

January 22, 2021

To whom it may concern,

Re: use of rapid antigen detection tests for COVID-19 in the resource development industry and/or industrial camp settings

With Health Canada approving rapid antigen detection (RAD) testing technologies, there have been multiple questions about Northern Health's (NH) position on their use. As these tests are technically feasible to implement outside of traditional medical laboratories, questions pertain to testing individuals with new COVID-19-like symptoms and for mass asymptomatic testing ("screening").

Industrial sites are at increased risk of COVID-19 clusters and outbreaks due to the relatively high turnover and the relatively high proportion of workers arriving from and returning to distant communities. COVID-19 outbreaks in these sites have the potential to affect large numbers of people, overwhelm local health services, require multiple evacuations for hospitalization, and contribute to spread in other communities both near and far. Rapid access to accurate test results is an important component of an overall COVID-19 prevention and control strategy. However, indiscriminate testing, or over-reliance on testing at the expense of other strategies, carries a number of risks which can undermine efforts to control COVID-19. In addition, as a medical procedure, COVID-19 testing is subject to a number of legal requirements.

If a business elects to establish an on-site testing program, NH wants to work with the business to ensure that all logistics are planned in advance, there is no forecasted additional strain on or risk to the public system, and the strategy will have a positive overall impact on COVID-19 control. To support your decision-making, we have developed the attached *Northern Health Medical Health Officer position statement re: use of rapid antigen detection (RAD) tests for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) detection in industrial settings*. We welcome you to share the statement with members of your team.

By law, all positive COVID-19 test results must be reported to the regional public health authority. If you are considering or planning for RAD or any other type of COVID-19 testing in your site, you must contact Northern Health's Office of Health and Resource Development (resource.development@northernhealth.ca). Someone will be in touch to work with you in the planning phase to ensure that you have information that you will require. We require that a formal testing strategy document be provided to Northern Health for review.

Sincerely,



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