

LATEST UPDATE – Nov. 27, 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 media availability on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, reported a total of 911 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours. Since the start of the pandemic, the total number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 in BC now stands at 30,884. 11 new deaths were confirmed, while a total of 301 people are hospitalized, with 69 of these cases receiving treatment in ICU/critical care. The total number of deaths due to COVID-19 now stands at 395, with the majority in their 70s and 80s. 10,430 people are under public health monitoring. There were 3 new healthcare outbreaks, totally 59 active outbreaks in our healthcare system. Currently, the province stands at 55% capacity in critical care. In the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region, there were 153 new cases reported.

Dr. Bonnie Henry Briefing

Public Gatherings and Indoor Fitness Activities

Dr. Henry addressed the number of questions she received over the past week about group indoor fitness activities and why certain events are included in the latest order, while others are not. She explained that the Public Health Office is using available evidence to inform its decisions around these activities and it is more complex than was originally believed. She emphasized that group indoor fitness participation is a concern (more than 2-3 people). More details will be provided later next week. Dr. Henry added that social gatherings are also more risky and we are seeing a higher level of community transmission in these scenarios. As a result, the activities that were deemed as safe, and guidelines that were developed 10 months ago, are no longer safe in our current environment.

When speaking about increasing case counts, and considering other restrictions, Dr. Henry said they continue to closely monitor the transmission of COVID-19. They closely monitor the rolling 7-day average, percent positivity, and the number of unlinked cases. As cases are increasing across the province, she recognized that health authorities are becoming more strained and is working with them to implement measures that can be modified or implemented.

Stigmatization

Dr. Henry is hearing of cases of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 experiencing stigmatization from those in their schools, and their communities, when they disclose that they are sick. It is really important to realize it is spreading rapidly around the world, and in our communities. She emphasized that COVID-19 does not recognize race, ethnicity, or gender and it doesn't discriminate. Some people are afraid to tell others that they are positive. We have to take a step back, keep ourselves safe, and support people who are infected. We have to realize we are not immune to this. This is why Public Health involvement during the contact tracing process is so important. If you do test positive, create a list of the places you have been and people you may have been in contact with. We do have tools to support people in reaching out to close contacts following a COVID-19 diagnosis.

She has heard stories this week of service staff experiencing aggression from others around the mask mandate. In indoor spaces, it is important to show respect for those who work in these environments. If you are opposed to wearing a mask, order takeout, stay outside, order online and do not put other people at risk. This illness is severe, people are suffering in hospital, and these small, simple actions make a big difference for all of us.

Upcoming Holidays

Preparation is underway for a number of upcoming holidays, including for retailers. Her message for shoppers for today which is Black Friday, and for the weeks in the lead up to the holidays is: if you do plan to shop, keep your COVID-19 safety plan in mind. Keep your distance, wear a mask, wash your hands, keep it local, and limit your travel. Shop local where possible, and support your neighbourhood businesses both in person, and online. She reemphasized the need to avoid social gatherings with anyone outside of our immediate households.

Release of Positivity Rates for MSP-funded and Private Testing

The Ministry of Health will now release a breakdown of positivity rates of both MSP-funded and privately funded COVID-19 tests. Overall, there is a higher rate of positivity among the MSP-funded tests, as these are

often cases which are presenting with symptoms and have engaged public health. While non-MSP tests are mostly administered to asymptomatic people who may be tested multiple times for work or for essential travel.

Advice for Skiing and Snowboarding Safely

As ski resorts across our region open, it is top of mind for many skiers and snowboarders how they can safely access the mountains this winter. The advice from the Ministry of Health is simple: keep it local if at all possible. For example, for residents of Metro Vancouver, the advice is to visit local mountains, including Cypress, Mt. Seymour and Grouse. Now is not the time to move outside of your region if possible, and we can still enjoy the slopes safely.

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 centres 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/>.

Other Resources

To find the Provincial Health Officer's orders, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

To see a map of **COVID-19 cases by local health area**, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/data>

For a listing of the **community exposure events**, go to: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/public-exposures>

For the **latest medical updates**, including case counts, prevention, risks and testing, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

For **community engagement opportunities** at VCH, see: <http://cean.vch.ca/members/current-opportunities/>