



North American COVID-19 Policy Response Monitor: Prince Edward Island

July 27, 2020

What is the North American COVID-19 Policy Response Monitor?

The North American COVID-19 policy monitor has been designed to collect and organize up-to-date information on how jurisdictions are responding to the crisis. It summarizes responses of health systems as well as wider public health initiatives. The North American policy monitor is an offshoot of the international COVID-19 Health System Response Monitor (HSRM), a joint undertaking of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the European Commission and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. Canadian content to HSRM is contributed by the North American Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (NAO).

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CPHO	Chief Public Health Officer
EMO	Emergency Measures Organization
F/P/T	Federal/Provincial/Territorial
ICU	Intensive care unit
IT	Information technology
LTC	Long-term care
NAAT	Nucleic acid amplification tests
NESS	National Emergency Strategic Stockpile
NML	National Microbiology Laboratory
PCH	Prince County Hospital
PEI	Prince Edward Island
PHN	Public Health Nurses
PPE	Personal protective equipment
PUI	Person under investigation
QEH	Queen Elizabeth Hospital
ROE	Record of Employment

1. Preventing transmission

This section includes information on key public health measures that aim to prevent the further spread of the disease. It details how jurisdictions are advising the general public and people who (might) have the disease to prevent further spread, as well as measures in place to test and identify cases, trace contacts, and monitor the scale of the outbreak.

1.1 Health communication

The provincial government of Prince Edward Island (PEI) communicates health information and guidance about COVID-19 through provincial government news releases, [COVID-19 website](#) and social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube).

The Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO), Dr. Heather Morrison, started providing updates about the COVID-19 pandemic on February 28, via the [provincial government news website](#) (Prince Edward Island, 2020a). At the time, the provincial government states that the risk to PEI residents (“Islanders”) was low and that they were working closely with federal, provincial and territorial governments to assess public health risk (Prince Edward Island, 2020a). Prevention measures to stay healthy against respiratory viruses were also described, including (Prince Edward Island, 2020a):

- Washing hands frequently with soap and water
- Coughing and sneezing into elbows or tissues
- Staying home when ill with acute respiratory symptoms
- Limiting touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- Avoiding sharing drinking glasses and water bottles
- Frequently cleaning surfaces such as taps, doorknobs and countertops

On March 11, the provincial government launched the PEI COVID-19 information line (1-833-533-9333) for Islanders to contact with questions about COVID-19 (Prince Edward Island, 2020d). The information line is available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, and individuals leaving messages receive call backs within 24 hours from the CPHO (Prince Edward Island, 2020d).

The first positive case of COVID-19 in PEI was confirmed on March 14 by the CPHO (Prince Edward Island, 2020an). Shortly after on March 16, Premier Dennis King declared a public health emergency to ensure the province could further steps to prepare for and prevent the impacts of COVID-19 (Prince Edward Island, 2020i).

On March 19, the [COVID-19 online self-assessment tool](#) for PEI that was developed by Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the Government of Nova Scotia went live (Prince Edward Island, 2020ap).

On April 6, the CPHO began discussing the use of non-medical masks and face coverings with Islanders (Prince Edward Island, 2020ab). She stated that homemade cloth masks were not proven to protect the person wearing it, and should not be used in replacement of public health measures; however, wearing a mask in public where physical distancing is not possible such as on public transit was suggested as appropriate to ensure the safety of those around the person wearing the mask (Prince Edward Island, 2020ab).

On April 16, Premier King extended the state of public health emergency by another 30 days and the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, Minister Thompson, confirmed that the state of emergency would be declared across the province until the end of the month to ensure efficient deployment of resources to assist in the public health response (Prince Edward Island, 2020av). More information about declared state of emergencies can be found in [Section 6.1](#).

On June 11, the Minister of Justice and Public Safety urged Islanders to be careful and vigilant about potential financial scams, and fraudulent financial activity especially in the context of the global pandemic (Prince Edward Island, 2020bk).

1.2 Physical distancing

Schools, childcare facilities and youth camps

On March 10, the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning cancelled all Public Schools Branch sanctioned school trips to Europe for the March Break period (March 16 to March 20), and all school-planned travel abroad for the rest of March (Prince Edward Island, 2020c). They stated that the future student travel opportunities would be reviewed at an appropriate time by the Public School Branch (Prince Edward Island, 2020c). The Department referred Islanders to the provincial website for up to date information about travelling and COVID-19 and advised that students and school staff returning from trips abroad who were feeling well could return to school, while those who were experiencing symptoms should stay home and refer to 811 for instructions (Prince Edward Island, 2020c).

Effective March 17, all public licensed child care centres were closed until further notice and all public schools were closed (initially for two weeks following March Break - March 23 to April 3) (Prince Edward Island, 2020g). For child care centres that could remain open, children who had travelled outside the country or whose parents or caregivers had travelled outside the country were asked not to attend child care centres and to self-isolate for 14 days regardless of whether they are symptomatic or not (Prince Edward Island, 2020f).

On March 27, the CPHO extended closures to schools, daycares, non-essential government services and non-essential businesses (Prince Edward Island, 2020s). Schools and daycares would remain closed for in-person classes and services until May 11, at which point closures would be re-evaluated (Prince Edward Island, 2020s).

On April 30, the provincial government announced several updates for education and schools (Prince Edward Island, 2020ai):

- Effective May 11, designated schools will open to some students who receive individualized supports from educational assistants and youth services workers;
- For the week of June 22, students transitioning to intermediate and high school in Fall 2020 would be able to attend small group tours and activities at schools;
- All school services would be required to adhere to public health guidelines including physical distancing, hygiene protocols and proper cleaning of schools; and
- School bus services would not be available, however, alternative transportation arrangements would be made for families requiring accommodation.

Transition Measures

On May 15, the provincial government announced its plan for expanding and reopening childcare on May 22 as part of Phase 2 of the reopening plan (see [Section 5.2](#) for an overview of the reopening plan) (Prince Edward Island, 2020be). These changes increased the number of licensed childcare centres from 22 to 155; allowed for groups of 5 people, with not more than 20 people in a single centre; and allowed private home-based child care centres to re-open to their full capacity of up to 7 children.

On May 28, Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, Brad Trivers, announced that public health restrictions for child care and schools would be further relaxed effective June 1 (Prince Edward Island, 2020bg), including the following changes:

- Ending the 20 person per licensed child centre cap;
- Increasing the maximum number per pre-school group from 5 to 8;
- Increasing the maximum number per school-aged group from 5 to 15;
- Allowing infants to return to centres;
- In-person appointments and small group sessions to be scheduled at schools;
- Transition sessions for kindergarten students and students moving to new schools; and
- Individualized support for students with educational assistants or youth service workers or including one-to-one counselling for students with significant social-emotional needs.

On June 23, the provincial government announced Phase 4 reopening plans that would go into effect on June 26 (Prince Edward Island, 2020bm). The CPHO stated that further relaxing of restrictions would occur in the context of continuing physical distancing, hand hygiene, and other public health precautions (Prince Edward Island, 2020bm). The easing of restrictions included allowing licensed child care centres to accept an additional 3 children between 22 months and school entry age, increasing the maximum group size from 8 to 11 (Prince Edward Island, 2020bm).

On July 2, the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning announced the province's plan to return all K-12 students to schools in September 2020 (Prince Edward Island, 2020bq). The plan was developed by a provincial Fall Readiness Committee and the CPHO, and involves the following (Prince Edward Island, 2020bq):

- Students working and remaining in groups of the same students as much as possible (i.e., "cohorting"), where cohorts will be required to distance from other groups to limit exposure.
- Configuring classrooms to support physical distancing, reducing class sizes, and when necessary, alternate space such as multi-purpose rooms will be used as classrooms.
- Staggered lunch and recess breaks and drop-off and pick-up times.
- Protocols for moving through the school safely and reducing congestion in hallways and common areas.
- Requiring screening protocols for entering the school and staff and students staying home if unwell.
- Educating students on the importance of physical distancing and hand washing.
- Enhanced cleaning protocols in schools and school buses.
- Reducing numbers of students on buses where possible, by asking parents to transport children where possible.
- Back-up plans in place should public health conditions change.
- Hiring additional teachers and cleaning staff.

On August 4, the provincial government announced that all 152 early learning and child care centres will operate at full capacity starting on September 1 (Prince Edward Island, 2020am). The Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning stated that the department would work closely with the CPHO to ensure appropriate measures are in place to ensure the safety of children, staff, and families (Prince Edward Island, 2020am).

Public and private gatherings

On March 13, the CPHO issued new recommendations regarding travel and physical distancing, that Islanders should reconsider attending social gatherings where 2-metre physical distancing is not possible, especially if elderly or immune-compromised individuals are present (Prince Edward Island, 2020e).

On March 16, the CPHO recommended that all Islanders avoid non-essential activities to reduce the spread of COVID-19 (Prince Edward Island, 2020h). The CPHO also recommended that Islanders who had not travelled and were feeling well should practice social distancing and maintain a 2-metre distance from others (Prince Edward Island, 2020h).

On March 17, the CPHO strongly recommended Islanders to stay home and consider leaving the house for only essential purposes (Prince Edward Island, 2020j). Effective on the same day, funerals were cancelled or rescheduled, while wakes at funeral homes were restricted to family only, with no more than 20 people present (Prince Edward Island, 2020j).

On March 20, the CPHO reiterated the importance of children remaining active and going outside while respecting social distancing by avoiding play in groups and sleepovers (Prince Edward Island, 2020m).

On March 30, the CPHO clarified to Islanders that social distancing was physical distancing and included not visiting family and friends; not having people over at home; not meeting up in groups outdoors; not grocery shopping in groups; not having playdates with children; and if going out for essential items, remaining at least 6 feet away from others (Prince Edward Island, 2020v).

On March 31, the CPHO advised anyone looking to visit summer homes or cottages in PEI should consider waiting until the end of May. Dr. Morrison also reminded Islanders that no in-person, faith-based gatherings should occur in PEI (Prince Edward Island, 2020w).

On April 9, the CPHO reminded Islanders to follow public health guidance over the Easter weekend, asking them to avoid crowding in line ups or inside stores and not holding social gatherings with other households (Prince Edward Island, 2020at).

