

# **Rotational Worker Policy Review**

**October 28, 2020**



## **Objective**

To evaluate the change in Public Policy on length of isolation of rotational workers on return to NL during Covid-19 epidemic.

## **Practice Points**

1. A mainstay of prevention of Covid-19 transmission in the community is 14-day isolation for travellers into NL.
2. Rotational workers are particularly disadvantaged by this policy. Consequently, on September 9, 2020, it was decided that rotational workers need only isolate until they received a negative coronavirus test done on day 5-7 after their return.
3. New Zealand depends upon 14-day isolation of travellers in government facilities and testing for the virus on day 3 and 12 of their quarantine. Iceland failed to prevent importation of Covid-19 into their community by single testing at the border and now depend on testing at day 1 and 5 or 6 of the visit with isolation until the second negative test is obtained.
4. Alberta are pilot testing a policy of testing travellers at the border and a second test 6 or 7 days later without isolation for the interim period provided the first test was negative.

## **Methods**

Aggregate data on calls made by rotational workers to 811 Public Health line and on coronavirus tests performed was obtained from September 9 - October 22 (44 days) from NL Centre of Health Information. The characteristics of de-identified travellers with Covid-19 during this period were provided by the Department of Health.

## **Results**

During the period September 9-October 22 there were no community acquired cases diagnosed in the community.

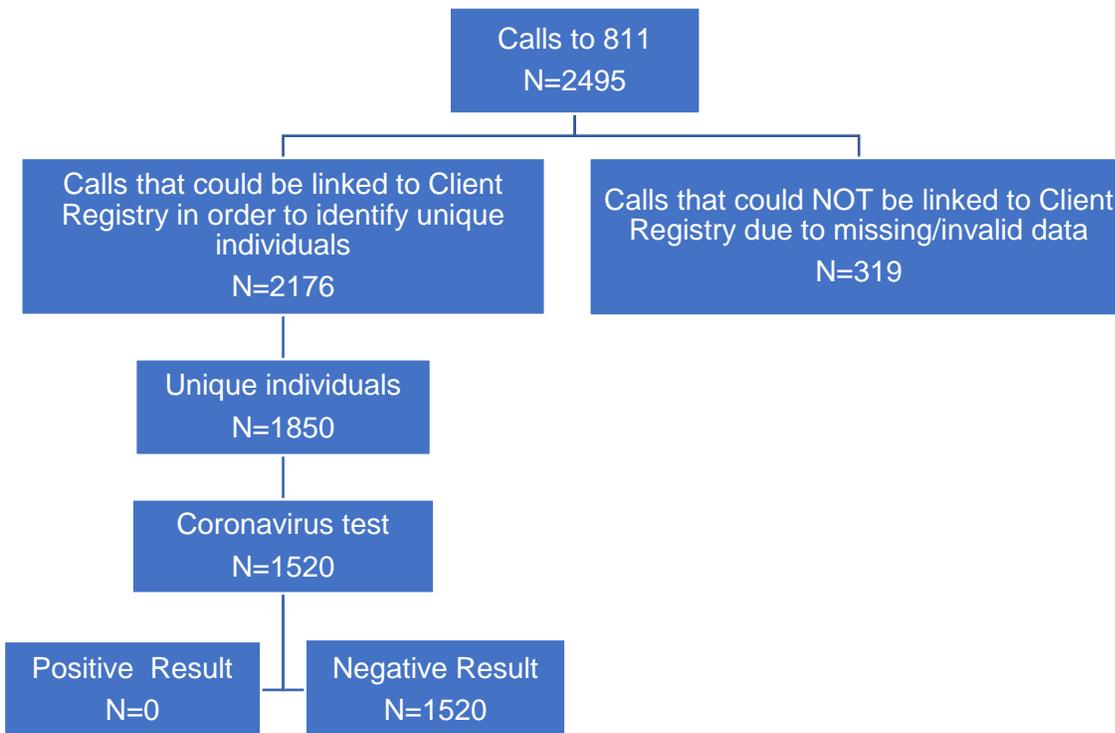
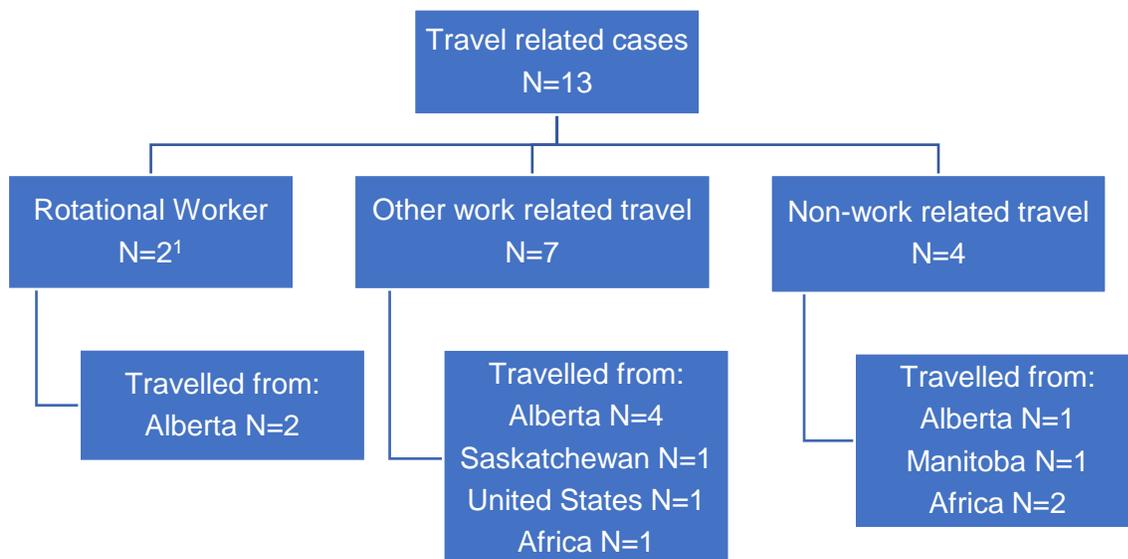


