

LATEST UPDATE – Mar. 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 yesterday's joint statement on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, reported 622 new cases.

The total number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 in B.C. now stands at 90,049 since the start of the pandemic. Of the new cases, 184 people were in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region.

Across the province, there were eight new COVID-19 related deaths, while 286 people are currently hospitalized, with 85 of these cases receiving treatment in ICU/critical care. The total number of individuals who have passed away due to COVID-19 is 1,419. There are 4,987 active cases of COVID-19 across B.C. currently.

There have been 136 new confirmed COVID-19 cases that are variants of concern in our province, for a total of 1,132 cases. Of the total cases, 143 are active and the remaining people have recovered. This includes 1,040 cases of the B.1.1.7 (U.K.) variant, 41 cases of the B.1.351 (South Africa) variant and 51 cases of the P.1 (Brazil) variant.

Vaccination update

Since the start of immunizations, 465,584 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca-SII COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in B.C., 87,120 of which are second doses.

Dr. Henry said based on our current age-based trajectory, everyone who is eligible for a vaccine will have access to a first dose before July 1, 2021. This is encouraging news.

Dr. Henry also provided an update to both our age-based immunization plan as well as the parallel AstraZeneca/SII immunization program. Details on both are below and can be found [here](#).

Updated information on who should get a COVID-19 vaccine can be found [here](#) and there is more information about vaccine after care [here](#).

Updates to VCH's implementation of Phase 2 of B.C.'s immunization plan

The age-based vaccine rollout using the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines is accelerating and moving forward ahead of schedule. The following ages are invited to call **1.877.587.5767** to book their COVID-19 vaccination appointment according to the following age groups:

People in Richmond, Vancouver, North Vancouver and West Vancouver

- Friday, March 19: seniors **80 years** of age and older
- Saturday, March 20: seniors **79 years** of age and older
- Monday, March 22: seniors **78 years** of age and older
- Tuesday, March 23: seniors **77 years** of age and older
- Thursday, March 25: seniors **76 years** of age and older
- Saturday, March 27: seniors **75 years** of age and older

People on the Sunshine Coast, Powell River, Sea to Sky and Bowen Island

- Saturday, March 20: seniors **70 years** of age and older

Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit)

- Saturday, March 20: Indigenous peoples **55 years** of age and older

The call-in schedule for the age 70 to 74 cohort will be announced in the coming days.

To prepare for your call, please have available a pen and paper, personal health number, full name, date of birth, postal code and phone number. There are enough appointments available for all seniors and there is no

rush to call in. Call volumes are lower in the late afternoon and evening. The appointment booking toll-free phone line is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week.

VCH is appealing to family members, friends, neighbours and social services agencies to help reach eligible seniors in the community. Please share this COVID-19 vaccination update with eligible seniors and Indigenous peoples along with Elders, to help them plan and book their appointment.

In partnership with [S.U.C.C.E.S.S.](#), VCH is pleased to host two information sessions about the COVID-19 immunization rollout. The March 20 session is in Cantonese and the March 27 session in Mandarin. Please click [here](#) for more information.

Front-line workers prioritized as COVID-19 vaccine rollout accelerates

More than 300,000 front-line workers, including first responders, grocery store employees, and teachers and child care workers, will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations over the coming weeks as the Province's COVID-19 Immunization Plan moves ahead of schedule.

Beginning in April, people in priority groups identified by public health and the COVID-19 Workplace Task Group will start to receive their first dose of the AstraZeneca/SII COVISHIELD (AZ/SII) vaccine. These groups include:

- first responders (police, firefighters, emergency transport);
- K-12 educational staff;
- child care staff;
- grocery store workers;
- postal workers;
- bylaw and quarantine officers;
- manufacturing workers;
- wholesale/warehousing employees;
- staff living in congregate housing at places such as ski hills;
- correctional facilities staff; and
- cross-border transport staff.

These priority groups have been identified as workers in places and sectors where:

- the use of personal protective equipment and barriers can be challenging;
- outbreaks and clusters have occurred or are ongoing;
- workers must live or work in congregate settings; or
- maintaining the workforce for a critical service is necessary.

Health Minister Adrian Dix said our age-based rollout is ahead of schedule and with the AstraZeneca/SII supply arriving, we can protect people working in specific, front-line industries. The latest science and data to identify high-risk industries or critical services will allow us to protect even more people from COVID-19, which in turn, gives our entire communities and our province greater protection from the virus.

