

LATEST UPDATE – February 17, 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 1,533 new cases during the long weekend.

- Friday to Saturday – 452
- Saturday to Sunday – 431
- Sunday to Monday – 348
- Monday to Tuesday – 302

The total number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 in B.C. now stands at 74,283 since the start of the pandemic. Of the new cases, 392 people were in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region.

Across the province, there were 26 new COVID-19 related deaths, while 231 people are currently hospitalized, with 74 of these cases receiving treatment in ICU/critical care. The total number of individuals who have passed away due to COVID-19 is 1,314. There are now 4,189 active cases of COVID-19 across B.C. currently.

Dr. Henry says the reproductive rate of the virus has risen above 1 in the last week in higher population areas in Fraser Health and VCH. She said this uptick can lead to very quick growth of the virus. It doesn't take much for community spread to get out of hand, which is why our individual efforts are so important to break the chains of transmission.

Dr. Henry said if you have symptoms of COVID-19, it is important to stay home, stay away from others and arrange to get tested right away. Sticking with all of the precautions we have in place is needed until we reach that milestone of widespread community immunity through our immunization program.

Vaccination Update

Since the start of immunizations, 171,755 vaccinations have been delivered in B.C. (not including today), with 22,914 of those being a second dose.

Dr. Henry said deliveries of the Pfizer vaccine are resuming this week and some has already arrived. The focus is on second doses for those in long-term care, where the risk is greatest. Addressing questions about the impact of the delay of second doses, Dr. Henry said studies around the world are finding a delayed second dose is not adversely affecting immunity, and it may result in stronger immunity.

Health Minister Adrian Dix said that if the vaccines arrive on schedule, 10 per cent of B.C.'s population will be vaccinated by April. And Dr. Henry said mass vaccinations for seniors will begin in March and then the next age groups to start in April.

More information and immunization data is available through this page: [BCCDC](#)

COVID-19 Variants

The BC Centre for Disease Control has identified 60 cases of a COVID-19 variant of concern. Forty of these cases are associated with the variant first identified in the UK. There are 19 cases associated with the variant first identified in South Africa and one case with the variant first identified in Nigeria.

B.C. Extends State of Emergency

The Province of B.C. has formally extended the provincial state of emergency, allowing health and emergency management officials to continue to use extraordinary powers under the Emergency Program Act to support the COVID-19 pandemic response. The state of emergency is extended through the end of the day on March 2, 2021, to allow staff to take the necessary actions to keep British Columbians safe and manage immediate concerns and COVID-19 outbreaks.

Premier John Horgan said, "The beginning of our mass vaccination program is just weeks away, and health-care workers have already vaccinated virtually everyone in our long-term care system. We need to keep following public health orders, knowing they will keep us safe as we work to end the pandemic in B.C."

Federal Government Expands International Travel Restrictions

With new COVID-19 variant detections increasing in the country, the Government of Canada has announced additional testing and quarantine requirements for international travellers arriving to Canada's air and land ports of entry. These new measures will help prevent variants of concern from reaccelerating the pandemic and making it more difficult to contain.

For travellers arriving to Canada by land, as of February 15, 2021, all travellers, with some exceptions, will be required to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result taken in the United States within 72 hours of pre-arrival, or a positive test taken 14 to 90 days prior to arrival. In addition, as of February 22, 2021, travellers entering Canada at the land border will be required to take a COVID-19 test on arrival as well as toward the end of their 14-day quarantine.

All travellers arriving to Canada by air, as of February 22, 2021, with some exceptions, will be required to take a COVID-19 test when they arrive in Canada before exiting the airport, and another toward the end of their 14-day quarantine period. With limited exceptions, air travellers, will also be required to reserve, prior to departure to Canada, a 3-night stay in a government-authorized hotel. Travellers will be able to book their government-authorized stay starting February 18, 2021. These new measures are in addition to existing mandatory pre-boarding and health requirements for air travellers.

Finally, on February 22, 2021, all travellers, whether arriving by land or air will be required to submit their travel and contact information, including a suitable quarantine plan, electronically before crossing the border or boarding a flight.

The Government of Canada continues to strongly advise Canadians to cancel or postpone any non-essential travel, including vacation plans, outside Canada. Foreign nationals should likewise postpone or cancel travel plans to Canada. Now is not the time to travel. More information is available [here](#).

Northeast Urgent & Primary Care Centre Opens

The new Northeast Urgent and Primary Care Centre (UPCC) is now open to the public to provide appropriate urgent primary care services for the residents of Vancouver Northeast.

Located at 102-2788 East Hastings Street in Vancouver, the UPCC is open 365 days a year, Monday to Saturday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The UPCC team includes family physicians, nurse practitioners and registered nurses. Rapid access to social work and mental health services are also available onsite. In addition, this will be the first VCH UPCC to provide access to Indigenous Elder support, which will be available on referral.

With the most urgent patients and clients seen first, people can go to the UPCC for conditions and services such as:

- Sprains and strains
- Cuts, wounds or skin conditions
- High Fever
- Infections (chest, ear, urinary tract, etc.)
- Asthma attacks
- New or worsening pain
- Less serious child illness or injury
- Worsening chronic disease
- Social work services
- Mental health services

The Northeast UPCC will bring more health-care options into the community, making it easier to access care, receive follow-up care and connect to support services within the community. The UPCC is not intended to replace primary care providers as a person's first point of contact for health concerns, nor will it replace emergency departments for life-threatening illnesses or injuries. Rather, it is intended to be an additional service in the community, wrapping services around the patients or clients to provide the right care at the right place.

To learn more about the UPCC and the community it serves, we have [released a video](#) highlighting the centre. For the official news release on the UPCC, please click this [link](#). If you would like more information on UPCCs, please visit www.vch.ca/UPCC

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/>