Figure 1. Number of calls to 811 and coronavirus tests in rotational workers.



<sup>1</sup>One rotational worker tested positive after September 9 but was swabbed on September 8 before the new policy came into effect; One rotational worker was not identified in the 811 data provided. They either (1) did not call 811 to arrange testing, or (2) called 811 but did not provide adequate information for identification in Client Registry. This person was tested because of being symptomatic.

Figure 2. Cases of COVID-19 in travellers to NL analyzed by relationship to work and by origin of travel.

\*Two cases/week were diagnosed that were imported from outside the province, unrelated to the workers availing of the rotational worker policy. The majority of these were work related, the majority of whom came from Alberta.

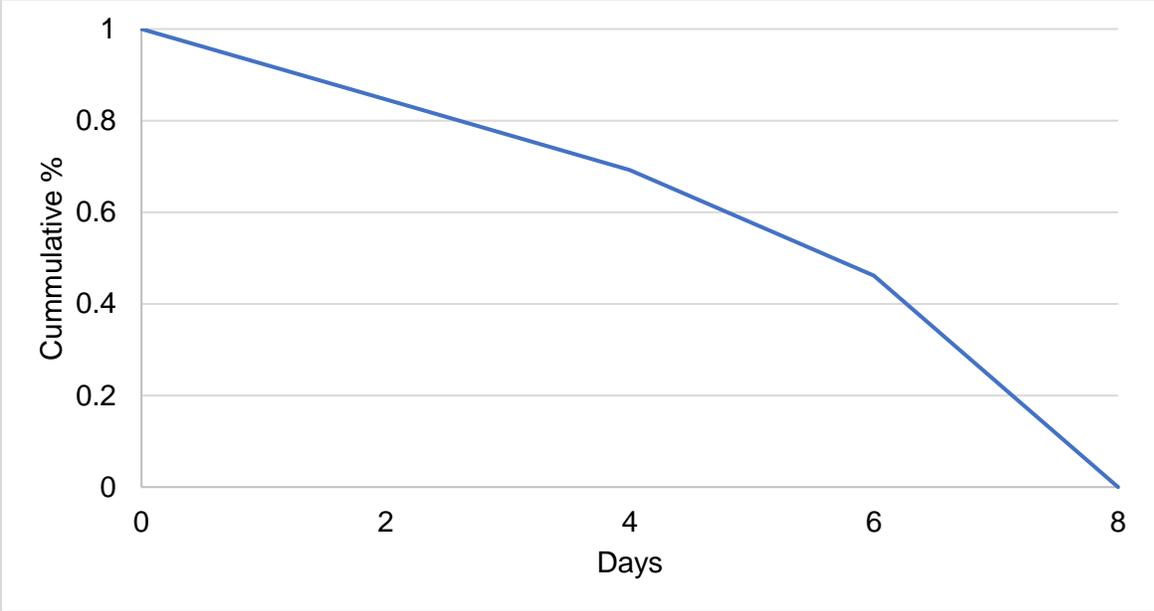


Figure 3. Time to diagnosis of Covid-19 from entry into the province.

