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Date: May 21, 2020

TO: NYRC Assessors

From: Dr. Rocco Guerriero, NYRC President

CC: Grace Ma, Vice-President of Operations and Business Development

Re: In-Person IMEs and NYRC's Safety Plan COVID-19

I hope everyone is safe and is doing well. During this challenging time, everyone has been concerned about the spread of COVID-19. Provinces throughout Canada are planning the reopening of businesses. I am pleased to announce ICBC has just notified us yesterday that as of today (May 21, 2020) in-person assessments can resume. It is important that we are appropriately prepared. As you conduct in person medical assessments for NYRC, we ask that you make every effort to keep yourself and examinees safe and protected. To that end, please ensure you are staying informed and following Public Health measures including physical distancing and the appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when conducting medical assessments. If you do not have sufficient PPE or you have elected not to use PPE for one of our assessments, please do not schedule independent medical assessments with us and/or contact us immediately. It is mandatory that you follow our Safety Plan COVID-19 for everyone's safety. I am sure you understand the importance of these precautions.

Below is our NYRC Safety Plan COVID-19 and NYRC Operating Guidelines COVID-19 for you all to consider in performing these assessments, either in our facility or in yours. It is very important that you adhere to these guidelines.

We are also including our new cancellation policy, which was updated today. Please be mindful that for everyone's safety, some examinees may have to stay home if they develop COVID-19 symptoms on the date of their assessment or shortly before it. Please review our updated policy.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation. For further information and COVID-19 considerations associated with IMEs, please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any questions or concerns (drguerriero@nyrc.ca). Hope to see you some time in the near future.

NYRC's Safety Plan COVID-19

Overview

As B.C. plans to reopen the province, there is a sense of cautious optimism in the government's staged approach to loosening emergency measures and reopening B.C.'s economy.

Phase 1 of the government's plan for reopening B.C. after COVID-19 included industries that were [designated as essential services](#) developing safe operation plans in consultation with WorkSafeBC and in compliance with the public health orders issued by the Provincial Health Officer. We have now entered Phase 2.

As a result, B.C.'s economy has continued to operate in ways other provinces haven't. But it's undeniable that local businesses have suffered.

The government's plan to reopen businesses, services and public spaces can be found here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/bc-restart-plan>

BC's Restart Plan lays out a series of steps that we will take together to protect people and ensure that our province can come back from COVID-19 stronger than before.

It is unlikely that the government's reopening framework will specifically identify when in-person Independent Medical Examinations (IMEs) should be completed on a non-urgent basis.

ICBC has just informed us that, "On Friday, the Provincial Health Officer provided an update to [Health Professionals](#) advising that B.C. is now in a position to ease restrictions on health care services. Since then, additional information has been provided for businesses to start reopening. I am pleased to advise that **effective May 21, 2020**, all in-person Independent Medical Examinations (IMEs) may be conducted.

If you are restarting your operations, you must ensure you are in compliance with the Provincial Health Officer's orders and align with WorkSafeBC's safety guidelines. Please review the information provided on the [WorkSafeBC website](#), which outlines the specific requirements that need to be in place."

To help ensure that NYRC and its assessors are ready to conduct independent medical assessment services in Phase 2, NYRC has developed a six-step COVID-19 safety plan as outlined on WorkSafeBC's website (see attached). NYRC will continue to monitor the impact and scope of COVID-19 in the communities that we service and will continue to adapt and modify our response as required. Close communication between NYRC and our valued clients and assessors will ensure that guidelines, requirements and expectations are aligned with the activities of NYRC.

Maximum use of all telehealth modalities is strongly encouraged. Many healthcare regulatory colleges in British Columbia have created guidelines for the use and applicability of telehealth modalities for their members, which they must follow. However, when telehealth modalities cannot be used, the following guideline should be considered when resuming in-person IME services for individuals across British Columbia.

General Considerations

NYRC is mindful of the pressures currently faced by the healthcare system in British Columbia. One of the key Principles of the Framework for reopening our province is to ensure that there is “sufficient health system capacity to respond to any resurgence in COVID-19 infections”.

