

LATEST UPDATE – September 17th, 2020

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

Ministry of Health update

In today's Ministry of Health briefing, Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, reported a record number of new cases: 165, for a total of 7,663 cases in B.C. since the pandemic began. Of those, 2,714 are in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region. Doctor Bonnie Henry also announced a new mouth-rise gargle test for children and young adults between the ages of four and 19. The test must still be done at a COVID-19 collection/assessment centre, but it can be done by an individual and does not require the assistance of health care workers. As is the case on Thursdays, Minister Dix updated the province on the surgical restart numbers. Between May 18th and September 13th, 2020, 102,598 surgeries were completed across the province, with 23,829 in the VCH region.

Improving primary care in Vancouver

Government is transforming everyday health care for people living in Vancouver by establishing six primary care networks, including supports for First Nations and Indigenous primary care through team-based primary care providers to strengthen support to the region. The Ministry of Health will provide approximately \$36 million in annual funding to the primary care networks, once they are fully operational. Over the next four years, residents of Vancouver will benefit from 197 full-time equivalent health providers and administrative staff who will provide better access to quality primary health care. This includes family physicians, nurse practitioners, clinical pharmacists and allied health professionals such as social workers, physiotherapists, mental health counsellors, dietitians and cultural support workers.

New public health order to slow the overdose crisis

A new public health order issued by Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, will increase the number of health professionals authorized to help people at risk for overdose access safer alternatives to the toxic street drug supply. The order, issued under the Health Professions Act, authorizes registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses to prescribe pharmaceutical alternatives to street drugs to help separate more people from the poisoned street drug supply to save lives and provide opportunities for ongoing care, treatment and support. New nursing standards will be introduced, along with training and education, and access to expert consultation and pathways to connect people to broader addictions and primary care. People with substance-use disorder and addictions can currently access safer pharmaceutical alternatives by talking to their doctor, nurse practitioner, community care team or by calling 811.

Testing

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. For more information and latest updates on COVID-19, follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter @CDCofBC or visit the website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>.