On April 23, the CPHO clarified that Islanders should not visit anyone they do not live with, even if it is an outdoor setting (Prince Edward Island, 2020ax).

Transition Measures

Effective May 1, outdoor gatherings and non-contact outdoor recreational activities of no more than 5 individuals from different households, while maintaining physical distancing was permitted (Prince Edward Island, 2020az). The new regulation includes recreational fishing both inland and tidal water fisheries, golf courses, and Islanders going to person seasonal properties (Prince Edward Island, 2020az).

Effective May 8, Premier King and the CPHO announced the easing of gathering restrictions (Prince Edward Island, 2020bb):

- Indoors, members of the same household could gather with up to 5 other individuals from different households
- Outdoors, members of the same household could gather with up to 10 other individuals from different households
- Physical distancing is required during gatherings with individuals outside the same household
- Households could be extended by one or two members who are important to supporting the household and/or may need further contact and support.

Premier King and the CPHO reminded Islanders to postpone gatherings who may be at increased risk such as the elderly, the immunocompromised, anyone who has traveled in the last two weeks, or anyone feeling sick (Prince Edward Island, 2020bb).

On May 28, the CPHO announced the changes to restrictions as the province entered Phase 3 of the reopening plan (Prince Edward Island, 2020bh). The easing of restrictions included (Prince Edward Island, 2020bh):

- Gatherings limited to no more than 15 people indoor and 20 people outdoor while maintaining physical distancing with those who are not a part of one's household, and
- For recreational activities and team sports, adhering to the gathering limits (15 indoor, 20 outdoor) and making modifications for sports based on level of physical contact.

On June 23, the provincial government announced Phase 4 reopening plans that would go into effect on June 26 (Prince Edward Island, 2020bm). The CPHO stated that further relaxing of restrictions would occur in the context of continuing physical distancing, hand hygiene, and other public health precautions (Prince Edward Island, 2020bm). The easing of restrictions included allowing gatherings of up to 50 people including for worship services, organized sports, day camps, and events such as weddings and funerals; and maintaining personal gathering limits at 15 people indoor and 20 people outdoor (Prince Edward Island, 2020bm). See [Section 5.2](#) for an overview of the reopening plan.

Non-healthcare business and services

On March 16, community centres and libraries, including events and programming, were cancelled (Prince Edward Island, 2020h). Closures extended the following day on March 17 to bars, theatres, movie theatres, indoor play areas, and in-room dining at restaurants (only pick-up, delivery, and drive-thru options permitted) (Prince Edward Island, 2020j).

On March 17, the CPHO directed law enforcement agencies to suspend and scale back services, including suspending elective fingerprinting, criminal records checks, and vulnerable sector checks (Prince Edward Island, 2020i). Law enforcement agencies' responses to reports of crime and non-emergency complaints were also moved to phone response where possible and officers began wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks (Prince Edward Island, 2020i).

On March 21, a list of essential services was published on the New Brunswick website (Prince Edward Island, 2020k, 2020n). The provincial government defined essential services as services which when

interrupted would “endanger the life, health, or personal safety of the whole or part of the population” (Prince Edward Island, 2020k). The list of essential services¹, by sector, included:

- Financial services, such as capital markets, and related securities trading and advisory services, banking/Credit Union activities including credit intermediation, insurance, and real estate trading and agency related services.
- Health and wellness services, such as health care operations, urgent care providers, dental, pharmacies, allied health services, and urgent care/support providers.
- Personal services, such as auto and bicycle repair shops, banks, computer and cellphone service and repair, veterinary clinics and hospitals, and moving firms.
- Public services, such as government officials, fire, police and security services, court services, child protection services, funeral directors, professional services, garbage, and recycling and waste management collection.
- Retail, such as food premises for takeout, drive through, and delivery service only, supermarkets and grocery stores, food banks, convenience stores, and hardware stores.
- Supply chain, such as agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries services, food distribution, and manufacturers.

Under public health orders, essential services that are allowed to operate must follow preventative measures for reducing the spread of COVID-19. These measures include (Prince Edward Island, 2020k):

- Ensuring minimal interaction between people within 2 metres of each other;
- Ensuring employees who are required to self-isolate are prevented from entering workplaces and developing and following exclusion policies to ensure symptomatic employees are immediately excluded from work activities;
- Developing and following plans that detail how risk of transmission of disease will be mitigated;
- Ensuring enhanced cleaning and disinfection of shared areas and surfaces, and availability of handwashing stations;
- Remain up to date with future directions about operation of businesses and services from the CPHO.

On March 27, the CPHO extended closures of non-essential government services and non-essential businesses indefinitely (Prince Edward Island, 2020s).

Transition measures

Phase 1 of the reopening plan came into effect on May 1 (see [Section 5.2](#) for an overview of the reopening plan). This allowed outdoor and construction services, including landscaping, road construction, indoor construction projects, watershed clean-up and outdoor photography to resume with physical distancing practices in place (Prince Edward Island, 2020az).

On May 8, the provincial government announced that select Access PEI locations would reopen to the public on May 12 with modified service and public health precautions in place, including reduced waiting room capacity to allow for 2-metre physical distancing, and enhanced cleaning procedures (Prince Edward Island, 2020ba). They also announced that beginning May 25, commercial vehicle and motorcycle road testing would resume on a limited basis along with written exams (Prince Edward Island, 2020ba).

¹ Liquor stores were not considered essential

On May 14, the provincial government reported that certain services would resume over the course of the month, in accordance with Phase 2 of the reopening plan (Prince Edward Island, 2020bd). Some examples include waste management facilities accepting additional items at drop-off centres (effective May 19); cannabis retail stores reopening with limited hours (effective May 22); provincial courts in Georgetown, Charlottetown and Summerside resuming on a limited basis (effective May 22); and provincial liquor stores reopening (effective May 25).

The provincial government announced on May 22 that as Access PEI opens, it will reserve Tuesday mornings from 8:30AM to 11:30AM for seniors (60 years or older), effective until further notice. (Prince Edward Island, 2020bf).

On May 28, the CPHO announced the changes to restrictions effective June 12 as the province entered Phase 3 of the reopening plan (Prince Edward Island, 2020bh). The easing of restrictions included (Prince Edward Island, 2020bh):

- Indoor dining being permitted at restaurants with a maximum seating capacity of 50 patrons, no set seating capacity for outdoor dining areas, and physical distancing maintained between patrons at different tables and between patrons at the bar or in waiting areas for both indoor and outdoor seating areas; and
- Re-opening of gyms, libraries, personal services, day camps, campgrounds, and other public facilities.

On May 29, Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, Steven Myers, announced that provincial liquor stores would expand hours of service, all as part of the Phase 3 re-opening plan, effective June 1 (Prince Edward Island, 2020bi).

On June 9, the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy announced that Access PEI office in Montague began offering driver's license renewals, vehicle registration renewals, and address changes by email and phone as part of a pilot of contactless services (Prince Edward Island, 2020bj).

On June 11, the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy announced that the Highway Safety Division would be piloting the use of dashboard cameras and Bluetooth or radio communication devices to provide contactless driver testing for Class 5 passenger vehicles (Prince Edward Island, 2020bl). The technology is currently used for motorcycle road tests and was piloted for commercial tractor trailers the previous month (Prince Edward Island, 2020bl). The technology allows instructors and participants to maintain a safe physical distance (Prince Edward Island, 2020bl).

On June 23, the provincial government announced Phase 4 reopening plans that would go into effect on June 26 (Prince Edward Island, 2020bm). The CPHO stated that further relaxing of restrictions would occur in the context of continuing physical distancing, hand hygiene, and other public health precautions (Prince Edward Island, 2020bm). The easing of restrictions included reopening of businesses providing personal services such as facials and piercings and reopening of businesses providing accommodations for non-PEI residents such as campgrounds, hospitality homes, inns, and bed and breakfasts (Prince Edward Island, 2020bm).

On July 16, the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning announced that all 26 public libraries would reopen to Islanders with reduced services and safety measures in place (Prince Edward Island,

2020al). Effective July 20, Islanders would be able to enter libraries to borrow books, DVDs, musical instruments, and access computers by appointment (Prince Edward Island, 2020al). Since June 12, libraries have been offering curbside service only (Prince Edward Island, 2020al). Library services which were not made available included public seating and room rentals; children's toys, puzzles and games; and in-person library programming (Prince Edward Island, 2020al). In addition, screening, physical distancing and enhanced cleaning measures were put in place to keep staff and Islanders safe (Prince Edward Island, 2020al).

Outdoor facilities

Effective March 17, the Mark Arendz Provincial Ski Park and all provincially run visitor information centres were closed (Prince Edward Island, 2020g).

On April 9, the provincial government announced that the recreational fishing season would be delayed until at least June 1 (Prince Edward Island, 2020ae).

Transition Measures

On May 7, Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture, Matthew MacKay stated that provincial day parks would open on June 5, including mountain bike trails at Brookvale; Brudenell River Golf Course and The Links at Crowbush Cove would reopen May 15; Dundarave Golf Course would reopen May 22; and all provincial campgrounds would open on June 26 only to those who had booked their campsite before March 31 (Prince Edward Island, 2020aj). All provincial golf courses, day parks, and campgrounds would be required to adhere to public health guidelines for physical distancing, cleaning and disinfection (Prince Edward Island, 2020aj).

On May 14, the provincial government announced that the spring lobster season would open on May 15 as part of the reopening plan, delayed from opening earlier in the spring (Prince Edward Island, 2020bc).

On May 29, the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy announced that provincial parks would be open for day use, effective June 1, as part of the Phase 3 re-opening plan (Prince Edward Island, 2020bi).

On June 30, the Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture announced that provincial park campgrounds would reopen additional sites beginning July 8 (Prince Edward Island, 2020bp). All provincial park campgrounds are open at 50% capacity to allow for physical distancing (Prince Edward Island, 2020bp).

Healthcare facilities

Effective March 17, all dental clinics and optometry appointments were cancelled, except for emergency appointments that were handled on a case-by-case basis (Prince Edward Island, 2020j).

Transition Measures

On June 23, the provincial government announced Phase 4 reopening plans that would go into effect on June 26 (Prince Edward Island, 2020bm). The CPHO stated that further relaxing of restrictions would occur in the context of continuing physical distancing, hand hygiene, and other public health precautions (Prince Edward Island, 2020bm). The easing of restrictions included resuming all non-urgent health care services (Prince Edward Island, 2020bm).