Resources at NYRC, including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), will be managed in a way that clearly demonstrates that priority will always be given to supporting the ongoing pandemic response.

NYRC supports the approach of like-for-like (peer-based) evaluations. Whenever possible, NYRC will consider the specialty of the independent healthcare assessor conducting the assessment to minimize the strain on the healthcare system.

Workplace Considerations

NYRC has taken appropriate action to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission within our workplace. Physical restrictions are in place and are monitored to maintain social distancing.

Environmental Cleaning

Increased cleaning and maintenance policies are now in place to ensure NYRC meets the highest sanitary standards. This may include increasing the frequency of cleaning at NYRC, including the cleaning of all public access areas with high-grade cleaning solutions. Disposable disinfecting wipes are also available in public areas and at points of care (i.e. assessment rooms) for the immediate cleaning of high-touch surfaces such as door handles, examination tables and desks after each use.

Workforce Considerations

All staff, including independent healthcare assessors, will be screened routinely for symptoms of COVID-19. If found to be symptomatic, they should be tested and quarantined in accordance with provincial guidelines. Every effort will be made to have proper physical distancing amongst staff, consistent with recommendations of public health officials.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

NYRC is aware of the availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in our communities and is cognizant to NOT detract from the availability of PPE to front-line healthcare workers.

While the use of N95 masks has been widely accepted as the best option for preventing the spread of COVID-19, their availability has been limited. NYRC supports the use of face masks and strongly encourages their use among staff, independent healthcare assessors and all visitors to our facilities.

Following the recommendations of public health officials, PPE should be made available and utilized as deemed clinically appropriate in instances where social distancing measures are difficult or unable to be maintained. This may include items such as masks, gloves, face shields and disposable gowns as appropriate or required.

Hand Sanitizer

NYRC has hand sanitizing stations readily available with signage within our facilities requesting their utilization. Hand sanitizer is also available at the point of care where a sink does not exist for regular hand washing.

Hand Washing

Where sinks are available within NYRC's facilities, proper hand washing instructions are posted to encourage people to wash their hands (e.g., 20 seconds) with soap and water. The COVID-19 virus has a lipid outer layer, which responds to being dissolved with soap. Washing your hands with soap and water is the single most effective way of reducing the spread of infection.

Limiting the Number of People Present

Appropriate social/physical distancing should be maintained wherever possible. It is recommended that seating capacity in waiting areas be reduced to ensure that appropriate social distancing can be maintained. NYRC has taken these measures within its facilities.

Other steps that we are taking include:

- Reducing the number of assessments taking place per day
- Increasing the time between assessments to allow for appropriate cleaning and to reduce the number of individuals present at any one time.

In this respect, we will be communicating with referral sources and examinees that, where possible, only the individual being assessed should be attending the appointment and that family members only attend when necessary to ensure the safety of the examinee.

For the purpose of limiting physical contact, virtual interpretation services may be considered where the opportunity exists.

Health Screening

All individuals attending for an in-person assessment will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 via telephone or electronic means, whenever possible, the day prior to their scheduled assessment. The

screen will be repeated on arrival at NYRC. In addition, all independent healthcare assessors and individuals who will be providing in-person services (transportation drivers, chaperones, interpreters, and readers) will also be screened prior to providing any services. Individuals with a positive screen result will be asked not to attend the assessment. Additional screening measures, including temperature taken via infrared, non-contact thermometer, will be considered where feasible. Individuals showing signs of fever will not be permitted entry to NYRC facilities.

Increased Signage

NYRC has placed signage at the entrances to all of its facilities regarding the reporting of symptoms and/or recent travel. Additional signage is also being placed throughout the facility with reminders for hand washing and good respiratory etiquette.

NYRC will continually evaluate the state of COVID-19 in the regions we serve and will be prepared to suspend operations if deemed necessary by local authorities. By following the above guidelines, NYRC will be able to continue delivering its services safely and help reopen British Columbia successfully.

