

10 February 2020

Q&A – 2019 novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

1. If not the person's home, then where exactly would people be quarantined?

Residents are likely to be quarantined at home. People needing hospitalization will go to the Cayman Islands Hospital (HSA). The numbers of people with a relevant travel history to mainland China who require quarantine is likely to be small. We have identified two shelters that will be able to house persons as a first step, should this need arise, and may find more comfortable accommodations.

2. What does the inside of a quarantine facility look like?

Most residents will be quarantined in their homes. For visitors who might need quarantine, the emergency provision we currently have is that of designated hurricane shelters, although alternatives may be selected. We have considered the need to provide food and drink, toiletries and internet access.

Locally families will generally tend to their own personal requirements. However, where this is not possible, Public Health staff will be able to purchase and deliver groceries to the residence.

It is our goal to ensure those quarantined are comfortable, well attended by Public Health staff, and have access to outside communication such as internet access.

3. What mechanism is being set up for monitoring?

The Public Health Department has extensive experience in monitoring people at home who have infectious diseases, and supporting the people affected through the period of quarantine.

4. How much staff will it require?

To truly monitor everyone adequately no more than five isolated persons per staff are normally allowed – needs may change with time.

5. What are practical tips for people who have family members being quarantined in their home?

People who have no symptoms should maintain the recommended advice about simple infection control measures:

- frequent hand cleansing with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- covering nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing

People in quarantine must have no physical contact or exposure with anyone apart from the controlled exposure to Public Health officials – this is part of the home quarantine requirements.

6. What if a child needs to be quarantined? Are they separated from their parent/s?

Families who have travelled together would be quarantined together. If a child needed to be quarantined in their own right, this would need to be considered on a case by case basis. In most cases a child would not be traveling alone therefore they would all be isolated together since they were in close contact with each other.

7. What provisions will be made to allow quarantined people to maintain contact with friends and family?

Other than by phone, contact with people with a relevant travel history is not permitted until after the period of quarantine. We need to do this to contain the potential for any potential spread of disease.

8. What if you are breastfeeding mother?

The World Health Organization advises the following: considering the benefits of breastfeeding and insignificant role of the breast milk in transmission of other respiratory viruses, mothers can continue breastfeeding. The mother should wear a medical mask when she is near her baby and perform careful hand hygiene before close contact with the baby. She would need also to apply the other hygienic measures as described elsewhere.

9. Is there a budget specifically for this? How much is it?

Cabinet has approved a budget of up to \$100,000 for quarantining measures.

10. How many business visitors/tourists do we have from China in a typical year?

We do have quite a few law firms and financial institutions that have a franchise or home base in other jurisdictions especially the UK, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Malaysia, and other far eastern countries with frequent travel, although many companies have reduced or have stopped this travel for the moment.

Since last week, cruise ships have been denying boarding to anyone with a travel history from mainland China; additionally, many of our neighbours (including the Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad and the USA) have instituted similar travel restrictions.

11. Do we have an idea how many people may be impacted?

The new Regulations will mean that persons currently being asked to stay at home will now be legally required to do so.

12. Will any commercial shipping be impacted by this?

The Cayman Islands does have goods delivered from China, which should not pose a risk as the virus will not survive the journey.