

NATIONAL HEALTH ADVISORY CORONAVIRUS UPDATE – 6th Feb 2020

This advisory is to update you on the response to the coronavirus outbreak in China. As at 1500hrs 6 February 2020, there have been 28,149 cases confirmed worldwide, with 565 deaths. 27,902 of these cases have been in Mainland China.

Below is some updated guidance for the sector; please distribute as you see fit.

Confirmation of Eligibility for Publicly Funded Health Services for Non New Zealand Residents Impacted by 2019-nCoV

Introduction

From Thursday 30 January 2020, novel coronavirus capable of causing severe respiratory illness was made a notifiable infectious disease under the Health Act 1956. In addition to allowing the Health Act provisions for the management of infectious diseases to be used for this new disease, its inclusion also triggers changes in eligibility for publicly funded services.

Eligibility

Any person who requires services relating to a notifiable disease (or quarantinable disease) is covered as part of publicly funded health services. These services include surveillance, diagnosis, treatment, follow up and contact tracing of an infectious disease. This means that a person who would normally have to pay the full cost of health services in New Zealand, for example a tourist at a public hospital or in a general practice, is now eligible to receive the same publicly funded services as a New Zealand resident.

Additional clarification for primary care for non-residents

When a person ineligible for health services presents to primary care they are initially treated and charged as any ineligible casual patient.

1. If they **meet** the epidemiological and clinical definition of a 'suspected case', 'probable case', or 'confirmed case':
 - a. the clinician will notify the Medical Officer of Health on call
 - b. they will then be eligible for care as if they were a New Zealand resident
 - c. they will still incur the usual co-payment (if appropriate) as per an eligible patient at that practice.

Note: Eligibility only relates to health care associated with the Notifiable Disease and not to any other health condition.

2. If they **do not meet** the epidemiological and clinical case definitions, they will continue to be charged as an ineligible casual patient.

Where a suspected case is confirmed as **not** having a notifiable disease, then any subsequent visit or follow up care required by primary care will be treated as if they were ineligible for New Zealand

subsidised health services (the patient should not retrospectively be charged for the original consultation).

The details of the processes around reimbursement to practices and pharmacies for service delivery have yet to be arranged. The Ministry of Health will provide further communication when this has occurred. Case definitions change, so please go to our website for the latest definition - <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov> for latest case definitions

Guidance on self-isolation

The guidance on self-isolation has been updated and can be found here: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/novel-coronavirus-self-isolation>

Dedicated 0800 number for health advice and information

Healthline has set up a dedicated 0800 number specifically for **health-related** calls about the coronavirus.