References

CDC COVID Guidelines. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Ministry of Health COVID Guidelines <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/symptoms-covid-19>

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/checklist/covid-19-safety-plan?lang=en>

Updated May 20, 2020

NYRC OFFICE OPERATING GUIDELINES COVID-19
Updated: May 21, 2020

ASSESSOR PRIVATE OFFICES – NYRC IMEs

Below are guidelines from NYRC for In-Person assessments at your private office:

1. Clearly post infection prevention and control procedures to ensure examinees and staff understand and use them appropriately
2. Have alcohol-based hand rubs (60-90% alcohol) available as appropriate at the clinic entrance, the reception counter, around the waiting area, as well as near exam room doors
3. Air circulation should be increased if feasible in your office
4. Ensure that your waiting area seating is well distanced to maintain the 6 ft apart recommendation
5. Remove soft toys and magazines
6. Remove or cover cloth seating
7. Spray down chairs with Lysol spray and wipe down tables with Lysol wipes after each examinee has left
8. Sanitize pens and thermometer (if using) after each use with Lysol wipes
9. Attached is a screening questionnaire you can refer to as a reference
10. Empty exam rooms of all but the bare minimum equipment (e.g. exam table, BP cuff).
11. Lysol wipe/Lysol spray the exam room after each examinee has departed
12. Implement other health and safety practices that are in keeping with the practices recommended by the public health authorities
13. PPE Requirement guidelines are below:

PPE Requirements	Mask	Gloves	Face Shield
Reception	Mandatory	Mandatory	Optional
Assessors	Mandatory	Mandatory	Optional
Examinees	Mandatory	Optional	Optional
Employees	Mandatory when interacting with other employees, assessors and examinees	Optional	Optional

We will be supplying employees, assessors and examinees with PPE (if needed) at the NYRC Office.

THE BELOW SPECIFICALLY PERTAINS TO THE NYRC OFFICE

INTAKE/SCHEDULING ASSESSMENTS

1. Interpreters - Every attempt will be made to schedule Interpreters virtually to minimize the number of persons in the exam room. For clients who will be scheduling interpreters themselves, it must be communicated to them that these need to be scheduled as either a phone interpreter or virtual interpreter. We will send the virtual link to the interpreter once they have confirmed it.
2. Examinees - All examinees are encouraged to come alone and to bring their own PPE (this will be added to confirmation letters). Pre-screen questions will be sent with confirmation letters.

NYRC RECEPTION

A. Waiting Area

1. Maximum number in waiting area: 3 persons
2. Spillover can be seated in the conference room: max 2 persons
3. Spray down chairs with Lysol spray and wipe down tables with Lysol wipes after each examinee has left
4. Sanitize pen/thermometer/clipboard after each use with Lysol wipes
5. Beverage station to be provided only upon request and will be wiped down between uses

B. Exam Rooms

1. All exam rooms will only have the bare minimum of equipment and supplies. Any medical equipment needed will be supplied by reception and returned to reception and sanitized
2. Hand sanitizer will be supplied in every exam room
3. Lysol wipe/Lysol spray the room after each examinee
4. Spray down the entire room including all touch points after each examinee with disinfectant when fogger arrives

C. Examinees

Sign In Procedures

1. Sign COVID Risks Informed Consent form
2. Complete Screening Questionnaire
3. Temperature Check
4. Complete Consent Form
5. Complete Intake Forms, if any

D. Assessors

1. Sign Assessor Attestation Form
2. Assessors are encouraged to bring own PPE (this will be added to confirmation letters)

EMPLOYEES

1. If you are exhibiting any of the below symptoms, DO NOT come into the office
 - Fever
 - Difficulty in breathing
 - Coughing
 - Tightness of chest
 - Headache
 - Muscle pain
 - Sore throat
 - Chills
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea
2. If you have travelled outside of Canada, we may require that you remain away from the office for 14 days
3. If you have been in contact with anyone who has travelled outside of Canada or has displayed the above symptoms we may require that you remain away from the office for 14 days
4. Hand Sanitizer will be provided at each workstation
5. No handshakes, hugs or kisses
6. Maintain recommended 6 feet distancing when conversing with colleagues

