

Hello Everyone,

COVID-19 Update

As always, we thank you for your dedication and the way you represent ITS Hamilton out in the community. As you know, we would like to assure you that your safety and well-being is our priority and of utmost concern to ITS-Hamilton.

As concerns over the COVID-19 outbreak continue to rise, many of you are expressing concern over health risks you may be exposed to while providing interpretation services, particularly in hospitals and health centres.

Like all agencies, we are closely monitoring the (COVID-19) outbreak. We are following guidance from PHAC <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html> and will continue to take proactive measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

As it is known that COVID-19 is Droplet infection not airborne infection, so we all have to follow the hygiene recommendations from government health authorities.

We are in contact with the services providers that we work together Please note that the regular appointment at the hospitals are cancelled, Ontario Works cancelled in-person appointments. Regardless, do not attend the assignment that previously assigned to you without consulting us.

We at ITS-Hamilton canceled in-person appointments as we are not equipped to do active and passive screening for walk-in clients.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, as of March 18, 2020 there are 569 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Canada, of which 189 in Ontario, 186 in British Columbia, 97 in Alberta, and 74 in Quebec.

It indicates that:

- 47% of cases are female
- 32% of cases are 60 years old and over
- 12% of cases have been hospitalized
- 8 people have died of COVID-19
- 74% of cases are travellers and 11% are close contacts of travellers

We at ITS-Hamilton, will continue to monitor the situation and to provide regular updates when new information becomes available through public health authorities.

We asked and continue asking service providers to consider the health and safety of our interpreters on assignments, by applying the same protection measures to our interpreters as are in place for their own staff.

We also asked service providers to set the use of phone interpretation in cases where interpreters may be exposed to any possible risk.

We are also planning to be prepared in case of a rapid change in the status of the outbreak to ensure we remain operational and continue to provide access to critical services at a time when they are needed most, while taking all precautions to protect the health and safety of our interpreters.

We kindly ask you to follow measures recommended by public health authorities to protect yourself and prevent the spread of the virus. Latest PHAC recommendations are available <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>. Also, please inform ITS-Hamilton immediately if you have travelled out of Canada within the past 14 days or are experiencing symptoms

As it is likely that more interpretation jobs will be conducted remotely, to limit exposure through in-person interaction, be prepared to accept assignments via phone/video and make sure that you have equipment (e.g. telephone, headset, microphone, high speed internet connection etc.).

Please feel free to contact us if you have further question.

Thank you all for your support and stay safe.

Sincerely,
Belkis Ozer