\* All cases were diagnosed within 8 days of arrival in NL.

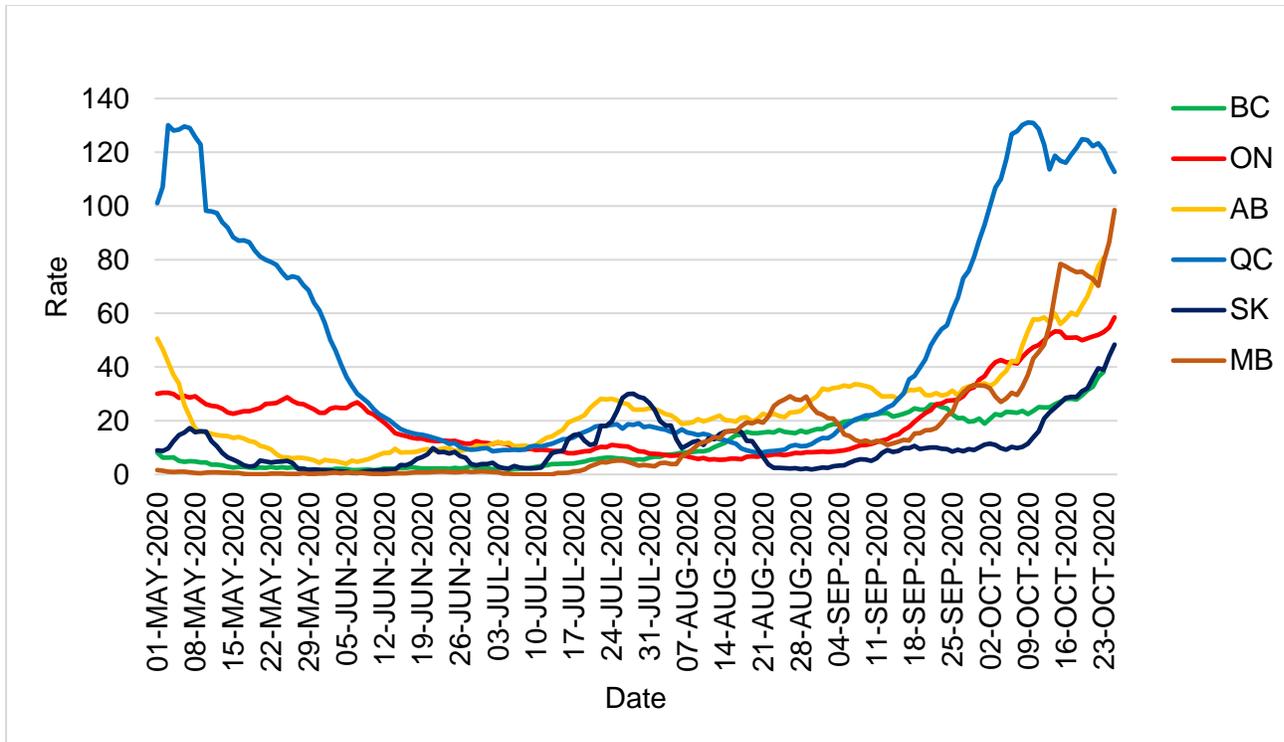


Figure 4. Incidence of new cases in non-Atlantic provinces (rate per 1,000,000 population based on rolling 7-day average).

\* There has been a recrudescence of Covid-19 in the non-Atlantic provinces but this has not translated into increased importation of Covid-19 into NL by rotational workers, suggesting that these people are working in communities with low prevalence of infection.

In New Zealand, 236 cases (216 since June 9) have been detected at the border, 69% identified at day 3 testing and 31% at day 12 testing.

In Iceland, 266 cases have been identified at the border since June 15. Two hundred and fourteen active infections were identified on first screening and 52 on second screening.

## Conclusions

1. The change in policy for rotational workers was not associated with harm in that there were no community acquired cases arising from rotational workers and the incidence in rotational workers exposed to the policy was zero.
2. Limitations include the short period of time evaluated and the relatively small number of workers in the observation period.