As of July 21, the following measures are in place in healthcare facilities (Health PEI, 2020d):

- Providing healthcare workers with all necessary PPE;
- Requiring medical masks to be worn by all staff or physicians who cannot physically distance from patients, masks are not required or needed in areas where physical barriers such as plexiglass, are used;
- Staff who do not provide direct patient care can choose to wear non-medical or cloth masks at work;
- Staggering breaks;
- Booking larger boardrooms; and
- Avoiding meetings in the hallways.

Long-term care facilities

On March 15, the CPHO announced orders to restrict visitors to all public and private long-term care (LTC) and community care facilities (CPHO, 2020c; Prince Edward Island, 2020f).

On April 28, Premier King and the CPHO reported that visitor restrictions in LTC facilities would be maintained through Phase 1 of reopening (Prince Edward Island, 2020az).

Transition Measures

On May 28, the CPHO announced the changes to restrictions as the province entered Phase 3 of the reopening plan (Prince Edward Island, 2020bh). The easing of restrictions permits outdoor visits at LTC facilities with a maximum of two designated visitors per resident (CPHO, 2020c; Prince Edward Island, 2020bh); and visitations for compassionate reasons and palliative care (CPHO, 2020c; Prince Edward Island, 2020bh).

On June 25, a public health order was issued prohibiting staff from working in multiple nursing homes and LTC facilities (CPHO, 2020d).

On June 26, the CPHO announced the easing of restrictions included allowing scheduled indoor visits with up to 2 individuals and additional access for clergy at private and public LTC facilities (CPHO, 2020c; Prince Edward Island, 2020bm).

Other facilities

On March 27, Social Development and Housing Minister Ernie Hudson announced that the Community Outreach Centre in Charlottetown temporarily relocated to Birchwood Intermediate School to ensure social distancing (Prince Edward Island, 2020t).

1.3 Isolation and quarantine

On February 28, the CPHO began recommending that travellers who had been to Hubei, China voluntarily self-isolate for 14 days after leaving China (Prince Edward Island, 2020a). Self-isolation was described as staying home and not attending school or work (Prince Edward Island, 2020a). Islanders were encouraged to call 811 and connect with local public health for further advice and support, as well as to report if they developed any new onset of symptoms including fever, cough, or difficulty breathing (Prince Edward Island, 2020a). In addition, the CPHO recommended that travellers to other areas affected by COVID-19 should monitor themselves and their children closely for 14 days upon returning home, and to call 811 if

they develop any new onset of symptoms (Prince Edward Island, 2020a). At the time, the list of affected areas included Mainland China, Hong Kong, Iran, Italy, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea (Prince Edward Island, 2020a):

The CPHO also recommended that Islanders be aware of health risks when travelling and encouraged visiting the Government of Canada's [Travel Advisory webpage](#) (Prince Edward Island, 2020a).

On March 9, the CPHO advised all Islanders travelling outside of Canada to take precautions and closely monitor their health for 14 days after returning home. The precautions that the CPHO advised travellers to take for a two week period upon arrival in Canada included avoiding attending large gatherings, delaying visits to elderly people or anyone with medical conditions, and calling 811 for instructions on managing new symptoms, as indicated above (Prince Edward Island, 2020b).

The CPHO issued new recommendations regarding travel and physical distancing on March 13 (Prince Edward Island, 2020e). The new recommendation requires Islanders (including healthcare workers, teachers, and students) who travelled outside of Canada to self-isolate for 14 days upon return, whether they are experiencing symptoms or not (Prince Edward Island, 2020e). The CPHO also recommended that Islanders cancel all non-essential travel outside of Canada and to reconsider attending social gatherings where 2-metre physical distancing is not possible, especially if individuals who are elderly or immune-compromised are present (Prince Edward Island, 2020e).

On March 14, the CPHO clarified that the recommendation to self-isolate for two weeks after international travel only applies to travel effective March 8 onwards (Prince Edward Island, 2020an). The CPHO also clarified that essential travel involved the movement of goods and transportation of people, such as truck drivers and airline crews across borders, who could continue work but were asked to self-monitor daily and to self-isolate and call 811 if they begin to experience symptoms (Prince Edward Island, 2020an). Family members or others living with workers who must travel for their work could continue their activities as normal and follow good hygiene practice; however, if the person they are living with should need to self-isolate they would also be required to self-isolate and monitor symptoms until test results are confirmed (Prince Edward Island, 2020an).

On March 20, Environmental Health Officers were stationed at Charlottetown airport to pass out self-isolation information sheets in French and English to travelers as they land (Prince Edward Island, 2020m).

Effective March 21, the CPHO directed anyone travelling to PEI from another region of Canada to self-isolate for 14 days, in addition to the existing measures for international travellers (Prince Edward Island, 2020n). Exceptions would be allowed for essential workers (e.g. healthcare worker, truck drivers, airline crews, essential frontline workers in public or private sectors, workers in critical sectors), who would be screened upon entry into the province, and asked to self-monitor daily for symptoms of COVID-19 and self-isolate if they experience symptoms of COVID-19 (Prince Edward Island, 2020n).

On March 23, the CPHO issued orders to fine anyone who is not complying with directions to self-isolate (Prince Edward Island, 2020o). The penalties are a fine of CA\$1,000 for first offences; CA\$2,000 for second offences; and CA\$10,000 for a third offence and every offence afterward (Prince Edward Island, 2020o).

On March 24, the provincial government announced a new toll-free phone number (1-833-533-9333) for Islanders to contact if they are in self-isolation and have no one to deliver necessary supplies such as food, medication, and pet supplies (Prince Edward Island, 2020p).

On March 25, the CPHO clarified that those who are self-isolating should remain on their own property when outside while those living in apartment buildings should remain on the property of the building when outside (Prince Edward Island, 2020q).

On April 1, the CPHO clarified that Islanders who are self-isolating should not visit banks unless for essential transactions only (Prince Edward Island, 2020y).

On April 2, the CPHO clarified that if an individual is self-isolating following travel, members of the household should maintain physical distancing from them, ensure enhanced cleaning of all shared spaces, and designate a separate bedroom and bathroom for the individual self-isolating (Prince Edward Island, 2020z). If these measures are not possible, all members of the household must self-isolate for 14 days as well (Prince Edward Island, 2020z).

On April 9, the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy announced the partnership with the PEI Trucking Sector Council, Emergency Measures Organization and Rodd Royalty Inn & Suites to make rooms available for truck drivers to practice self-isolation between trips (Prince Edward Island, 2020au). Rooms would be available at reduced rates of CA\$20 per night billed to the driver's company for drivers who booked a room (Prince Edward Island, 2020au).

On May 28, the CPHO announced the changes to restrictions as the province entered Phase 3 of the reopening plan, which would allow seasonal residents of PEI to apply for visits in the summer with a self-isolation plan in place, effective June 1 (Prince Edward Island, 2020bh).

On June 24, Premier King announced that the four Atlantic provinces would form a travel bubble ("Atlantic bubble") starting on July 3 that would permit non-essential travel within the region without requiring self-isolation for 14 days (Prince Edward Island, 2020bn). However, other public health and screening measures would be required, such a self-declaration form, public health and proof of residency screening at all entry points, and physical distancing, hand hygiene and self-isolation for symptomatic individuals (Prince Edward Island, 2020bn). More information about the travel and mobility is reported in [Section 6.2](#).

The bubble would still require Islanders returning from travel from outside Atlantic Canada for 14 days before travelling within the region again (Prince Edward Island, 2020bn). Seasonal residents entering from outside Atlantic Canada would still need to apply for pre-approved travel to PEI and have a 14-day self-isolation plan (Prince Edward Island, 2020bn). After completion of the self-isolation period, seasonal residents would be permitted to participate in the travel bubble (Prince Edward Island, 2020bn). Atlantic Canadians traveling to PEI are required to apply within 2 days of their scheduled arrival date (Prince Edward Island, 2020bo). The online self-declaration form is available [online](#) along with further information about the travel bubble.

1.4 Monitoring and surveillance

Screening and surveillance

On March 11, the province first began screening for COVID-19 by having individuals who believed they may have COVID-19 symptoms calling 811 (Prince Edward Island, 2020af). In the following week on March 19, the online self-assessment tool for screening went live (Prince Edward Island, 2020af) and on March 21 new screening measures were being instated at all points of entry into the province including Charlottetown Airport, Confederation Bridge and Magdalene Island Ferry dock (Prince Edward Island, 2020n).

On March 30, the CPHO announced that screening measures at entry points into the province had been strengthened, with additional information now being collected from travellers, including where they travelled from, where they are going, and whether they have a support system in place to deliver supplies while in self-isolation (Prince Edward Island, 2020v).

On April 1, the provincial government announced additional screening and enforcement measures at Confederation Bridge, involving stopping individuals to determine whether travel into PEI is essential, and to ask non-Islanders travelling unnecessarily to turn around (Prince Edward Island, 2020ar). Screening of travellers into the province will assess whether they are within any of the following categories considered essential: essential workers commuting for work; essential workers in trade and transportation sectors moving goods and people across borders; Islanders returning from out-of-province travel, medical appointments, or students returning home; and individuals coming on compassionate grounds (Prince Edward Island, 2020ar).

Effective April 16, as part of the state of emergency, individuals travelling to PEI would be required to disclose the purpose of their travel to determine whether it is essential and points of entry across the province would continue to be monitored and controlled (Prince Edward Island, 2020av).

On April 28, Premier King and the CPHO reported that border screening and self-isolating practices for everyone entering the province would be required for the foreseeable future (Prince Edward Island, 2020az).

Contact tracing

Public Health Nursing (PHN) carries out and completes contact tracing (CPHO, 2020b). Contact tracing and counselling is completed for all reported cases (CPHO, 2020b). Close contacts are defined as:

- Individuals providing care for the case, including healthcare workers, family members or other caregivers, or who had other similar close physical contact without consistent and appropriate use of PPE, OR
- Individuals who lived with or otherwise had close prolonged contact, within 2 metres, with a probable or confirmed case while the case was ill, OR
- Individuals who have had direct contact with infectious body fluids of a probable or confirmed case while not wearing recommended PPE.

