KEY STEPS TO SAFELY OPERATING YOUR BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION AND REDUCING COVID-19 TRANSMISSION

The core measures set out below provide the basis for Government and sector partners to think through and plan for business and institutional resumption based on a sectoral analysis through its multiple ministries and sectoral partnership tables. It is intended to help the sectors think through and plan a cautious return towards the 60% social contact maximum of the pre-Covid-19 normal.

Key sectors that will need to work through in detail and then implement the "new normal" practice standards include:

- Office Workplace Practice Standards

- Health Workplace Standards

- Personal Service Workplace Practice Standards (hairdresser/barbers; spas)

- Retail Practice Standards (including grocery stores)

- Resource Sector Standards

- Restaurant and Food Service Practice Standards

- Bar, Casino, Night Club Practice Standards

- Hotels and Resorts (Including Camping) Practice Standards

- Child Care Settings Practice Standards

- School and Post Secondary Institutions Practice Standards

- Recreational Facilities Practice Standards

- Outdoor Recreational Setting Practice Standards

- Parks, Beaches and Outdoor Space Standards

1. You and your staff need to know the basic transmission facts and work with them:

    - Coronavirus is transmitted via **larger liquid droplets when a person <u>coughs or sneezes</u> <u>but also potentially when they are talking in very close proximity to another person</u>**. The virus in these droplets then can enter the body of another person when that person breathes in the droplets or when the droplets touch the **eyes, nose or throat** of that person.

    - This requires you to be in close contact – less than the so-called social distancing of 3 – 6 feet. This is referred to as 'droplet' transmission and is believed to be the primary way COVID-19 is transmitted.

    - In addition, droplet transmission is much more likely when in close contact in an indoor setting. COVID-19 can also be transmitted through droplets in the environment if someone **touches the contaminated area then touches their face or eyes without cleaning their hands**. This speaks to the importance of regularly cleaning one's hands and also cleaning of high touch areas in the environment.

    - A key issue in transmission is the median incubation period (the time from infection to appearance of symptoms) and the serial interval (the time between successive cases) for the Covid-19 virus. The **serial interval for Covid-19 virus is estimated to be 5-6 days.** The serial interval is 3 days for influenza with transmission taking place in the first 1-3 days of illness, **pre-symptomatic transmission** (transmission of the virus before the appearance of symptoms) being a major driver of transmission for influenza. For Covid-19 there are some emerging indications that there are people who can shed Covid-19 virus 24-48 hours prior to symptom onset, but at present, the WHO suggests that this **does not appear to be a major driver of transmission.** However, we need to acknowledge that there is debate about this and that at this time we cannot be categorical**.**

2. Use the tool below to assess the risk of transmission from social interaction in your organizational settings based on two dimensions based on an assessment of low, medium, high:

    (1) What is the **contact intensity** in your setting – the type of contact (close/distant) and the duration of contact (brief/prolonged);
    (2) What is the **number of contacts** in your setting – the number of people present in the setting at the same time[1].

    By doing these ratings you can position your organization on the risk matrix below:
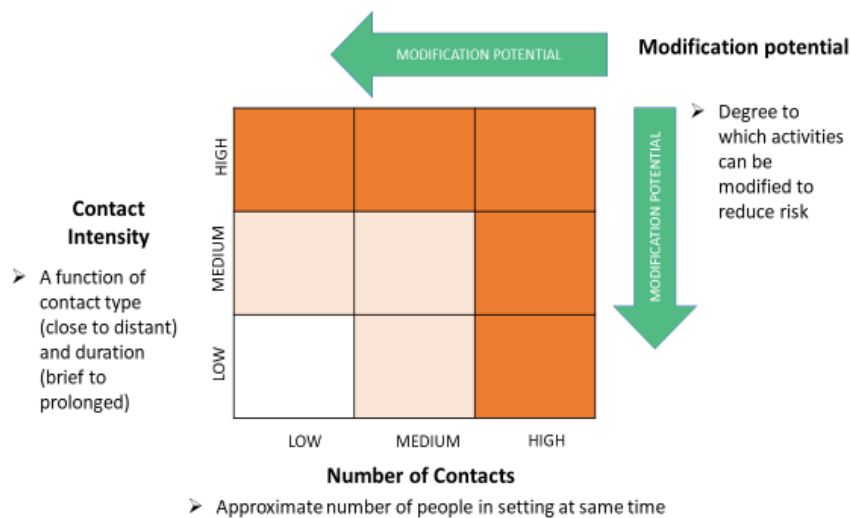
[1] John Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Centre for Health Security April 2020

3. Low is low risk; however, the medium and high categories are also subject to potential modification or controls which can help move you to a lower risk category by taking a range of actions:

    *   Physical distancing measures – measures to reduce the density (intensity and number of contacts) of people in your setting.

    *   Engineering controls – physical barriers (plexiglass for example).

    *   Administrative controls – rules and guidelines to help employees, students, customers reduce the risk of transmission.

    *   Use of personal protective equipment in the form of non-medical masks.

4. Using the assessment and potential modifications or controls to further reduce risk of transmission, you are being asked to **develop an explicit plan for the measures you will implement and maintain over the coming 12-18 months** thinking through three areas that will become the "new normal" in terms of formal and required actions that are the basis for workplaces and commercial businesses being in operation until the PHO lifts the public emergency requirements:

Reducing Transmission - Personal Self Care in Organizational Settings
This is the foundation to reduce transmission:

Core Personal Measures for the "New Normal":
o   No hand shaking as the new norm.

o   Practice good hygiene (frequent hand washing with soap and water and use of hand sanitizers; avoid touching one's face; respiratory etiquette; disinfect frequently touched surfaces).

o   Maintain reasonable physical distancing as much as possible and use a non-medical mask or face covering in situations where reasonable physical distancing

cannot be consistently maintained, and engineering controls are not available (e.g. plexiglass barriers).

o If you have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or Covid-19 including a cough, sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, fatigue you must stay at home (not going to school/work) and keep a safe distance from others in your family until those symptoms have completely disappeared. Retail malls, shops, and supermarkets should implement clear policies to strongly encourage customers who have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or Covid-19 with any coughing or sneezing to not come into their stores through highly visible signage and verbal prompts if required.

o A further consideration are the extra precautions individuals should consider if they are at increased risk of a more severe illness because they are over 60 years old, or if they have compromised immune systems or underlying chronic medical conditions.

