



ORDER OF THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH OFFICER

(Pursuant to section 13 of the *Health Professions General Regulation*, B.C. Reg 275/2008)

HEALTH AUTHORITY REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS SARS-CoV-2 SWABBING – November 16, 2020

WHEREAS:

- A. On March 17, 2020 I provided notice under section 52 (2) of the *Public Health Act* that the transmission of the infectious agent SARS-CoV-2, which has caused cases and outbreaks of a serious illness known as COVID-19 among the population of the Province of British Columbia, constitutes a regional event as defined in section 51 of the *Public Health Act* (the “**Emergency**”);
- B. Screening for infection with SARS-CoV-2 involves carrying out a nasopharyngeal swab, which requires the insertion of an instrument or device beyond the point of the nasal passages where they normally narrow, a throat swab, which requires the insertion of an instrument or device beyond the pharynx or a mouth rinse (the “**Screening Activity**”);
- C. Restricted activities may only be provided by registrants of health professions if applicable health professions regulations under the *Health Professions Act* have authorized those restricted activities to be provided. Restricted activities established in health profession regulations under the *Health Professions Act* include “put[ting] an instrument or a device, hand or finger beyond the point in the nasal passages where they normally narrow” (an activity required to perform a nasopharyngeal swab) and “put[ting] an instrument or a device, hand or finger beyond the pharynx” (an activity required to perform a throat swab).
- D. I am of the opinion that:
 - (i) limiting the provision of a Screening Activity to registrants of a health profession who have it as a restricted activity adversely affects the timely delivery of the Screening Activity, and the efficient and effective use of health human resources, throughout British Columbia, and
 - (ii) registrants in the health professions of speech language pathology (who are not otherwise authorized to provide the activities established in sections 5(3)(c) and (d) of the *Speech and Hearing Health Professionals Regulation*), physical therapy, dental hygiene, occupational therapy, dietetics, audiology and pharmacy (pharmacists only) (each a “**Testing Registrant**”) that are employed by:

- a. “a health care body as defined in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*”,
- b. the Provincial Health Services Authority, or
- c. the First Nations Health Authority,
(each a “**Health Authority**”)

may perform the Screening Activity, as authorized by this order, without undue risk to the health or safety of the patient or any other person.

I, Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, order that notwithstanding any requirements set out in the regulations under the *Health Professions Act* and any standard set by the applicable college that conflict or may conflict with this order, a Testing Registrant employed by a Health Authority is authorized to perform the Screening Activity, subject to the following conditions:

1. The Screening Activity must be performed in the course of providing a screening program approved by a medical health officer with responsibility for the geographic area in which the activity is performed.
2. The Screening Activity must be conducted in accordance with the guidelines issued by the BC Centre for Disease Control (the “**Guidelines**”) posted at the following website:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/lab-testing>
3. The registrant must successfully complete Health Authority training materials and assessments that include or are based on Elsevier Clinical Skills. “Specimen Collection: Nose and Throat – CE” published by Elsevier.
4. The Health Authority or medical health officer must first assess the Testing Registrant’s competence to perform the Screening Activity in a manner that is safe for both the client and the Testing Registrant, including by requiring the Testing Registrant to demonstrate knowledge, in accordance with the Guidelines, respecting who to test, specimen collection and labelling, and the use of personal protective equipment. The Health Authority may only make this assessment if the individual making the assessment is a registrant who has assessed the Testing Registrant and who is authorized under a health profession regulation, and competent, to perform the Screening Activity.

Unless rescinded earlier, this order will end on the date that I provide notice under section 59 (b) of the *Public Health Act* that the Emergency has passed.

DATED THIS: 16th day of November 2020

SIGNED:



Bonnie Henry
MD, MPH, FRCPC
Provincial Health Officer