Individuals identified by PHN as contacts will be instructed to self-isolate and monitor for symptoms for 14 days and receive follow-up with PHN daily, testing will occur if symptoms arise (CPHO, 2020b).

On May 8, with the easing of physical distancing restrictions, Premier King and the CPHO encouraged Islanders to maintain a log of individuals they had contact with to aid the CPHO in contact tracing if needed (Prince Edward Island, 2020bb).

Data collection

Health PEI collects and reports data on the provincial COVID-19 website on total numbers of tests conducted, persons under investigation, negative results, recovered cases, and total cases (Prince Edward Island, 2020as). Data on the gender, age, and location of cases is also collected and reported (Prince Edward Island, 2020as).

Projections and modelling

On April 14, the provincial government released COVID-19 modelling that reported the following projects by June 1 (Prince Edward Island, 2020af):

- Total hospital stays: 120 with strong controls in place; 14,000 with mild controls in place
- Acute care bed needs: 15 with strong controls in place; 3,250 with mild controls in place
- Critical care bed needs: 4 with strong controls in place; 840 with mild control measures in place
- Total fatalities: 9 with strong controls in place; 900 with mild controls in place

In these models, the provincial government defined mild control measures as a low degree of physical distancing; a high proportion of cases identified and isolated; a low proportion of contacts traced and quarantined; and a low proportion of self-isolation by out-of-province travellers (Prince Edward Island, 2020ag). Strong control measures were defined as a high degree of physical distancing; a high proportion of cases identified and isolated; a high proportion of contacts traced and quarantined; and high proportion of self-isolation by out-of-province travellers (Prince Edward Island, 2020ag). The CPHO stated that the next steps in the modelling were to assess scenarios for modifying public health measures and testing strategies to control the pandemic without overwhelming the health system (Prince Edward Island, 2020af).

1.5 Testing

Assessment centres

On March 25, the provincial government and Health PEI announced deployment of a National Emergency Strategic Stockpile (NESS) Mini Clinic in Charlottetown that would operate similarly to an outpatient clinic to allow increased testing capacity and divert visits to hospitals (Prince Edward Island, 2020q). The clinic is one of 4 clinics provided by the federal government across the country (Prince Edward Island, 2020q).

On March 27, the provincial government and Health PEI announced the establishment of two cough and fever clinics, one in the Charlottetown area and one in the Summerside area (Prince Edward Island, 2020r). The clinics are appointment only and would allow physicians to refer patients with coughs or fevers to them and allow for COVID-19 assessment for individuals without family physicians or nurse practitioners (Prince Edward Island, 2020r). Individuals could receive a referral to the clinics by calling 811 or contacting their physician or nurse practitioner (Prince Edward Island, 2020r). Islanders who do not meet the criteria for assessment would be directed to their family physician or walk-in clinic (Prince Edward Island, 2020r). However, children 2 years old and younger with a cough and fever were recommended to be taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) and Prince County Hospital (PCH) emergency departments. The clinics

would allow for timely assessment while diverting patients with coughs and fevers from Primary Care Clinics, Emergency Departments, and Walk-in Clinics (Prince Edward Island, 2020r). The clinics are separate from COVID-19 testing clinics (Prince Edward Island, 2020r). The cough and fever clinics opened on March 31, as well as drive-thru testing centres each in Charlottetown and Summerside (Prince Edward Island, 2020w).

On April 6, the provincial government clarified that cough and fever clinics also offered telephone assessments, if necessary (Prince Edward Island, 2020ab).

On July 10, Health PEI announced that a new testing site for PEI residents who are essential workers was established near Confederation Bridge in Borden and would open on July 13 (Prince Edward Island, 2020br). Essential workers returning to the province after travelling outside of the province for work would be able to drop-in to the testing site and be swabbed for COVID-19 (Prince Edward Island, 2020br).

Testing criteria

The following definitions are used for persons under investigation, confirmed cases, probable cases, and exposure criteria (CPHO, 2020b):

- In the 14 days preceding onset of illness, individuals meeting **exposure criteria** will have traveled outside PEI OR had close contact with a confirmed or probable case OR had close contact with a person with acute respiratory illness who has travelled outside of PEI OR have laboratory exposure to biological material known to contain COVID-19 (CPHO, 2020b).
- *Person under investigation (PUI)* are individuals with fever and/or cough who meet exposure criteria and for whom a laboratory test for COVID-19 has been or is expected to be requested (CPHO, 2020b).
- *Confirmed cases* are individuals with laboratory confirmation of infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 that was performed at a reference laboratory (National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) or provincial public health laboratory) and consists of positive nucleic acid amplification tests (NAAT) on at least two specific genome targets or a single positive target with nucleic acid sequencing (CPHO, 2020b).
- *Probable cases* are defined as individuals with fever (over 38 degrees Celsius) and/or new onset of or exacerbation of a chronic cough AND who meet exposure criteria AND in whom laboratory diagnosis of COVID-19 is inconclusive, negative with suspect specimen quality or timing, or positive but not confirmed at NML or provincial public health laboratory by NAAT (CPHO, 2020b).

Until March 21, testing criteria only included individuals who had symptoms of fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, or marked fatigue and had traveled outside of Canada in the past 14 days or close contact with a confirmed case or person under investigation (CPHO, 2020b).

On March 23, testing criteria was expanded to individuals with additional symptoms of joint pain, muscle aches, those admitted to a hospital or intensive care unit (ICU), and healthcare workers with cough and/or fever (CPHO, 2020b).

Testing criteria were again expanded a month later on April 23 to ensure that staff members who work at more than one LTC facility were tested (Prince Edward Island, 2020ax). This allowed the following

individuals to obtain testing: anyone experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19, close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases, anyone admitted to hospital or ICUs with respiratory symptoms, residents being admitted to LTC and residents in LTC facilities experiencing symptoms, and staff members working at more than one LTC facility (Prince Edward Island, 2020ax). At the time, mandating testing for long haul truckers residing in PEI was being considered (Prince Edward Island, 2020ax).

As of July 24, testing for COVID-18 is recommended for all of the following individuals (Prince Edward Island, 2020ay):

- Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms;
- Anyone who was in close contact with a confirmed case 48 hours before onset of symptoms in the case;
- Anyone hospitalized with influenza-like-illness;
- Anyone admitted to an intensive care unit with any respiratory symptom;
- Admitted patients at hospitals, addictions treatment facilities, and inpatient psychiatry units;
- Healthcare workers with fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing, congestion or unusual fatigue;
- Healthcare workers who travel to PEI to work or who travelled out of the province;
- Staff at the QEH Microbiology Laboratory;
- New residents in LTC centres
- LTC residents with fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing, congestion, or unusual fatigue;
- All staff and residents who are close contacts of a positive LTC case;
- LTC staff who work at more than one health care site should be tested on a regular basis;
- Patients transferring between healthcare facilities;
- Temporary foreign workers at the end of 14 day self-isolation;
- Essential workers with frequent travel outside of PEI (e.g. long-haul truck drivers); and
- Others as indicated by the CPHO or Medical Microbiologist.

Laboratory and testing capacity

At the end of March, PEI had no local testing capacity for COVID-19 and relied on sending tests to Moncton and the NML in Winnipeg (CBC News, 2020).

On April 2, the CPHO announced that limited testing for COVID-19 as available in PEI, in addition to use of the NML in Winnipeg (Prince Edward Island, 2020z).

By April 10, the provincial government was able to acquire two testing systems, increasing local testing capacity to 70 to 100 tests per day with capacity to do 280 tests per day (CBC News, 2020). The provincial government's plan to acquire further testing equipment would bring testing capacity up to 2 000 tests per day (CBC News, 2020).

2. Ensuring sufficient physical infrastructure and workforce capacity

Infrastructure and workforce capacity are crucial for dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak, as there may be both a surge in demand and a decreased availability of health workers. This section considers the physical infrastructure available in the jurisdiction and where there are shortages, it describes any measures being implemented or planned to address them. It also considers the health workforce, including what jurisdictions are doing to maintain or enhance capacity, the responsibilities and skill-mix of the workforce, and any initiatives to train, protect or otherwise support health workers.

2.1 Physical infrastructure

Health system capacity

Effective March 17, all dental clinics and optometry appointments were cancelled, see Section 1 for further information on closures (Prince Edward Island, 2020j).

On March 17, the CPHO reminded Islanders to call ahead if they have a health-related appointment booked and if not considered essential to consider rebooking the appointment (Prince Edward Island, 2020j).

On June 23, the provincial government announced Phase 4 reopening plans that would go into effect on June 26, allowing resumption of all non-urgent health care services in the context of continuing public health precautions (Prince Edward Island, 2020bm).

Medical equipment and supplies

On March 20, the CPHO asked Islanders to avoid stock piling medications to prevent shortages for those who need them and to speak to their pharmacist about reasonable supplies of medication (Prince Edward Island, 2020m).

Effective March 21, the CPHO stated that pharmacies would be limiting prescription refills to a maximum of 30 days to ensure fair access to medications for all Islanders (Prince Edward Island, 2020n).

On March 31, Premier King launched PEI [Sourced Solutions](#), an online portal to help Islanders and businesses to address challenges of the pandemic such as need for medical supplies, virtual care services, and to share ideas on how to address the impacts of the pandemic (Prince Edward Island, 2020u). Premier King also stated that the portal would identify the potential supply and service challenges that the province would face and allow individuals and businesses to respond to opportunities for procuring goods and services as well as sharing creative solutions for directing resources and new ways for conducting business (Prince Edward Island, 2020u).

On March 31, Marion Dowling, Chief of Nursing, Allied Health and Patient Experience at Health PEI announced that Health PEI would be sourcing PPE from local and international vendors (Prince Edward Island, 2020w). The Chief Nursing Officer stated that while Health PEI had enough supplies to meet immediate needs, it would be essential to maintain and conserve the supply (Prince Edward Island, 2020w).

On July 14, the CPHO announced that patients in emergency departments across the province would be required to wear a mask, due to high volumes of patients in waiting and triage areas (Prince Edward Island, 2020ak). In addition, masking would be required in psychiatric urgent care facilities (Prince Edward Island, 2020ak). The CPHO stated that patients visiting any of those facilities should bring their own masks if possible, otherwise they would be provided with one on arrival (Prince Edward Island, 2020ak).