Reducing Transmission – Managing Social Interaction in Organizational Settings
Social interaction is critical to our individual well-being and health. It is a key part of our organizational settings. Increased social interaction must balance this fundamental human need with key actions to reduce transmission. In addition to the personal measures set out above there are two additional measures can be taken to reduce transmission.

Core Social Interaction Measures for the "New Normal":
o Ensure congregate social settings (kitchens, staff rooms, canteens) in the organization maintain best practice in terms of social distance
o Ensure increased cleaning through out the day when in use.

Reducing Transmission – Implement Safe Organizational Practices

Core Institutional and Work Place Measures for the "New Normal"

o You <u>must</u> have clear policies to enable and ensure that individuals who have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or Covid-19 including any coughing or sneezing should not come into the workplace. As part of opening up your specific settings, you should implement sick day policies for the coming twelve months that actively support individual staff being off sick more often or working safely at home during these illnesses. As employers you must take leadership in this regard.

o For office-based organizations, where possible encourage working from home part of the time to reduce "contact intensity" and "number of contacts" in the work place. Where this is not possible or in addition to working from home policies, ensure employees have less contacts by using staggered shifts or work hours, creating smaller teams working together virtually; forgoing in person meetings as much as possible.

o For retail organizations implement strategies that reduce contact intensity and number of contacts by continuing to promote <u>sensible</u> social distancing (3-6 feet) and <u>sensible</u> volume of customers in the retail space based on the transmission fact basics. The 50 number is for large social gatherings not larger shopping or retail spaces. Lining up outside retail stores, especially in the rain or cold winter months is not socially sustainable or healthy. A number of strategies can be used: increasing throughput of customers by maintaining a high number of check-outs; increasing hours of shopping to decrease density of customers; encourage or require utilization of basic non-medical masks to reduce the spread through individuals coughing, sneezing, or close interpersonal contact; manage or eliminate waiting areas; increased use of appointments or bookings; increased on-line shopping/deliveries and/or pickups; use of physical barriers such as plexi-glass.

o Focus on higher-risk populations including those 65+ and those with underlying medical conditions. Workplaces, retail and personal service businesses are encouraged to exercise greater accommodation for these age groups in terms of work space, more flexible hours of work or shopping (earlier, later, mid-day) or working at home options.

o Require and sustain higher levels of frequent cleaning of "high touch" areas in workplaces and retail outlets throughout the day and availability of hand sanitizer stands at entrances or around workplaces and shops.

o Where appropriate and practical increase use of temporary physical barriers (such as plexiglass at service counters or checkouts).

Reducing Transmission – Daycare and Education Settings/Camps

Daycares are an important part of the social infrastructure to support parents returning to work.

While it is well established that children are important drivers of influenza virus transmission in the community; for the COVID-19 virus, initial data indicates that **children are less affected than adults and that clinical attack rates in the 0-19 age group are low**. Further preliminary data from household transmission studies in China suggest that children are infected from adults, rather than vice versa. This is an important consideration with respect to school closures and reopening but is an area in which the evidentiary base will continue to develop.

The evidence of the impact of covid-19 on young adults appears to be evolving although the data to date suggests that they are more likely to experience mild symptoms.

In general, educational settings are critical to a child's and youth's psycho-social development as well as learning but also for younger children, important to a parent's ability to maintain employment. Any actions taken in this area should take in to consideration all these dimensions.

Recreation and involvement in sports are also important developmental activities for many children and young people.

Specific Additional Measures for Daycare and Education Settings/Camps for the "New Normal":

Day Cares
o Routine daily symptom screening for all staff and students.

o Routine and frequent environmental cleaning.

o Explicit policy for children or staff who have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or Covid-19 with any coughing or sneezing <u>not</u> coming into daycare.

Schools (K-12)
o Routine daily screening for all staff and students.

o Routine and frequent environmental cleaning.

o Smaller class sizes, increased space between desks, alternating attendance arrangements, frequent hand washing, wearing non-medical masks for group activities and sports, and limiting group sizes.

o Clear policy for children, youth and staff who have symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19, with any coughing or sneezing <u>not</u> coming into school or taking part in extra curricular activities and sports.

o Planning over the summer for increased use of remote online learning, especially for high school children.

o Early arrival and self-isolation for 14 days of international students.

Post Secondary Institutions

o   Routine daily screening for all staff and students.

o   Routine and frequent environmental cleaning.

o   Clear policy for students and staff who have symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19, with any coughing or sneezing not to attend classes, extra curricula activities, sports or work.

o   Increased use of on-line learning balanced against the need of social interaction for learning and development.

o   Early arrival and self-isolation for 14 days of international students.

Recreation/Sports/Camps

▪   Routine daily symptom screening for all staff and participants.

▪   Support low contact sports (especially outdoor). Identify high contact sports that should not take place during the pandemic.

▪   Clear policy for participants and staff who have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19 symptoms, with any coughing or sneezing not participating.

▪   Staff and students at higher risk of experiencing severe illness should not take part in recreational, sporting, or camp activities.