

COVID-19 UPDATE – April 7th, 2020

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

Key Updates for April 7th, 2020

- For a full list of updates from VCH visit vch.ca
- Update on COVID-19 cases - Dr. Henry encouraged to see overall rate of new cases levelling, but vulnerable individuals still at risk
- Dr. Henry releases Op-Ed, “No boundaries with COVID-19” on why local case numbers are not being released
- Canada Emergency Response Benefit now available for those with reduced hours and students
- COVID-19 Strategic Research Advisory Committee will advise COVID-19 public health research

Update on COVID-19 cases

At today’s briefing, B.C. Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry said it’s encouraging to see the overall rate of new cases in British Columbia levelling, but that we continue to see new outbreaks in the community and with vulnerable individuals. There are a total of 1,266 confirmed cases in British Columbia to date. Of those, 586 have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region. The vast majority of people with COVID-19 are recovering at home in isolation; 783 people are now listed as fully recovered. Dr. Henry also announced one new long-term care facility outbreak in VCH, while three outbreaks at long-term care homes in our region have been declared over. Dr. Henry said residents in long-term care are our most vulnerable citizens, and efforts to protect them continue to be a major focus of our health teams. Catching cases early with surveillance has been key — most of the outbreaks in long-term care have been managed with a full outbreak response upon finding even one case. Dr. Henry also said there has been a community death of a known COVID-19 case in the VCH region, and as is the process for any sudden unexpected death that takes place in community, the BC Coroners Service is investigating. We offer our condolences to the friends and family of this individual, and to everyone who has lost loved ones.

No boundaries with COVID-19

Dr. Henry released an Op-Ed piece to the media to explain why she is not releasing the local numbers of COVID-19 cases. In her words:

“It would be irresponsible to mention only a few communities and give people outside those areas a false sense that they are not susceptible or at lower risk. Every health region in British Columbia has people with COVID-19. Every community and home town – no matter how large or small – is at risk.”

“As we notify the public about COVID-19 cases, we have been careful about how much we disclose about the personal details of people who were potentially exposed and the specific location of confirmed cases. This is because, as with many communicable diseases, there is still very much of a stigma associated with infection.”

“We want people who have symptoms to contact us and to feel safe contacting us, knowing their personal information will be protected. This is important to everyone. It allows public-health teams to do the work they need to do to keep all of us safe.”

The full Op-Ed can be found here: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/no-boundaries-with-covid-19>

Canada Emergency Response Benefit

Today, the Canada Emergency Response Benefit became available at Canada.ca or at 1-800-959-2041. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also said during his briefing that more help is on the way for people who don’t qualify for the benefit but are working with reduced hours, and for post-secondary students who usually rely upon summer jobs.

COVID-19 Strategic Research Advisory Committee

Dr. Henry also announced a new COVID-19 Strategic Research Advisory Committee, which will advise the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, which has received \$2 million to fund research in several important public health areas. Research will focus on B.C.-specific epidemiology and public health countermeasures to address some of the challenges of long-term care homes, inner city populations, rural communities, Indigenous people, and health-care workers. This is in addition to a variety of research that is already underway across B.C., as we do all we can to understand this virus, to stop transmission and protect our province.

Key Messages to Share

- Practice [physical distancing](#) if you have to go out
- If you think you have COVID-19 take the self-assessment here: covid19.thrive.health
- Self-isolate at home for 10 days if you have COVID-19 symptoms