2.2 Workforce

Workforce capacity

On March 19, Health PEI issued a call for any retired or otherwise qualified healthcare staff such as nurses, clinical staff, volunteers, and physicians of all specialties who wish to assist in PEI's COVID-19 efforts to contact (902) 368-4927 (Prince Edward Island, 2020aq).

Workforce support

On March 18, the Premier announced emergency child care services would be available to essential workers without alternatives (Prince Edward Island, 2020ao). Essential workers with children who wish to request child care were provided with the online form at Emergency Child Care Services (Prince Edward Island, 2020ao).

On March 31, the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning provided an update on the plan for daycare services for Islanders who work in essential services, centre-based child care would be available for children over 2 years old and who are not immunocompromised (Prince Edward Island, 2020x). For children who are immunocompromised or with family members who are, in-home children care would be provided (Prince Edward Island, 2020x). The Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning clarified that childcare would be implemented over the course of April, and that the department will work with the Early Childhood Development Association to ensure health and safety protocols are in place for reopened centres (Prince Edward Island, 2020x).

On April 28, Premier King and the CPHO reported that child care for essential service workers and home-based learning options would be maintained through Phase 1 of reopening (Prince Edward Island, 2020az).

As of July 21, the following measures are in place to support and protect healthcare workers (Health PEI, 2020d):

- Providing healthcare workers with necessary PPE such as masks, gowns, gloves, and hand sanitizer;
- Continuing to pay active casual employees and active temporary or permanent employees without adequate paid sick leave should they test positive for COVID-19, for up to 2 weeks or until they are cleared to return to work, whichever is sooner, in extenuating circumstances, paid leave may be authorized in excess of 2 weeks; and
- Travel reimbursement for employees who are reassigned or redeployed to alternate work sites.

Additional financial workforce supports are detailed in [Section 6.4](#).

3. Providing health services effectively

This section describes approaches for service delivery planning and patient pathways for suspected COVID-19 cases. It also considers efforts by jurisdictions to maintain other essential services during periods of excessive demand for health services.

3.1 Planning services

On March 15, the Chief Nursing Officer reported that the pandemic plan would include moving to essential health service delivery only, meaning that elective procedures or appointments would be rescheduled, offered by home-based programming, or deferred (Prince Edward Island, 2020f). The Chief Nursing Officer also clarified that Islanders would still be able to access primary care, prenatal and newborn care, emergency care and urgent care among other essential services.

The Chief Nursing Officer announced on April 3 that the essential services plan for Health PEI would be re-evaluated every 3 weeks and until changes were announced, Islanders could phone ahead for medical appointments and still visit the emergency department or phone 911 for non-COVID-19 medical emergencies (Prince Edward Island, 2020aa).

On April 22, the Chief Nursing Officer reported that work was underway to coordinate the gradual reintroduction of health services, with each service undergoing a public health risk assessment (Prince Edward Island, 2020aw).

On May 19, the CPHO published its pandemic contingency plan for the health sector (CPHO, 2020a). The plan details the frameworks for emergency management and planning, ethical decision making, key components of protecting the health of the public, key components of delivery of health services and mitigating risk, and aims of communications and research (CPHO, 2020a).

3.2 Managing cases

Health PEI recommends that cases and PUIs are to be managed with droplet/contact precautions in healthcare facilities until the person is no longer symptomatic or the test is confirmed (CPHO, 2020b). Precautions including self-isolation are continued for up to 14 days after symptoms began, as long as the case feels better (CPHO, 2020b). Health PEI does not recommend any specific treatment for COVID-19, however, treatment for symptoms can be offered according to individual clinical condition (CPHO, 2020b). If required, cases may be hospitalized should their condition deteriorate (CPHO, 2020b).

On April 2, the Chief Nursing Officer clarified that COVID-19 patients requiring hospitalization would be seen at PCH or QEH (Prince Edward Island, 2020z). Patients requiring intensive care in hospital would be seen at QEH and if capacity at QEH is reached, PCH would take over this level of care for future patients (Prince Edward Island, 2020z).

3.3 Maintaining essential services

Physical activity services and programs

On March 19, Minister of Health and Wellness, James Aylward, encouraged Islanders to connect to the online initiative by go!PEI and community fitness leaders called Live at Home to encourage physical

activity while staying home (Prince Edward Island, 2020aq). The Minister of Health and Wellness described Live at Home as offering online resources and workouts to remain active from home, including 10 live sessions per week planned between March 19 and April 12, 2020 at 10AM and 7PM daily (Prince Edward Island, 2020aq). The program can be accessed through the [Go!PEI Facebook page](#) (Prince Edward Island, 2020aq).

Clinical services and programs

On March 20, the CPHO encouraged Islanders who are not self-isolating to consider blood donation if feeling well and without a history of international travel (Prince Edward Island, 2020m).

On April 9, the Chief Nursing Officer reminded Islanders with ongoing health concerns to call their physician or nurse practitioner to access care for existing conditions (Prince Edward Island, 2020at).

On August 3, the provincial government announced a partnership with telemedicine provider, Maple, called the Virtual Care for Patients without a Primary Care Provider program to provide Islanders with access to a PEI physician through their smartphones, tablets, or computers at designated clinic hours (Prince Edward Island, 2020bs). Maple is a technology platform providing virtual care solutions for hospitals and clinics aiming to expand delivery of care (Prince Edward Island, 2020bs). The program is being made first available to Islanders who have been on the Provincial Patient Registry waitlist for a primary care provider the longest (Prince Edward Island, 2020bs).

Violence prevention

On March 27, the provincial government provided a link to [list of resources](#) for individuals experiencing family violence or who know of family violence taking place (Prince Edward Island, 2020t).

On April 8, Minister of Justice and Public Safety provided an update on supports for individuals experiencing family violence (Prince Edward Island, 2020ad). The Minister of Justice and Public Safety announced that the Special Cabinet Committee on Family Violence Prevention was established to ensure parents, children and individuals at risk of family violence could have appropriate resources available during this time (Prince Edward Island, 2020ad). The Minister of Justice and Public Safety highlighted COVID-19 specific online resources for individuals and families including resources on alcohol and cannabis use; avoiding financial scams; workbooks for kids; home care FAQ sheets; colouring pages; the evidence-based Triple P Positive Parenting Program; safety tips for food delivery, drive thru and takeout; home learning resources; co-parenting; and information sheets for supporting children and youth and on mental health programs (Prince Edward Island, 2020ad). Minister for the Status of Women, Natalie Jameson, also reminded Islanders that supports were available for those experiencing domestic abuse or violence and fleeing their homes (Prince Edward Island, 2020ad). Phone numbers for Child Protection Services and emergency shelters were provided (Prince Edward Island, 2020ad):

- Child Protection Services at 1-877-341-3101 or after hours 1-800-341-6868
- Emergency shelters, including for survivors of family violence 1-833-220-4722

Child and family meal programs

On March 31, the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning announced that the province would work with the Public Schools Branch, PEI Home and School Federation, Breakfast Club of Canada, and Pure Kitchen to assist families dealing with food insecurity (Prince Edward Island, 2020x). Effective the week of

March 31, families could register for support to receive nutritious, prepared meals and snacks by contacting Support for Families at 902-368-5155 or emailing supportforfamilies@edu.pe.ca (Prince Edward Island, 2020x).

On April 7, the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning reported that the School Food Team Initiative, in partnership with the Department of Social Development and Housing, PEI Home and School Federation and Breakfast Club of Canada were providing almost 3 000 health meals and snacks to Island students in the absence of regular school breakfast and lunch programs during the school closure period (Prince Edward Island, 2020ac). The Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning also provided the update that 11 emergency child care centres were up and running, with 13 other centres ready to be used when needed (Prince Edward Island, 2020ac).

Mental health, addictions, and substance use disorder services programs

On April 1, the Chief Nursing Officer announced that patients requiring acute mental health admission would be redirected from emergency rooms to psychiatric urgent care clinics, except for individuals who require medical stabilization (Prince Edward Island, 2020y). The first of these clinics opened on April 1 at the Hillsborough Hospital (Prince Edward Island, 2020y). Individuals with non-urgent mental health and addictions cases not requiring admission would continue to be served via Community Mental Health Clinics and walk-in/call-in services (Prince Edward Island, 2020y).

On April 1, the provincial government confirmed that the liquor stores in O’Leary and Souris would provide limited access to address the needs of Islanders at risk of alcohol withdrawal symptoms (Prince Edward Island, 2020ar). The provincial government also stated that cannabis products would continue to be available for purchase online, but not in-person stores (Prince Edward Island, 2020ar).

On April 6, the Chief Nursing Officer announced that secure virtual care platforms for physicians, nurse practitioners and mental health and addictions would launch that week to reduce the need for in-person visits (Prince Edward Island, 2020ab).

On April 22, Chief of Mental Health and Addictions at Health PEI, Dr. Heather Keizer, highlighted that Islanders should reach out for support by telephone and video services to support their mental health (Prince Edward Island, 2020ah). On April 22, the Chief of Mental Health and Addictions (Dr. Keizer) announced that a Psychiatric Urgent Care Clinic was established at PCH in Summerside, in addition to the one at Hillsborough Hospital in Charlottetown, to reduce burden on QEH and PCH Emergency Departments (Prince Edward Island, 2020ah). The clinic would open the week of April 22 (Prince Edward Island, 2020ah). Dr. Keizer also stated that Community Mental Health and Addictions would continue to provide assessment, counselling, and programming, but was moving to service delivery by telephone, with one-to-one counselling offered by phone call and group programming by conference call (Prince Edward Island, 2020ah). Dr. Keizer announced that call-in clinics for mental health services and addictions programming were developed and being made available across the province to replace walk-in clinics (Prince Edward Island, 2020ah). Appointments and referrals are not required to access the call-in clinics (Prince Edward Island, 2020ah). Call-in clinic contact information is listed [online](#) (Prince Edward Island, 2020ah). In addition to these services, the Strongest Families program for children and youth seeking help for mental health and other health and well-being related issues, as well as the ICAN Adult Anxiety Program would continue to be offered (Prince Edward Island, 2020ah). On April 22, the Transitional Unit

for individuals recovering from addiction at the Provincial Addictions Treatment Facility was temporarily moved to Queen Charlotte Junior High School and began operating as a day program (Prince Edward Island, 2020ah). On April 22, Health PEI announced it was partnering with community organizations to provide online sessions for families dealing with increased anxiety due to the pandemic (Prince Edward Island, 2020ah).

