



March 11th, 2022

Mr. Glen Rutland
Acting Clerk
Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

Response to Honourable R. L. Barclay's November 2021 Disposition Report

Dear Mr. Rutland:

After a recent review of the Honourable R.L. Barclay's November 17, 2021 Disposition Report (the Report) on the code of conduct complaint against the MLA for Tu Nedhé-Wiilideh, I wanted to alert the Legislative Assembly to a minor discrepancy between the written report and our usual public health practice in NWT. It's possible that the discrepancy occurred because of internet connectivity difficulties during my virtual testimony.

Paragraph 203 of the Report states:

"Dr. Delli Pizzi testified that the communicable period of the virus can last up to 10 days after the onset of symptoms in the case of a mild illness. Those with a more severe illness can transmit for up to 14 days."

To clarify, the World Health Organization publishes criteria that categorize a COVID-19 illness into severity categories, including "severe", or "critical". (See Table 6.3 in November 23, 2021 Living Guidance for clinical management of COVID-19 available at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-clinical-2021-2>). Critical COVID-19 generally means that a person requires life sustaining therapies, such as mechanical ventilation, to treat their condition.

Although there is some uncertainty about the duration of the communicable period of those with severe or critical COVID-19, many public health organizations, after their review of the available information, publish that a person with critical COVID-19 can transmit the virus to others for at least 20 days.

Our office provides guidance on duration of isolation for those with mild, severe, and critical COVID-19 illnesses, and we address this in our guidance documents. Our office adopted the WHO criteria of "severe" or "critical" illness. We then advise isolation for at least 20 days if a person has critical COVID-19 illness. We have communicated this to practitioners many times.

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For example, here is guidance from the August 2021 version of our *COVID-19 Interim Public Health Disease Management for the Northwest Territories* chapter:

The communicable period (Figure 1) of the confirmed or probable case is:

Symptomatic: Two days before until a minimum of 10 days after symptom onset in a confirmed or probable case in those with mild illness. Severe cases are likely communicable for 14 days after symptom onset, and critical cases for 20 days after symptom onset.

<https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/professionals/sites/professionals/files/resources/interim-guidance-public-health-management-cases-contacts-covid-19.pdf>

I recall that during my virtual testimony there was intermittent difficulty with the internet connection, resulting in loss of communication at times. It is possible, for example, that one or two sentences describing that those with critical COVID-19 likely transmit the virus for at least 20 days was lost in the communication disruption.

Overall, because the document is available publicly and the testimony is not consistent with what I commonly communicate to practitioners, I simply intend to inform the Legislative Assembly of this relatively minor discrepancy, for their awareness.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Delli Pizzi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Andy Delli Pizzi, MD, MSc, FCFP, FRCPC
Deputy Chief Public Health Officer

