

## COVID-19 UPDATE – May 15th, 2020

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

### Key Updates for May 15th, 2020

For a full list of updates from VCH visit [vch.ca](http://vch.ca)

- Update on COVID-19 Cases
- Planning for the long weekend ahead
- Hospital occupancy rates begin to climb
- B.C.'s state of emergency extended
- New federal measures to support Indigenous peoples
- First serological test authorized by Health Canada

### Update on COVID-19 Cases

In yesterday's daily briefing, Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, reported a total of 15 new cases of COVID-19 in B.C., bringing the total number of people who have tested positive to 2,392 since the pandemic began. Of those, 878 have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region. The number of people in hospitals throughout B.C. sits at 58, including 12 people in critical care, and 1,885 people are considered fully recovered. There are still 19 active outbreaks in long-term care, assisted living, and acute care throughout B.C.

### Planning for the long weekend ahead

Dr. Henry also called on all British Columbians to stay close to home. She recommended they get outside and enjoy the best of B.C. in our own backyards, going for hikes in local parks, visiting farmers markets, or having a picnic, and if it rains, continue with home movie screenings and Zoom dates. She asked that we all use this May long weekend as an opportunity to put our safe social interaction rules into action and set those habits for the coming weeks.

### Hospital occupancy rates begin to climb

Health Minister Adrian Dix said the occupancy rate in our hospitals is climbing slightly, indicating increased utilization of health care services for reasons other than COVID-19. In recent days in emergency room numbers, and today, occupancy rates across BC hospitals are 67.1%, and in critical care at 52.3%, indicating a slight rise in both. During the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals across VCH remain prepared to safely receive and care for all individuals who experience health conditions that require urgent and emergency care.

### B.C.'s state of emergency extended

On Wednesday, Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, extended the provincial state of emergency to support continued co-ordination of the pandemic response. The action allows a continued, coordinated response to keep people safe, support our health-care system and ensure our supply chains are secure. The current state of emergency is being extended through the end of the day on May 26, 2020.

### New federal measures to support Indigenous peoples

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced yesterday new measures to support Indigenous peoples. The federal government set aside \$306 million to provide interest-free loans and non-repayable contributions to Indigenous businesses. It is also providing \$75 million of targeted support for First Nations, Inuit and Métis students, well as helping young people find a job in their community this summer. Another \$10 million has been invested in emergency shelters for Indigenous women and children who are fleeing violence.

### First serological test authorized by Health Canada

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Health Canada has authorized the first serological test for COVID-19 antibodies. This is a critical step for the work of the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force, which now has a safe and approved test that can detect antibodies specific to COVID-19, in an individual's blood. These tests will help us better understand immunity against the virus and how it spreads so we can keep Canadians safe and healthy.

### 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](http://covid19.thrive.health)
- Self-isolate at home for 10 days if you have COVID-19 symptoms
- Find helpful posters, handouts and other resources about COVID-19 [here](#).