Transition measures

On April 28, Premier King and the CPHO reported that priority non-urgent health care services would resume on May 1, including elective surgeries, priority services (e.g. cardiac supports, cancer screening), and certain health service providers including physiotherapists, optometrists, opticians, chiropractors, foot care providers, occupational therapy, and naturopaths (Prince Edward Island, 2020az). See [Section 5.2](#) for an overview of the reopening plan. Other health care services would continue to be delivered virtually (Prince Edward Island, 2020az).

4. Paying for services

Adequate funding for health is important to manage the excess demands on the health system. This section considers how jurisdictions are paying for COVID-19 services. The subsection on health financing describes how much is spent on health services, where that money comes from, and the distribution of health spending across different service areas. The section also describes who is covered for COVID-19 testing and treatment, whether there are any notable gaps (in population coverage and service coverage), and how much people pay (if at all) for those services out-of-pocket.

4.1 Health financing

On March 16, an initial CA\$25 million emergency COVID-19 contingency fund was announced at the same time that the province declared a state of Public Health Emergency. Initially, details of the uses for this funding were not provided, but on March 17, further details were announced: CA\$250,000 to United Way Prince Edward Island to support the Atlantic Compassion Fund, \$100,000 to the Prince Edward Island Food bank Association, CA\$100,000 to Salvation Army Prince Edward Island and \$50,000 initial contingency fund for community programs and non-governmental organizations. On March 18, 2020, an additional CA\$27 billion in funding was announced in direct support for people and businesses who are impacted by COVID-19; the specifics of this funding is detailed in other sections of this report (see references to other sections below). On May 14, 2020, the Minister of Finance announced an increase to the Emergency Contingency Fund to a total of CA\$75 million. In addition, CA\$50 million was also announced specifically to help address the financial challenges faced by PEI residents and businesses (PEI News, 2020e).

On May 14 2020, the Minister of Finance for PEI has confirmed that the federal government provided CA\$16.7 million in federal funding to create additional support for essential workers (PEI News, 2020e).

Health services, mental health, and virtual care financing

The Province of PEI has provided Lennon Recovery House Association Inc with CA\$365,000 in funding to help with adding 7 additional beds for PEI residents suffering from addiction and mental health challenges in need of treatment (PEI News, 2020b). See [Section 6.4](#) for additional information on health services that have been made available during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2 Entitlement and coverage

Health coverage managed by Health PEI and is available for all residents of PEI who reside in the province at least 6 months of the year. Coverage is available to newcomers on day one if moving from outside Canada, or 3 months after immigrating if moving from another province (during which time they are still covered by their home province) (Health PEI, 2020b). Health coverage is also available to individuals residing in PEI with a work or study permit, as well as their spouses and dependents. The PEI health card covers medical testing and treatment at a publicly funded facility on the island. Individuals who are not enrolled in the provincial health care system are directly billed for services, which can then be paid by their home province or private health insurance (Health PEI, 2020c). The Web page describing eligibility for obtaining a health card was last updated on June 26 2020 and contains no mention of changes made specifically due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Health PEI, 2020c). COVID-19 testing and treatment is provided free of charge to anyone who is covered by provincial health insurance.

5. Governance

The governance of the health system with regard to COVID-19 relates to pandemic response plans and the steering of the health system to ensure its continued functioning. It includes emergency response mechanisms, as well as how information is being communicated, and the regulation of health service provision to patients affected by the virus.

5.1 Prince Edward Island's pandemic response plan

In PEI, the *Public Health Act* and the *Emergency Measures Act* are the two main legislations responsible for managing pandemics by enacting Public Health orders and declaring States of Emergency as deemed appropriate. The *Public Health Act* (updated June 23, 2020) describes the rules and regulations pertaining to public health in the province (Legislative Counsel Office, 2020), while the *Emergency Measures Act* describes the rules and regulations regarding emergencies of any nature across the province (Legislative Counsel Office, 2017). Accompanying both *Acts* are two plans: 1) the Pandemic Contingency Plan, which describes the steps to be taken by the province and roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the event of a pandemic (CPHO, 2020a); 2) and the All-Hazards Emergency Plan, which describes the steps all stakeholders should follow in the event of an emergency (Justice and Public Safety, 2017).

Public Health Act

According to the *Public Health Act*, the Minister of Health appoints a Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO), a medical practitioner who is responsible for carrying out the duties described in the Act including prevention, interception, and suppression of communicable diseases. The Minister of Health can also appoint Deputy Public Health Officers and Public Health Nurses to assist the CPHO as required (Legislative Counsel Office, 2020).

Per the *Act*, a Public Health Emergency can be declared by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the advice of the CPHO if they believe a public health emergency exists or is imminent, and coordination of action or special measures is necessary to protect public health (Legislative Counsel Office, 2020). Declaring a Public Health Emergency allows the CPHO to make Orders to ensure public health, including but not limited to identifying and managing cases, controlling infection, managing hospitals and medical

equipment or supplies, administering immunization, restricting access to public premises, restricting public gatherings and travel to any area of the province, and other measures deemed reasonably necessary to protect the health of the public. Public notice must be given if the CPHO issues an Order (Legislative Counsel Office, 2020). The CPHO can direct any part (or all) of the Province to adhere to a pandemic response plan if necessary, such as the PEI Pandemic Contingency Plan that outlines the response that the Province will take in the event of a pandemic (CPHO, 2020a).

Pandemic Contingency Plan

PEI's Pandemic Contingency Plan outlines the response that the Province will take in the event of a pandemic (CPHO, 2020a). This plan is aligned with the larger F/P/T Public Health Response for Biological Events (PHAC, 2018) and relies on the *Public Health Act*. This plan was written in collaboration with the Provincial Clinical Ethics Committee of PEI, to maintain a focus on ethical decision-making (CPHO, 2020a). The Plan contains four core components: (1) Mitigation the steps the province can take to prevent a pandemic, (2) Preparedness, the steps taken to prepare for a pandemic once one is imminent, (3) response to a pandemic, steps taken while the pandemic unfolds, and (4) Recovery, steps taken to facilitate returning to normal following a pandemic (CPHO, 2020a).

The CPHO is responsible for leading the health care sector during a disease outbreak or public health emergency. In the event of a pandemic, an Emergency Management Outbreak Team is established to manage existing health care infrastructure and any non-traditional health care sites or operations that are put in place along with the CPHO (CPHO, 2020a). The Pandemic Contingency Plan outlines eleven key measures that the CPHO and Emergency Management Outbreak Team is responsible for undertaking in the event of a pandemic, such as disease surveillance, ensuring laboratory services, reducing disease spread, providing vaccines if they are available, helping to maintain health care services, providing recommendations for occupational health, establishing a mass fatality plan if needed, helping to facilitate research into the disease, facilitating communication with islanders and across departments and working with the Federal government on pandemic response measures (CPHO, 2020a).

As well, the Plan describes three possible stages to a pandemic. Stage one, declaring an outbreak, is where these 11 measures begin to be implemented. Stage 2 activates mass triage sites in an effort to pool resources to a centralized location and provide faster diagnosis and treatment while also separating individuals with the illness from other individuals in emergency rooms and clinics. Stage 3 is declared when the number of individuals requiring hospitalization exceeds the number of available hospital beds, after scaling back to essential services and maximizing hospital capacity. In stage 3, alternate care sites are to be established (CPHO, 2020a).

Emergency Measures Act

Under the *Emergency Measures Act*, the Minister who is responsible for administering the Act (currently the Minister for Justice and Public Safety (Justice and Public Safety, 2016)) can declare a state of emergency (Legislative Counsel Office, 2020). The Act also establishes the Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) that, with the Minister, can produce a provincial emergency measures plan (e.g. the *All Hazards Emergency Plan*), survey and study existing or potential hazards across the province, conduct public information programs related to the prevention and mitigation of damage, procure food, medicine and other goods for the purpose of mitigating emergencies and require the implementation of any emergency measures plan (Legislative Counsel Office, 2017). In addition, the Minister can divide the

province into areas for the purpose of this Act, request that municipalities prepare emergency measures plans including mutual assistance programs and submit them to the EMO for review, and require that individuals comply with emergency management plans. The Minister also has the power to issue directions with respect to any other matter that the Minister considers necessary (Legislative Counsel Office, 2017). In the event of conflicting orders, the *Emergency Measures Act* takes precedent over the *Public Health Act* (Legislative Counsel Office, 2017).

All-Hazards Emergency Plan

The All-Hazards Emergency Plan was published June 2017 and was created as part of the *Emergency Measures Act* (Justice and Public Safety, 2017). Its objectives are to coordinate the Provincial response to an emergency to ensure safety, minimize property or environmental damage, and reduce significant economic loss or disruption. The Plan establishes the role of the provincial Emergency Operations Center, which is activated in response to a declaration of a State of Emergency to coordinate the response to said emergency (Justice and Public Safety, 2017). The Emergency Operations Center is a cross-government round table and is not part of any one ministry; it is also in partnership with critical service providers and non-governmental organizations, and is staffed in part by federal agency representatives as well (Justice and Public Safety, 2017). Its roles are to facilitate the acquisition of provincial, national and international support via the federal government, prioritize emergency incidents in need of response, help with resource allocation, provide support for policy-level decision-making, and share situational awareness as required and coordinate between levels of government, critical service provider agencies (like health service providers) and NGOs (Justice and Public Safety, 2017).

Provincial Level

The Provincial level of government, under both the *Emergency Measures* and *Public Health Acts*, are responsible for managing pandemics by enacting Public Health Orders and declaring States of Emergency as deemed appropriate (Legislative Counsel Office, 2017, 2020). The powers granted to the CPHO under these acts is described above. In addition, provincial leaders are responsible for ensuring that the All Hazards Emergency Plan is executed and adhered to in the event of a disaster, as described above (Justice and Public Safety, 2017).

A summary of all public health orders and emergencies enacted in PEI during the COVID-19 pandemic can be found in [Section 6.1](#).

