

## COVID-19 UPDATE – May 5th, 2020

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

### Key Updates for May 5th, 2020

- For a full list of updates from VCH visit [vch.ca](http://vch.ca)
- The end of the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in B.C.
- Update on COVID-19 cases
- Update on data and modelling on COVID-19
- Critical care surge capacity reduced
- Modelling increasing contacts in community
- Getting tested for COVID-19

### The end of the beginning of COVID-19

Dr. Bonnie Henry said she believes we are at "the end of the beginning" of our COVID-19 pandemic in B.C., and while we are not quite ready to ease restrictions on daily life, we are at the point where we can begin to plan forward to increase our social connections, to increase our work, to increase our school and day care and child care. On Wednesday, Premier John Horgan will be speaking about how government will be moving forward.

### Update on COVID-19 Cases

Dr. Henry reported 53 new cases of COVID-19 since Saturday, bringing the total number of people who have tested positive in B.C. to 2,224 since the pandemic began. Of those, 845 have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region. The number of people in hospitals throughout B.C. sits at 77, including 20 people in critical care, and 1,417 people are considered fully recovered.

There are no new outbreaks to report, but there are 23 active outbreaks in long-term care, assisted living facilities, and acute-care units. At United Poultry, 35 people have now tested positive. Sadly, there are another three deaths related to COVID-19, all of them in long-term care in B.C. As always, our condolences go to the families of those who have died.

### Updated data and modelling on COVID-19

Dr. Henry and Health Minister Adrian Dix also shared some of the data and modelling that has guided decision-making so far, and will continue to inform planning for B.C. As well as the decline in the number of new cases and hospitalizations, the data shows who has been most affected by COVID-19 in our province. Of those who have tested positive, most people have been between the ages of 30 and 60, with more women than men affected. However, of those who have been hospitalized, have been in critical care, and have died, most people were in their 70s, 80s, and 90s, and were more often men than women.

Data about health-care workers showed some were affected at work, as well as through travel, through attendance at the dental conference, or from exposure to family members who may be positive for COVID-19. While 21% of our total cases as of April 28, or 428 people, have been of health care workers in B.C., 8%, were hospitalized, and 3% required intensive care. Unfortunately one person passed away.

### Excess deaths and COVID-19

Dr. Henry also spoke about "excess deaths." On most days of the year, about 115 people die in B.C. from a variety of causes, from old age, motor vehicle crashes, overdoses, or other causes. We have had about 170 excess deaths since March and the vast majority of them, at least 111 that we know of so far, have been attributed to COVID-19. We are still learning about other contributing factors — some may be indirectly related, for example, we know that people were not going to the ER because of concerns about COVID-19 and it may be that there were excess deaths recorded from that.

### Critical Care surge capacity reduced

Minister Dix said surge capacity has been reduced, from 951 to 704 critical care beds. We currently have a critical care bed occupancy rate of about 44%, so 390 total vacant critical care beds. Today we have 20 people with COVID-19 in critical care, and 284 people in critical care for non-COVID-19 cases. He also reported that we've significantly increased our ventilator capacity, with more on the way, so we are well within our capacity for mechanical ventilators.

### Modelling increasing contacts in community

Using dynamic compartmental modelling, Dr. Henry showed that with physical distancing, and doing work and school at home, the modelling shows we are having about 30% of our usual contacts in the community. If we increase our contacts to 40%, we would expect new cases to continue to be relatively low over the coming weeks and months, hospitalizations would also stay low. If we increase our number of contacts from 30% to 60%, we would likely have increased numbers of cases, and some hospitalizations over time in the coming weeks, but we could manage them within our capacity planning. If we went all the way to 80% of our usual contacts, the virus has the opportunity to take off quite rapidly, and we might have a rapidly increasing outbreak, and a rapidly increased number of people who need hospitalization.

Dr. Henry said the challenge is to rebuild our resilient economy and provide supports for people so they can safely return to work, to strengthen our social fabric and have connections in a safe way. She said the sweet spot will be increasing our contacts by about half, or twice as many as we have now, to 60%, but without allowing those opportunities for rapidly exponential growth of the virus in our community. She said key principles include staying informed, practicing good hygiene, and staying at home and away from others if you're feeling ill.

### Getting tested for COVID-19

Anyone in the VCH region with cold, influenza or COVID-19-like symptoms, however mild, can now be assessed for and get a COVID-19 test. Contact your physician or nurse practitioner's office, or a local community collection centre to arrange for a test. Phone numbers and locations of collection centre can be found by visiting: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing> or by calling 8-1-1. In Vancouver, the City Centre and REACH urgent and primary care centres can provide testing as well as the St. Vincent's drive-up location at 4875 Heather Street. On the North Shore, testing is available at the North Vancouver Urgent and Primary Care Centre. If you think you need testing, please call ahead before visiting your doctor, urgent and primary care center or health clinic.

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