7. Pantry:

- 2 people max in the pantry at any point in time
- Lysol wipe down countertop, coffee machine, microwave and water cooler after use and any touch points, including door handles.
- Bring own cups/utensils/food containers to limit use of those provided in the pantry

8. Lunch breaks

- Handle food carefully
- No food sharing
- Food to be eaten at desk

NYRC COVID-19 Cancellation Policy 2020

The goal of NYRC's COVID-19 Cancellation policy is to ensure that clients are capable of cancelling and re-scheduling their IMEs if examinees are found to be symptomatic without being unjustly billed cancellation fees. This will help to ensure that all parties are protected from contracting and/or spreading the disease during the IME process and that all parties are fairly treated.

NYRC maintains that any examinee experiencing the below symptoms should stay home and reschedule their in-person exams to a later date or through NYRC's Staged-Virtual IME service:

- Fever
- Difficulty in breathing
- Coughing
- Tightness of chest
- Headache*
- Muscle pain*
- Sore throat
- Chills
- Loss of taste or smell

*Headache and muscle pain that has new onset and different than accident-related symptoms.

To ensure that we can maintain a safe work environment for our assessors, staff and the examinee NYRC will be implementing a customized COVID-19 Cancellation Policy moving forward.

No IME late cancellation fees will be charged if the cancellations are due to valid COVID-19 concerns of the examinee or the assessor. However, the below conditions must be met and the below process must be followed:

EMAIL NOTIFICATION 6 BUSINESS DAYS PRIOR

- NYRC will contact the client one week prior to all scheduled in-person assessments and request that the client reach out to the examinee to confirm if the examinee has developed symptoms related to COVID-19
- If the examinee states that they are experiencing any of the above symptoms related to COVID-19, NYRC will work with the client and explore the following options:
 1. Reschedule the assessment to a Virtual IME
 2. Reschedule the in-person IME for a later date
 3. Cancel the IME without a fee
- If the examinee states that they are asymptomatic **6 business days** prior to the assessment the IME will continue as scheduled

WITHIN THE 6 BUSINESS DAY PERIOD PRIOR TO ASSESSMENT DATE

- Should the examinee develop COVID-19 symptoms after being contacted 6 business days prior to the assessment, they **must** notify NYRC and or their lawyer immediately to either:
 1. Reschedule the in-person assessment to a Virtual IME

- 2. Cancel **and** reschedule the IME for a later date
 - If the IME is cancelled and rescheduled for a later date a charge of 50% of the IME fee will be incurred that can be applied as a **credit** toward the rescheduled IME cost.
 - If the IME is cancelled without rescheduling NYRC's **standard IME late cancellation fee will apply**
- Failure to notify NYRC about the need to cancel/reschedule the IME due to COVID-19 related symptoms and subsequently failure to show up for the assessment will be charged at NYRC's **standard no-show fee**.
 - *This includes examinee's who begin experiencing symptoms on the day of the scheduled assessment*

ON DAY OF ASSESSMENT

- If an examinee is found to be symptomatic of COVID-19 on the day of their assessment the IME will be cancelled or will be moved to a virtual platform to minimize physical contact
 - If a virtual IME is not possible the IME will be cancelled and rescheduled for a later date.
 - **A 50% charge** will be incurred that will be used as a credit toward the rescheduled IME cost.
- If an assessment is moved to a virtual IME due to COVID-19 concerns with the agreement of all parties and the examinee fails to attend the scheduled virtual IME, NYRC's **standard no-show fee will apply**.

NYRC's Cancellation Fees are as follows:

- IME Late Cancellation Fee (< 5 business days, IME date counted as Day 0) – 40% of IME fee
- IME Same Day Cancellation/No Show Fee – 50% of IME fee

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS POLICY RELATES TO PLAINTIFF IMEs ONLY. ICBC IMEs ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS POLICY.