

LATEST UPDATE – Dec. 7, 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 new COVID-19 cases from Friday December 3 to today, Monday December 7. This totalled 2,020 new cases, 10 of which were epi-linked.

- Friday December 4-Saturday December 5- 647 new cases
- Saturday December 5-Sunday December 6- 726 new cases
- Sunday December 6-Monday December 7- 647 new cases

The total number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 in BC now stands at 38,152 since the start of the pandemic. There were 304 new cases reported in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region over this reporting period.

VCH hospital bed capacity stands at 93.1% base bed capacity and 68.3% overall occupancy (surge and base bed capacity combined).

Across the province, 35 new deaths were confirmed, while 349 people are currently hospitalized, with 77 of these individuals receiving treatment in ICU/critical care. There were six new facility outbreaks across health authorities, and five facility outbreaks were declared over. One new community outbreak was declared at a mink farm in the Fraser Health region. The Ministry of Health and Fraser Health is closely watching this site, as COVID-19 mink farms outbreaks have been observed in other countries where the virus was transmitted between animals and humans.

Extension of Current Public Health Orders

Dr. Henry announced the extension of the existing Gatherings and Events Public Health Order to midnight of January 8, 2021. This means holiday dinners or gatherings in restaurants with anyone outside of your household is not permitted. Drive through or drop off, such as toy drives, are allowed. Up to 50 cars can congregate at a public event but only those within the same household are allowed in each car. Individuals must remain in their car for the duration of the event. Restrictions on group fitness and sports for adults remain unchanged, while children can continue to partake in supervised group sports activities, but without any associated travel. WorkSafe BC safety requirements must continue for all BC businesses - this means daily health checks are required, updating COVID-19 safety plans and allowing people to work from home, where possible.

Dr. Henry does see some promising data, particularly in the last few days, where we may be levelling off COVID-19 transmission. She does believe the restrictions, and also the actions of British Columbians, are beginning to work. We are still seeing the virus circulating in communities across BC, and the hundreds of people in hospital receiving the care they need for COVID-19 symptoms are putting a strain on our healthcare system. She emphasized we cannot afford to see a rebound in cases, where we would see more people being hospitalized and requiring additional care.

BC Vaccine Availability

Dr. Henry also referenced the good news today - that vaccines to protect British Columbians are days away. She expects a small portion of the Pfizer vaccine to arrive in BC next week. It is an important start to ensure logistics are working effectively, and also to prioritize the health of our elderly. Later this week, Dr. Brown, head of BC's COVID-19 vaccine program, Dr. Henry and Minister Dix, will deliver a full briefing on their proposed approach to the province's vaccine program. It will be both adaptable and flexible to ensure vaccines are available to those who most need them.

Federal Vaccine Update

Prime Minister Trudeau confirmed today that Canada is on course to begin receiving Pfizer vaccine doses in December. Canada is contracted to receive 249,000 doses this month, with additional shipments scheduled for January 2021 onwards. The Pfizer vaccine is still being reviewed by Health Canada to ensure the scientific evidence confirms it is both safe and effective, before it is distributed to Canadian provinces, and later, to

immunize priority populations. Pending its approval by the Canadian medicine's regulator, immunizations may start as early as next week.

For information on who the priority populations are for the COVID-19 vaccine, visit [Health Canada's website](#), where the National Advisory Committee on Immunization's (NACI) recommendations are available.

VCH Website and Translation Engagement

VCH has started two important projects – the redesign of the VCH website and a review of VCH translation practices. Your input in the web design project and the translation needs at VCH for safe care will help us improve our translation tools and ensure our future website is a user-friendly resource that is easy to navigate. We are hosting Zoom focus groups to hear from the diverse communities we serve. To register for our upcoming focus group times and dates (see the attached poster), please email ce@vch.ca.

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/>