

LATEST UPDATE – Jan. 19, 2021

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 joint statement on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, reported a total of 465 new COVID-19 cases for the province. The total number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 in B.C. now stands at 61,912 since the start of the pandemic. There were 83 new cases reported in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region. There are 4,331 active cases of COVID-19 across B.C. currently.

Across the province, there have been 21 new COVID-19 related deaths, while 329 people are currently hospitalized, with 70 of these cases receiving treatment in ICU/critical care. The total number of individuals who have passed away due to COVID-19 is 1,090.

COVID-19 Vaccination Update

Since the start of immunizations, 87,346 people have been vaccinated. The focus continues to be on immunizing people of greatest risk. We are well on our way to completing vaccinations in long-term care homes in the Lower Mainland (VCH and Fraser Health). And the vaccine is rolling out to the populations of greatest risk in Sea to Sky, Sunshine Coast, Powell River and our remote communities. The target is to complete all long-term care homes by end of this week or next week depending on when the next shipment of vaccines arrive.

Canada has received notice that there will be delays in the Pfizer vaccine during the next two weeks and then we will get extra catch-up doses at the end of February and early March. This delay only affects the Pfizer vaccine and BC expects regular deliveries of the Moderna vaccine to continue. Dr. Bonnie Henry said we knew these types of things could happen, so we're trying to have some flexibility and that we will be doing more first doses in March instead of February.

It has been 35 days since the first vaccinations were delivered. The priority next week is second doses and then on to immunizing people of the greatest risk will continue as we move into phase two of the vaccination schedule. Dr. Henry said we are on track to protect the most vulnerable in BC by the end of March.

Dr. Henry said it is amazing to have such an effective vaccine in such a short time. Right now, our individual actions continue to have the greatest impact. The choices that we make every day will make the biggest difference right now.

More COVID-19 immunization information is available here: www.bccdc.ca

Rapid Testing

Speaking about calls for more rapid testing in BC, Dr. Henry said there have been pilot projects using the rapid tests. She said they have been found to be useful in more remote communities where there's a longer turnaround time to get the gold standard, the nasopharyngeal swab, to a lab. Rapid tests are also being used in the downtown east side, where people may not come back to get the result a day or two days later and need to have the result as best we can right then and there.

Dr. Henry said the rapid tests take at least three people to conduct and she said that as a single test, used by itself, is not very accurate. She also said rapid testing cannot take the place of the importance of using all of the infection prevention and control measures that we know work within care homes.

New Urgent and Primary Care Centre Opening in Vancouver Soon

People living in northeast Vancouver will soon have better access to team-based everyday health care with the opening of a new urgent and primary care centre (UPCC) on Feb. 16, 2021, located at 102-2788 East Hastings St.

The centre will incorporate a team-based care approach through a health-care team that includes family physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses and allied health professionals, such as dietitians, social workers and counsellors, and support staff.

The new UPCC will be operated by Vancouver Coastal Health. It was developed in collaboration with the Vancouver Division of Family Practice, regional program leads and Aboriginal program leads at Vancouver Coastal Health and Providence Health Care. For more information, the news release can be found [here](#).

Report of COVID-19 Transmission in Schools

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) released data that indicates a low rate of COVID-19 transmission in schools across its region in the first half of the school year. Since schools reopened in September, VCH has not recorded a significant increase in COVID-19 cases among school-aged children relative to other groups. Those aged 5-17 years of age accounted for 6 per cent of VCH's COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the pandemic, despite representing 10 per cent of VCH's population. Evidence shows children are less likely to get infected with COVID-19, and less likely to experience severe symptoms if infected.

From Sept. 10 to Dec. 18, approximately 700 students or staff in the Vancouver Coastal region of a total population of over 100 thousand, have been diagnosed with COVID-19 since schools reopened. Over 90 per cent of these cases have not resulted in any school-based transmission. The vast majority of affected students and staff contracted the virus at home or in social circumstances outside of school and links to schools were determined through contact tracing.

For more information, the news release can be found [here](#).

VCH Website and Translation Engagement

Many thanks to everyone who has been involved in our two important projects – the redesign of the VCH website and review of VCH translation practices. Your input in the web design project and 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 have launched a survey for the two projects, and would like to receive input from the diverse communities we serve. Please feel free to distribute widely. The survey is also available in Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Punjabi and Farsi. To complete the survey, go to:

<https://survey.givingopinions.ca/vch>

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/>