



March 19, 2020

Berens River Nursing Station  
PO Box 343  
Berens River, MB R0B 0A0

Dear Chief, Councillors, Health Director, and Nurse-In-Charge,

At Ongomizwin Health Services, we are well aware of the careful planning and extensive efforts that you are making to reduce the spread of COVID-19 to your communities. We want to do everything we can to minimize the risk of introducing COVID-19 into the communities that we serve while maintaining essential health services. With these goals in mind, we are implementing changes to the way that we support health services in communities.

After careful consideration, for Beren's River, we will be moving to an offsite Virtual Care model. We will have a family physician dedicated to support the community each week. This physician will be available 24 hours per day on weekdays to provide telephone support to nurses in the community, support for community pandemic preparedness, liaising with referral centres to access specialist advice and when needed transportation for urgent and emergent situations that cannot be safely managed in community. This physician will also ensure prescription medications are renewed as safely as possible.

On weekends, we will continue our routine practice of providing 24 hr per day phone support to nurses for urgent and emergent cases.

At this point, routinely scheduled specialist physician visits will be put on hold. Family physicians supporting communities will work with nursing staff to identify patients in need of urgent specialist support and alternate arrangements will be made.

Lastly, we are working with partners to develop rapid response teams who would be available should a community be found to have a positive case of COVID-19 and need additional support. These teams will be ready to come to community if needed to help with containment and management of cases to minimize spread within the community.

Rady Faculty of  
Health Sciences



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We are committed to supporting you and your community members to minimize the transmission and the impact of COVID-19 in your community.

If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact our Medical Director, Ian Whetter via email at: [ian.whetter@umanitoba.ca](mailto:ian.whetter@umanitoba.ca) or phone at: 204-795-2735.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Melanie MacKinnon.

Melanie MacKinnon  
Head of Ongomiizwin  
Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing

Handwritten signature of Ian Whetter.

Ian Whetter  
Medical Director  
Ongomiizwin Health Services

Handwritten signature of Sara Goulet.

Sara Goulet  
Remote Family Medicine MD  
Ongomiizwin Health Services

Handwritten signature of Marcia Anderson.

Marcia Anderson  
Executive Director  
Indigenous Academic Affairs  
Indigenous Institute of Health & Healing