Municipal/Regional level

Under the *Emergency Measures Act*, each municipality can establish a municipal EMO by passing a bylaw and appoint a coordinator or committee to help develop an Emergency Measures Plan for the municipality as is required by the *Act* (Legislative Counsel Office, 2017). A local authority may also declare a state of local emergency when satisfied that an emergency exists under this Act; this declaration must describe the nature of the emergency and the area in which it exists (Legislative Counsel Office, 2017).

Declaring a State of Emergency allows the municipality all the same powers granted to the Minister when a state of emergency is declared, as described above. However, a copy of the declaration of a local state of emergency must be forwarded to the Minister, and the Minister has the power to terminate a state of local emergency if he or she believes on reasonable grounds that an emergency no longer exists (Legislative Counsel Office, 2017).

To date, no municipalities in PEI have declared a State of Emergency due to COVID-19 in addition to the province-wide declaration of a State of Emergency.

5.2 Prince Edward Island’s framework for reopening

Renew PEI Together, first announced May 25 2020 (PEI News, 2020f), is a four-phase approach to reopening the province while continuing to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 (Health and Wellness, 2020c). During all phases, border screening at points of entry is still required, as is 14-day self-isolation for travellers entering the province from anywhere other than Atlantic provinces (Health and Wellness, 2020c). Decisions made during each phase, including the decision to move to the next phase or to scale back to a previous phase, was evidence-based and involved continuous monitoring of the situation to ensure that transmission is controlled, public health capacity for testing and contact tracing is maintained, health system capacity is sufficient for treating acute cases and maintaining supplies of PPE, risks of outbreaks in vulnerable populations are minimized, the risk of importing the virus into the province is managed, and that preventive measures are implemented in workplaces, schools, institutions, businesses and gathering places (Health and Wellness, 2020c). The province relies on public health surveillance data and health capacity data. No mention of using data or guidance from other provinces, the federal level, or other countries is mentioned, although the EMO leading the COVID-19 response works closely with the federal government.

At all stages of reopening, businesses that are permitted to reopen must write and adhere to the COVID-19 Operational Plan Template to describe how the business will adhere to public health measures (Health and Wellness, 2020b). The plan does not need to be submitted to the CPHO but must be available for inspection by request (Health and Wellness, 2020f). The plan must include measures in place to ensure physical distancing between employees and clients, a description of illness policies, enhanced cleaning and disinfection of shared areas, hand washing and sanitizer stations, and capacity limits (Health and Wellness, 2020f).

Below is a brief summary and key dates of PEI’s reopening plan.



Phase 1: May 1, 2020

Changes to guidelines during this phase include increasing the number of individuals who can gather outdoors to 5 people from different households, permitting non-contact recreational activities, permitting select outdoor and construction non-essential services to resume, providing child care for essential service workers, providing priority non-urgent healthcare services and priority non-essential public services, and permitting some limited in-person educational activities, although the majority of education is still conducted from home (Health and Wellness, 2020b).

Phase 2: May 22, 2020

This phase saw an increase to the number of allowed gatherings to 5 individuals indoors and 10 individuals outdoors. Retail businesses and select indoor services were permitted to reopen. Unlicensed and licensed childcare centers were officially allowed to open, and additional non-urgent health care and public services were permitted to open (Health and Wellness, 2020b).

Phase 3: June 12, 2020

Phase 3 began on June 12 and included gatherings of no more than 15 people indoors and 20 people outdoors, including religious gatherings. Organized recreational activities, recreational services and public places were permitted to open. In-room dining, hotel accommodations for PEI residents only and some personal grooming services were permitted to operate. Health and public services continued to increase in availability and capacity (Health and Wellness, 2020b).

Phase 4: Started June 26, 2020

The province entered Phase 4 of reopening on June 26, 2020 (Health and Wellness, 2020d). With these changes, residents of PEI are still encouraged to adhere to public health guidelines like frequent handwashing, the use of non-medical masks, and keeping a log of interactions should self-isolation and contact tracing be necessary (Health and Wellness, 2020d).

Businesses, workplaces, and government services reopened with extra safety precautions and physical distancing measures in place. Individuals are permitted to gather in larger groups: 50 people indoors or outdoors if an operational plan for physical distancing is in place, and non-medical masks are worn if physical distancing is not possible; 100 people if individuals can be kept in groups of 50 in separate rooms. Personal gatherings (i.e., those without an operational plan) are still limited at 15 people indoors and 20 people outdoors. Allied health practices (dental, chiropractor, physiotherapy, optometry, etc.) and all non-urgent healthcare were also permitted to open, along with visits at LTC facilities with enhanced controls. Day camps have reopened, and schools began the *Welcome Back to School Plan* for the safe resumption of kindergarten to grade 12 classes in September 2020 (Health and Wellness, 2020d). (Education and Lifelong Learning, 2020b).

The following table is a summary of Prince Edward Island’s key reopenings to date. More information about reopening plans by category/sector can be found in [Section 1.2](#) and [Section 6.2](#).

Table 1. Overview of key re-openings

Category	Dates and Relevant Notes
Schools, childcare facilities and youth camps	Childcare centers: Opened during Phase 2 on May 22. Schools: Planned to reopen in Fall 2020 as per the Welcome Back to School Plan
Non-essential businesses and services	Businesses progressively reopened during Phases 2-4
Public and private gatherings	Gathering sizes, both indoor and outdoor, increased through all phases
Outdoor facilities	Most outdoor facilities resumed operations during Phase 4, June 26

Healthcare service facilities	Healthcare services progressively reopened through all phases
Long-term care facilities	Long term care facility visits are still restricted
Subpopulations and Indigenous communities	No information is presently available
Mobility and travel	Travel into the province is restricted for individuals who are not travelling from another Atlantic province (i.e., outside of the Atlantic Bubble)

According to the PEI *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, workers have the right to refuse work that they reasonably believe will cause a danger to their health or safety (Workers Compensation Board, 2020). The PEI's work refusal page has been updated to include information on COVID-19; every work refusal application related to the pandemic is assessed based on circumstances specific to the worker and their workplace. Workers retain the right to refuse work, but the risk must suggest there is an immediate or imminent threat to safety. The PEI Web site specifies that a pandemic alone is not reason enough to refuse work. Workers who successfully exercise their right to refuse work must continue to be paid (Workers Compensation Board, 2020).

6. Measures in other sectors

Many measures beyond the immediate scope of the health system are being taken to prevent further spread of the virus. This section contains information on many of these areas, including border and travel restrictions and economic and fiscal measures, among others.

6.1 State of emergency

The Government of PEI declared the first public health emergency, under the *Public Health Act*, on March 13, 2020 (Office of the Premier, 2020b). This has since been renewed on April 15, May 15 and June 15, 2020 (CPHO, 2020g). On March 15, the Premier of the province established three special cabinet committees in response to COVID-19: Economy and Business Supports, Labour and Social Supports, and Government Operations. This is in addition to the EMO (Office of the Premier, 2020a). These Committees are focused on responding to the community and economic challenges that have arisen due to the pandemic to ensure that residents of PEI, workers and industries have the supports they need and that the government's essential services are maintained (Office of the Premier, 2020a).

Since declaring a public health emergency, 5 public health orders have been issued by the CPHO under the *Public Health Act*:

1. *The COVID-19 Prevention and Self-Isolation Order*: Originally published on March 22 with its latest version dated June 26, this Order mandates a 14-day self-isolation period for individuals diagnosed with COVID-19, individuals who are symptomatic and awaiting a COVID-19 test result, close contacts of individuals who are diagnosed as positive for COVID-19, and individuals travelling into the islands from within Canada or outside of Canada (CPHO, 2020e). This Order also closes all businesses, services and organizations that are not an essential service (CPHO, 2020e).

2. *The Self-Isolation Exemption Order*: Lists the groups of people who are not required to self isolate under the previously-described Order (CPHO, 2020f). Health care workers who are exempt from self-isolation unless they are diagnosed with COVID-19, awaiting testing results, or if they have travelled into the province internationally. Asymptomatic essential workers are exempt from self-isolation after travel but must self-isolate other than performing work duties. Individuals whose job requires frequent travelling must be tested for COVID-19 every 7 days and are exempt from self-isolation once a negative result is confirmed. Essential workers travelling from other Maritime provinces are not required to self-isolate (CPHO, 2020f).
3. *Travel Restriction Order*: Last updated on July 2, any person arriving into PEI is required to answer COVID-19 screening questions (CPHO, 2020g).
4. *The Long Term Care and Nursing Homes Staff Movement Order*: Written June 25 2020, prohibits nursing home and LTC staff from working at more than one facility at a time to limit the spread of COVID-19 (CPHO, 2020d).
5. *The Directive on Visitation to Long-Term Care Facilities and Nursing Homes*: Was ordered on July 2 and describes the conditions under which individuals are allowed visiting LTC and nursing homes (CPHO, 2020c).

On April 16, a State of Emergency under the *Emergency Management Act* was declared. This provided the CPHO with additional powers to enact virus-containing measures for the health of the Province (Office of the Premier, 2020c).

6.2 Border control, mobility, and travel restrictions

Official travel advice for PEI can be found [in the Travel section of the government of PEI website](#).

Internal travel

At the time of this report, there are currently no internal travel restrictions within PEI.

External travel

For travellers outside of the “Atlantic Bubble”, which includes PEI, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, screening measures are in place at all entry points into the province (Justice and Public Safety, 2020). Every person arriving to PEI must answer questions relating to name, place of residence, contact information, travel details, reasons for entering PEI, occupation, and symptom information. Individuals can also be submitted to temperature checks and must declare if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. All individuals arriving into PEI must provide details of a self-isolation plan. Essential workers and persons travelling for emergency medical services are exempt from self-isolation requirements (Justice and Public Safety, 2020). See [Section 1.3](#) for further details about isolation and quarantine.

6.3 Migrant workers

Employers who employ migrant workers are required to have a space for workers to self-isolate upon arrival to PEI. No other measures have been described (CPHO, 2020e).

