



COMMUNICATION MEMO

2020-03-11

MEMO: COVID-19: Update - #5

TO: Algoma University Students, Faculty and Staff

FR: Brianne Pringle, Human Resources & Employee Relations on behalf of the **COVID-19 Task Force**

All members of Algoma University are asked to review this memo in its entirety. The evolving nature of the COVID-19 situation necessitates the sharing of this entire update.

As the COVID-19 situation evolves, Algoma University continues to take proactive steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our University community across all three campuses. We are sharing some related updates that have recently come forward.

Today, The World Health Organization (WHO) has made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic. WHO Director, General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus notes that “Describing the situation as a pandemic does not change WHO’s assessment of the threat posed by the virus, it does not change what WHO is doing, and it doesn’t change what countries should do.”

Algoma is aware that Laurentian University has temporarily suspended classes as a precaution, as a result of a confirmed case within the Sudbury community. Faculty and staff remain on campus and Laurentian University remains open.

As of March 11, 2020, the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario have provided the following updates:

1. The Public Health Agency of Canada has **assessed the public health risk** associated with the COVID-19, as **low for the general population in Canada** but could change rapidly. There is an increased risk of more severe outcomes for Canadians:
 - age 65 or over
 - with compromised immune systems

- with underlying medical conditions
2. While a COVID-19 outbreak is not expected in Canada, the public health system is prepared to respond and the public health risk is continually reassessed as new information becomes available.

In late January, Algoma University established a COVID-19 Task Force that is:

- comprised of Robert Battisti, Brianne Pringle, Brian Leahy, Dave Trudelle, Brent Krmpotich and Karen Hudson and which reports directly to the Senior Executive and the President
- monitoring the situation daily and are in regular communication with a range of organizations including Algoma, Peel and Porcupine Public Health Units, Sault College and Northern College, the Council of Ontario Universities and Universities Canada
- updating the University community as information becomes available via memos and [website updates](#)
- reviewing the Short Term English as a Second Language Program (ESL) for recent intakes and reviewing the Study Abroad program.

For proactive measures, the University is also working on pandemic planning and updating business/academic continuity plans for all departments.

In addition to the above, all international travel for the University continues to be actively monitored. As noted in the January 30 [memo](#), all travel for University purposes to China had been suspended until further notice. Travel to Italy and Iran has now officially been suspended until further notice due to COVID-19.

Algoma University will continue to review the travel advisories and their impacts on employees and students. In addition to the normal [Safe International Travel Policy](#) procedures, we ask that any **University-related International travel** be reported to brianne.pringle@algomau.ca, even if it has already been approved, so we can continue to monitor the situation closely and how it may impact Algoma University.

The Government of Canada has noted the following regarding risk to Canadian travellers:

The risk to Canadian travellers abroad will vary depending on the destination, as well as the individuals' age and health status. There are some areas where the Government of Canada recommends avoiding all travel or all non-essential travel. In addition, the Government of Canada has active travel health notices for the following areas:

- China
- France
- Germany
- Hong Kong
- Japan
- Northern Italy
- Singapore
- South Korea

- Iran
- Spain

As well, the risk for COVID-19 may be increased for certain settings such as:

- cruise ships
- heavily affected areas
- international conferences and other large gatherings in enclosed spaces

Additional advisories:

- Those travelling from Hubei province, China or Iran in the last 14 days are to self-isolate at home and contact their local public health authority within 24 hours of your return to the country.
- Those who have travelled outside of Canada should monitor your health for fever, cough and difficulty breathing for 14 days after you arrive in Canada. If you have these symptoms, please notify your public health authority.

For the most up to date information on travel regarding COVID-19 please visit the [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Travel Advice](#) webpage.

Being a diverse university, we must take care not to draw assumptions based on ethnicity. There are currently more than 50 countries representing a multitude of cultures within our ever-growing Algoma University family. This is what makes our community so unique. Diversity is our strength therefore we must remember, solidarity, not stigma.

Algoma University will continue to actively monitor the situation and is in contact with Health Officials. We will provide updates as needed, advise of any impacts to all three campuses, and ensure that the appropriate prevention and response measures are taken.

Additional Information:

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- fever
- cough
- difficulty breathing

Many of these symptoms are similar to seasonal influenza. Should you experience these symptoms AND have recently travelled internationally to an affected region, avoid contact with others and follow-up with your health care professional. Advise your health professional in advance of attending the clinic of your symptoms and travel history.

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, please reach out to Brianne Pringle at brianne.pringle@algonau.ca or 705-949-2301 ext 4373 to ensure proper accommodations (both academic and employment) are in place.

To help protect yourself from possible infection, health officials recommend that everyone:

- wash your hands frequently and well with soap and warm water;
- use alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth;
- cough or sneeze into your elbow, or cover your cough or sneeze;
- avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness;
- stay home if you are sick and avoid contact with others;
- if you are sick, contact a health care provider about your symptoms and inform them of your travel history.

If you need support please contact the following support services:

For students in need of support, please contact Student Success Central by phone 705-949-2301 ext.4367 or by email healthservices@algonau.ca.