-nCoV in China, Toronto Public Health experts and our provincial and federal health partners implemented response protocols and outbreak preparedness measures. These efforts are ongoing and we continually look for opportunities to refine and strengthen our response. The declaration of this public health emergency of international concern has little impact on our daily operations.

My team continues to work around the clock with our local partners including hospitals, airports and community agencies on this important work. We have followed up with all known contacts for suspected cases of 2019-nCoV in Toronto. We are actively monitoring the situation in collaboration with our provincial and national health colleagues. We continue to share updates and facts to the public as quickly as possible. At this time, I also want to remind the public to seek credible, evidence-based sources of information.

Our Novel Coronavirus web page and the Toronto Public Health Twitter account, @TOPublicHealth, are updated regularly with up-to-date information for Toronto residents and visitors. We also continue to operate our hotline for those with questions about this virus to connect with a health professional. I encourage people who have questions to contact us at 416-338-7600.

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