6.4 Economic measures

Public financial support

PEI has implemented a Support for Essential Workers program, where essential workers earning CA\$3,000 a month or less received a one-time CA\$1000 top-up to their wages through their employer (PEI, 2020m). In addition, the Emergency Relief Worker Assistance Program provides financial support to employers, intended to be used for assisting their employed workers who have been impacted by reduced work hours due to COVID-19. Employees who have experienced a reduction in hours of at least 8 hours per week between March 16 and April 11 2020 will be granted a maximum of CA\$250 a week through employers who apply for this program (PEI, 2020b). The Government of PEI has also partnered with Sobeys on the Employee Gift Card Program to provide a CA\$100 gift card to Sobeys for any employee who has been laid off with an ROE as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is intended to help employees who are awaiting Employment Insurance payments from the Federal government (PEI, 2020c). The COVID-19 Special Situation Fund for Individuals provided up to CA\$1000 to residents of PEI who have experienced urgent income loss as a result of the pandemic and who are ineligible for other federal or provincial funding support. This program closed May 8, 2020 (PEI, 2020f). The COVID-19 Income Support Fund provided financial support to PEI residents to help those who have lost their job and are ineligible for federal Employment Insurance. This fund provides a one-time CA\$750 lump sum from the Government of PEI and is taxable (PEI, 2020d).

To help tenants and landlords, the PEI Housing Corporation has halted all evictions and suspended all eviction hearings, unless they are for urgent matters pertaining to the health and safety of tenants and landlords (Social Development and Housing, 2020).

The Child Care Allowance program is part of the Renew PEI Together Plan, and allows families who are returning to work to apply for an allowance of up to CA\$75 per child, per week between May 22 and June 26, 2020 to help with child care costs (PEI, 2020o).

The Post-Secondary Student Program is a summer employment program designed to create jobs for post-secondary students by providing a financial incentive to PEI employers (PEI, 2020g). Skills PEI will reimburse up to 75% of a student's hourly wage, up to 40 hours a week, after successful application to the program by an employer. Non-profit and public-sector employees will be reimbursed 100% of the wages. Wages can be covered from 8-18 weeks depending on the needs of the employer and the student (PEI, 2020g). In addition, the Province established the COVID-19 Student Financial Support, for students residing in Prince Edward Island. This includes student loan payment deferral until September 30, 2020, and a fund containing a total of CA\$95,000 that is used to help students in immediate need at any of the three universities in the Province (Education and Lifelong Learning, 2020a).

The Province has also provided tax relief measures (PEI, 2020j). Residents of PEI can defer provincial property tax and fee payments until December 31, 2020. The province is also providing interest relief for the 2020 tax year, including all past due amounts. The sales tax process has been suspended for the rest of 2020, and the mailing of provincial tax bills for 2020 has been delayed until June (PEI, 2020j).

Sectoral and business financial support

The Province of PEI has also put in numerous programs to help businesses affected by the pandemic, using a CA\$2.7 billion in funding that was announced on March 18 (see Section 4.1). For instance, the Commercial Lease Rent Deferral program encourages landlords to defer rent payments for small and medium-sized businesses for 3 months, and to spread the deferred amount over the rest of the lease term. If deferred rent cannot be recovered, as per the *Public Health Act*, landlords can be eligible for coverage up to CA\$50,000 for up to \$15,000 a tenant (Finance PEI, 2020). The Business Adaptation Advice Program provides a non-repayable contribution to PEI businesses, entrepreneurs, NGOs, and not-for-profit organizations to access professional advice or support to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. Only real estate development businesses are ineligible to apply. The program can cover costs related to accessing advice for business, human resources, financial planning, information technology (IT) or transitioning to digital business models, marketing, exporting, logistics, or other services as needed. 100% of the cost up to CA\$2500 per business is available (PEI, 2020e). The Workspace Adaptation Assistance Fund is a non-repayable contribution for businesses, towards the cost of implementing the COVID-19 operational plan (discussed in Section 5). Any non-governmental organization or business is eligible, except for agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries (for whom other funding opportunities are available, described below), and real estate developers. The program will cover any costs retroactive to March 16 associated with physical changes to the workplace to ensure physical distancing, purchase of equipment or PPE, or COVID-19 specific signage. Staff labor and cleaning supplies are not covered by this program. A maximum fund contribution of CA\$2,000 covering 75% of the project costs can be accessed twice per business (for two individual projects) (PEI, 2020n). The Emergency Working Capital Financing program is a financing program for small businesses to provide emergency financing to assist them in maintaining normal operations during the pandemic. Applicants can receive a loan of up to CA\$100,000 with a fixed interest rate of 4% per annum to be used to assist with fixed operating costs, including payroll, rent, etc. Principal and interest payments are deferred for 12 months (PEI, 2020a).

Tourism

To assist the tourism sector of PEI, the Tourism Interest Relief Program has been established. This program is a joint partnership of Finance PEI and Tourism PEI and is intended for tourism operators that experience a 30% decrease in tourism revenue compared to the same month in the previous year, or for operations who have had no revenue (PEI, 2020i). The provided assistance will cover interest payments on term debt from April to September 2020, up to CA\$250,000 per business. The total provincial budget for the fund is CA\$10,000,000. In addition, the Tourism Assistance Loan Program provides loans of up to CA\$1 million to businesses in the tourism sector who have been impacted by COVID-19. The total provincial budget for this program is CA\$50,000,000. Interest payments on these loans qualify for the Tourism Interest Relief Program (PEI, 2020h).

Fisheries

To assist the fishing sector, the Province has established the Fisheries Interest Relief Program. The Department of Fisheries and Communities will reimburse interest payments for 12 months for debts incurred with financial institutions, up to a total of CA\$12,500,000 for the entire program (PEI, 2020l). In addition, the Fisheries Emergency Loan is a repayable loan of up to CA\$25,000 that can be accessed by fisheries impacted by COVID-19. Interest payments on this loan will qualify for the Fisheries Interest Relief

Program (PEI, 2020k). The province has also invited islanders and students who are interested in working in the seafood processing industry to register for Work PEI to be connected to businesses who have posted job opportunities. Students returning to post-secondary studies in the fall received a CA\$2000 bursary, and those returning to high school have received CA\$1000 for working in the seafood processing sector (PEI News, 2020g).

Agriculture

The COVID-19 Agriculture Labor Support Initiative allows individuals who are interested in working on a farm to register with Work PEI and be connected with agricultural-based businesses who have registered job openings. In addition, students returning to post-secondary studies in the fall received a CA\$2000 bursary, and those returning to high school have received CA\$1000 for working in the agriculture sector (PEI News, 2020c).

Maintaining Service Delivery

The Premier of PEI has launched [PEI Sourced Solutions](#), an online portal designed to help PEI residents and businesses connect to address the need for medical supplies, virtual care services, or to share ideas on how the Province can best help businesses weather the COVID-19 pandemic. The portal identifies the province's potential supply challenges and services that are required, and invites PEI residents to help provide these resources (PEI News, 2020a). See section 2.1 for additional information.

6.5 Maintaining services for schools and businesses

Internet service and connectivity support

The Province has established the Broadband Fund for Businesses, which provides financial assistance to local internet service providers, communities and businesses for the purpose of installing infrastructure for enhanced broadband coverage. This program covers up to 50% of the cost for a project that has been approved for funding (PEI, 2019).

Home education support

For the duration of school closures, students and their families have access to online and offline home learning materials provided by the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning (Education and Lifelong learning, 2020). These resources ensure that students will progress to the next grade level in September 2020 and that Grade 12 students remain on track to graduate. It is noted that any learning gaps due to school closures will be addressed when students return to school. In addition to learning resources, the PEI government has made school counsellors and psychologists available for any students needing support (Education and Lifelong learning, 2020). Resources for home education in PEI can be found [here](#).

Mental health and addictions

The Province established a [directory](#) of online and telehealth support programs for individuals facing mental health or addiction crises during the COVID-19 pandemic (Health PEI, 2020a). In addition, a psychiatric urgent care clinic was established at Hillsborough Hospital in Charlottetown and the Prince County Hospital in Summerside, which employs telehealth psychiatrists and is equipped to admit urgent psychiatric patients if necessary (PEI News, 2020b). Regularly provided mental health services are continuing to be provided by phone.

Hospice PEI launched the 'No Islander Alone' program in response to COVID-19, to provides seniors who are isolated from their community with support for the pandemic. Specially trained volunteers provide wellness checks and supports by phone and may help seniors and their families navigate additional supports. This program is in partnership with United Way PEI, with funding provided by the Government of Canada New Horizons for Seniors program (see Section 4.1 for additional information about funding for United Way PEI during the COVID-19 pandemic) (Health and Wellness, 2020e).

Support for volunteers

The Department of Health and Wellness established a [directory](#) of community organizations and groups to whom individuals from the Province can reach out to during the COVID-19 pandemic for additional assistance. This directory also specifies that individuals interested in volunteering with these organizations can contact the organizations themselves for additional information (Health and Wellness, 2020a).

6.6 Civil protection

Protection for vulnerable populations

Due to the necessity for social isolation and the health and safety concerns that could result from this, including an increased risk of family violence, the Government of PEI developed a [list of specific resources](#) about topics like co-parenting and taking care of mental health. They have also provided a list of associations, with phone numbers, covering child and adult protection.

The PEI Children and Youth Table was created on May 12 to promote and protect the rights of children and youth during the COVID-19 pandemic, under the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*. The mandate of this group is to engage children and youth, including those in provincial facilities, to identify solutions to areas of concern for children and youth (PEI News, 2020d).

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Appendix A. Key Resources

Government of Canada: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
Travel Advisory Webpage

PEI Government COVID-19 www.princeedwardisland.ca/covid19
Website

PEI COVID-19 information 1-833-533-9333
line

PEI COVID-19 Self- <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/service/self-assessment-covid-19>
Assessment

PEI COVID-19 Self- <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/service/complete-pei-self-declaration-travel-form-enter-other-atlantic-provinces>
Declaration Form

PEI Sources Solutions www.princeedwardisland.ca/sourcedolutions

The views expressed by the authors are not intended to represent the views of the North American Observatory on Health Systems and Policies.



Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by the North American Observatory on Health Systems and Policies with support from a number of individuals, including:

Nessika Karsenti

Sara Allin

Yalinie Kulandaivelu

Gregory Marchildon

Monika Roerig

Suggested citation

North American Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. (2020). North American COVID-19 Policy Response Monitor: Prince Edward Island. Toronto, Canada: North American Observatory on Health Systems and Policies.

About NAO

The North American Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (NAO) is a collaborative partnership of interested researchers, research organizations, governments, and health organizations promoting evidence-informed health system policy decision-making.

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