These sectors or settings prioritized for the AZ/SII vaccine are in addition to the workplaces previously identified by public health where vaccines are being used to assist with outbreak response. Currently in B.C., the first shipment of AZ/SII is being deployed to protect people in workplaces identified as having the highest risk of COVID-19 transmission, including:

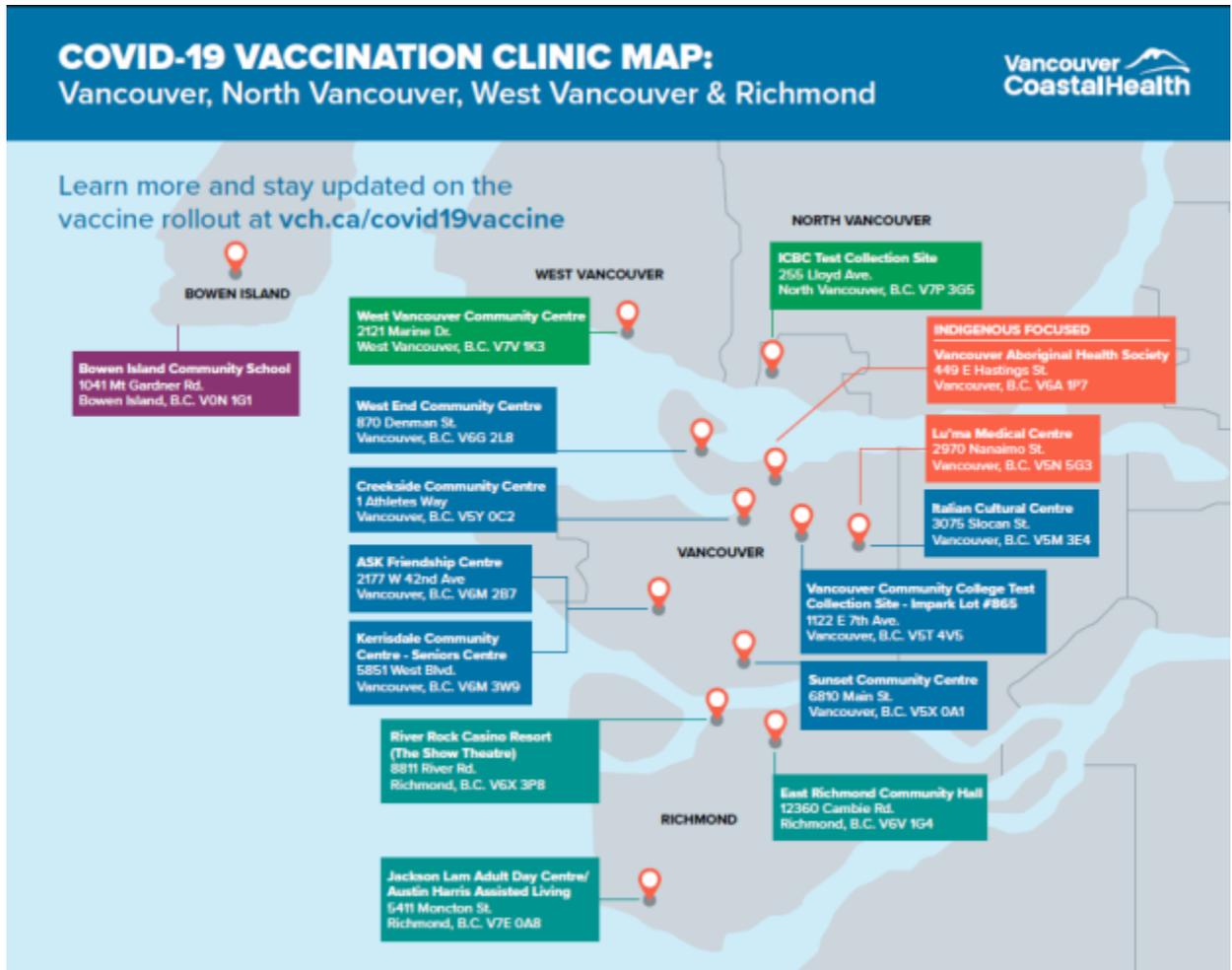
- food processing plants, including poultry, fruit and fish processing;
- agricultural operations with congregate worker accommodations, including farms, nurseries and greenhouses; and
- large industrial camps with congregate accommodations for workers.

