



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Statement from 2020 Arctic Winter Games Host Society**

**March 2, 2020 (Whitehorse, YT)** – The 2020 Arctic Winter Games (AWG) Host Society is aware of the current concerns surrounding the Coronavirus (COVID-19), and is taking all necessary precautions to avoid an outbreak in Whitehorse during the Games.

On February 2, the AWG 2020 Host Society received a letter from Dr. Brendan Hanley, Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) for the Yukon. The letter stated:

“Yukon public health officials are closely monitoring the novel coronavirus (2019-nCov) outbreak in cooperation with other northern, Canadian and international jurisdictions. At this point the risk to the Canadian public being affected by 2019-nCoV remains low, and there is no reason to change travel plans for this event.”

Dr. Hanley went on to outline preventative measures for all participants and visitors, in order to prevent illness during the Games:

- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands;
- avoid close contact with people who are sick
- practice good respiratory habits, including:
  - when coughing or sneezing cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, then throw the tissue immediately into the trash or
  - cover your mouth and nose by coughing or sneezing into your inner elbow
- stay away from events and others and report promptly if you are sick

This letter was shared with all participating contingents, as well as the AWG International Committee and the AWG 2020 Board of Management.

On February 28, the CMOH confirmed that the office is continuing to monitor the situation and have noted no community-based spread in any Arctic country.

In addition to the preventative measures listed above, the AWG 2020 Host Society has committed to: providing extra tissue and disinfectant at all venues, displaying proper educational signage in all venue washrooms, scheduling extra volunteers to administer hand sanitizer at all food services areas, and identifying a minimum of one emergency isolation room at every accommodations venue.

Should there be a suspected illness reported during the Games, the CMOH's office would be contacted immediately and public health protocols under the CMOH would take effect.

For updated information from the CMOH on 2019-nCov, visit [www.yukoncmoh.ca/](http://www.yukoncmoh.ca/).

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