

## COVID-19 UPDATE – April 20th, 2020

**In an effort to keep our community partners connected, we are providing you with regular COVID-19 updates.**

### **Key Updates for April 20th, 2020**

- For a full list of updates from VCH visit [vch.ca](http://vch.ca)
- New epidemiological modelling data shows B.C. has succeeded in flattening the curve
- Update on current COVID-19 cases
- Fines will be issued to those re-selling medical supplies at inflated prices
- Financial support for Canadians during COVID-19

### **New Epidemiological Modelling Data shows B.C. has flattened the curve**

Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, recently released modelling data showing B.C. has succeeded in flattening the curve — we have reduced the expected number of COVID-19 cases and avoided overwhelming the health-care system. In the presentation, which can be viewed [here](#), Dr. Henry shared data about the nature of the epidemic in B.C. Among the statistics shared:

- 54 is the median age of those affected with COVID-19 in BC.
- The median age of those hospitalized is about 10 years older.
- There have been 349 people hospitalized over the course of the pandemic thus far.
- 35-40% of those hospitalized had at least one underlying chronic condition
- Of those who have died, the median age of death is 86, reflecting outbreaks in long-term care
- One person in their 40s died, two people in their 60s died, the remainder of those who died were over 70, mostly in their 80s and 90s.
- There has been only one case in a child under 10.
- Most cases are in the 30-59 age group. This reflects a lot of testing of health-care workers who tend to be in this age group.

The presentation also included comparisons with other regions and countries. B.C.'s rate of infection curve has flattened, putting us on a trajectory similar to South Korea and Australia. Within Canada, B.C.'s infection rate is lower than Ontario, Alberta, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Quebec. We have not seen the dramatic increase in deaths that have been seen in other jurisdictions. Dr. Henry said B.C. has the capacity to provide good care early for patients; we are putting people on oxygen and ventilators earlier, which is helping people get well.

Previously, B.C.'s projections were modelled on data from South Korea, Hubei and Northern Italy. In reality, we tracked much more closely to South Korea's epidemic, which tells us that the public health measures have worked: we have now plateaued and B.C. is starting to decline. Dr. Henry said B.C. has the capacity to provide good care early for patients; we are putting people on oxygen and ventilators earlier, which is helping people get well. Going forward, we will use our own experience with the virus for modelling, which we'll use as a tool to help policy development and decision-makers.

Thanks to the "cautiously optimistic" forecast, Dr. Henry spoke about a gradual return to activities in the next few weeks, although the new normal for the coming months will be modifications of what we're seeing right now. Health care will be among the first sectors to be restored. We are well within the scope of meeting the needs of patients, and

the surge beds have not been utilized, so if things remain steady and we don't experience a surge of COVID-19 patients, we are preparing to start scheduled surgeries, as well as urgent and emergent procedures, in mid-May.

Events such as large weddings, fairs and festivals, however, will not be coming back for this summer, Dr. Henry said during her Saturday briefing, as they are much riskier than in the past. She said we don't have enough herd immunity to allow those types of events to happen in 2020. For personal gatherings this year, Dr. Henry said there is the possibility this summer for more social interaction, but we need to find a sweet spot — a balancing of connection, but still protecting the system and those who are most vulnerable. She suggests people “think small” for funerals, weddings, and parties with friends and family.

### **Update on COVID-19 cases**

On April 17th, Dr. Henry also announced 29 new cases of COVID-19 in the province, bringing the total to date to 1,647 confirmed cases; 686 cases have been in the VCH region to date. The statement lists 987 people as fully recovered. There are still 20 long-term care and assisted living residences that are under outbreak protocol, and one outbreak in an acute care unit.

### **Fines for resale of medical supplies at inflated prices**

On April 18th, Mike Farnworth, B.C.'s public safety minister says anyone caught reselling medical supplies at inflated prices during the pandemic will now face \$2,000 fines. He said police forces across the province will be granted powers to issue tickets with those fines, and municipal bylaw officers, liquor and cannabis inspectors, park rangers and other provincial and local officials will help with enforcement.

### **Financial support for Canadians**

The federal government has taken a number of steps to help employers and employees during the pandemic. On Friday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced more than \$1.7 billion for targeted measures, including:

- \$675 million to give financing support to small and medium-sized businesses that are unable to access the government's existing COVID-19 support measures, through Canada's Regional Development Agencies.
- \$287 million to support rural businesses and communities, including by providing them with much-needed access to capital through the Community Futures Network.
- \$500 million to establish a COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for Cultural, Heritage and Sport Organizations to help address the financial needs of affected organizations within these sectors so they can continue to support artists and athletes. This measure is consistent with the government's other existing COVID-19 support measures for wages and fixed costs for organizations.
- \$250 million to assist innovative, early-stage companies that are unable to access existing COVID-19 business support, through the National Research Council of Canada's Industrial Research Assistance Program.
- \$20.1 million in support for Futurpreneur Canada to continue to support young entrepreneurs across Canada who are facing challenges due to COVID-19. The funding will allow Futurpreneur Canada to provide payment relief for its clients for up to 12 months.

### **Key Messages to Share**

- Practice [physical distancing](#) if you have to go out
- If you think you have COVID-19 take the self-assessment here: [covid19.thrive.health](https://covid19.thrive.health)
- Self-isolate at home for 10 days if you have COVID-19 symptoms