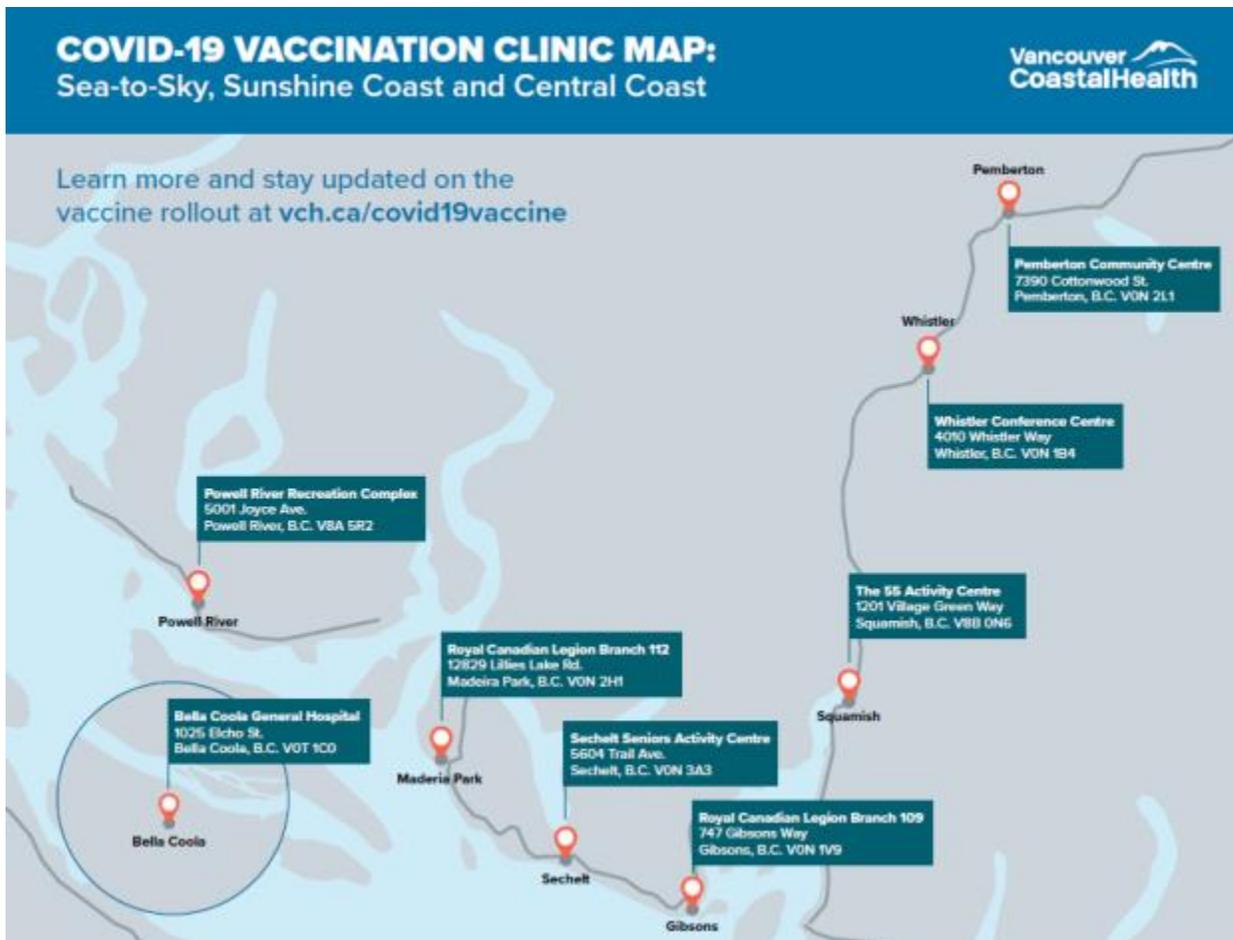
In total, B.C. expects to receive approximately 340,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine by the end of May 2021. The Province will use a combination of community pharmacists, existing immunization clinics and mobile clinics at some worksites to administer the AstraZeneca vaccine to front-line workers.

Booking arrangements for front-line workers will be established in the coming weeks and will be communicated clearly and directly to each sector to arrange bookings. Workers identified as “front-line” and prioritized for the AstraZeneca vaccine should not call into regional health authority call centres at this time.

VCH releases vaccination clinic locations

A reminder that when you book your vaccination appointment, you will be directed to one of the following vaccination clinics. More information on the vaccine rollout and clinics can be found [here](#). And if you would like to share these maps, they can be found [here](#).





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/>