

COVID-19 UPDATE – August 4th, 2020

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

Key Updates for August 4th, 2020

For a full list of updates from VCH visit vch.ca/COVID19

- Update on COVID-19 Cases
- New cases
- Hospital and PPE update
- Funding boost for overdose response

Update on COVID-19 Cases

In today's briefing, Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, reported 146 new cases of COVID-19 in B.C. since last Friday, including:

- July 31-Aug. 1: 43 cases
- Aug. 1-2: 29 cases
- Aug. 2-3: 46 cases
- Aug. 3-4: 28 cases

That brings the total number of cases to 3,787 since the pandemic began. Of those, 1,119 have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region. There are 319 active cases of COVID-19 in the province and 3,273 people who tested positive have recovered. The number of people in hospitals throughout B.C. is eight, including four people in critical care. There are three long-term care facilities in B.C. that continue to have active outbreaks.

New cases

Dr. Henry said health officials knew events from the last few weeks had exposed people to the virus, those happened before the long weekend. Many of the new cases are related to gatherings or private parties. Some include travel within Canada, some from outside the country and some workplace exposures. The factors that lead to transmission are all the same, it's what we do with each other when we're having close interactions with people over a period of time. Thankfully, the vast majority of the cases we know where people have been exposed, and we know many are overlapping social circles. Minister Dix pointed out the average of 36 new cases per day is more than we had in June, and advised against going to private parties at this time. He urged people not to attend parties if you don't know who will be there, or the numbers — this is the time to keep numbers small.

Hospital and PPE Update

Minister Dix reported there were 6,324 visits to Emergency Departments yesterday, which is similar to what we had before the pandemic. He also provided an update on personal protective equipment (PPE): since last week, the Ministry of Health has obtained 40,754 n95 respirators; 7.58 million surgical masks; 5,080 eye protection; and 51,310 gowns.

Funding boost for overdose response

Earlier today, Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, announced \$10.5 million in funding that will accelerate the response to an increasingly toxic illicit drug supply due to COVID-19. The Minister said a record number of lives were lost to overdose last month – all the more heart-breaking since before COVID-19, we had managed to bring deaths down for the first time. The funding will further scale up overdose prevention services, expand access to safe prescription alternatives to separate people from toxic street drugs and add new outreach teams to help prevent overdose deaths, save lives and connect more people to treatment and recovery throughout the province. To reduce the number of people using alone, funding will be used to open 17 new supervised consumption services and 12 new inhalation services in communities hit the hardest by the overdose crisis. The funding will be used to expand access to safe prescription alternatives for people at high risk of overdoses. Forty-two new full-time registered nurses, psychiatric nurses, social workers and peer support workers will be added to 14 new and existing interdisciplinary outreach teams throughout the province. Working in groups of three, these workers will help connect people with substance-use challenges, including those who use drugs alone, to treatment, recovery and services that best suit their needs. In addition, these teams will be vital in bringing services to people who may be unable to access services as a result of COVID-19.

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
- 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 <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing>
- Self-isolate at home for 10 days if you have COVID-19 symptoms
- Find helpful posters, handouts and other resources about COVID-19 [here](#).