

LATEST UPDATE – August 27th, 2020

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

Ministry of Health update

On Thursday August 26, 2020, Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, announced 68 new cases of COVID-19 in the province for a total of 5,372 cases in British Columbia. Of the total COVID-19 cases, 22 individuals are hospitalized, 19 of them in Fraser Health and three in Vancouver Coastal Health. The remaining people with COVID-19 are recovering at home in self-isolation. Since the start of the pandemic, there have been 1,737 cases of COVID-19 in the Vancouver Coastal Health region.

Returning to the classroom

Back to school plans for K-12 families are now posted for all 60 school districts in B.C., so parents and families can prepare to support their children for a safe return to the classroom. Families should visit their school district website to view their local school's plans. Education Minister Rob Fleming has directed school districts to contact all families in their school communities to share their safety plans and to confirm if they are planning for their child to attend school classes in September, or if they need alternative learning options. As part of the ministry's July 29 guidelines for planning, many districts have already begun engaging with parents to determine their needs. The Ministry of Education has also given school districts the flexibility and certainty to find options that work for families. This includes the authority for all school boards to offer remote options to students within their districts, as well as the tools they need to increase their existing programs to meet demand. Meantime, the federal government has announced \$2 billion in support for provinces and territories through the Safe Return to Class Fund. For example, the Fund will help provinces and territories by supporting adapted learning spaces, improved air ventilation, increased hand sanitation and hygiene, and purchases of personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies.

175 illicit drug deaths in July

B.C. recorded 175 overdose deaths in July. This is the third consecutive month with more than 170 suspected overdose deaths. Fentanyl remains the most significant driver in the number of deaths our communities are experiencing. Lisa Lapointe, Chief Coroner, BC Coroner's Service says the number of people dying in B.C. due to an unsafe drug supply continues to surpass deaths due to homicides, motor vehicle incidents, suicides and the COVID-19 pandemic combined. Sadly, she notes it is not uncommon for two or three people using drugs together to die suddenly, with no opportunity to seek help. Given the high prevalence of fentanyl detected in overdoses, it's critical that people only use drugs in the presence of someone willing and able to inject naloxone and call for emergency assistance.

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 centre can be found by visiting: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing> or by calling 8-1-1.

To protect yourself while out in public, wash your hands frequently and maintain social distance. For more information on COVID-19, please visit www.vch.ca/COVID19. 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/>.

Take our survey

Thank you for being a valued community partner with Vancouver Coastal Health. We hope you have found our regular COVID-19 updates informative and helpful during this unprecedented time. As we move forward, we'd like to hear from you about how you'd like to stay informed and engaged with Vancouver Coastal Health on COVID-19 matters and beyond.

We have prepared a brief survey, which should take approximately 5 – 10 minutes to complete, to gather some feedback from you. Please click on the link below to begin the survey.

<https://hrsurveys.vch.ca/Survey.aspx?s=c6b77e2e34174c16a88af675353a1ecd>

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out the survey!

If you have any questions, please e-mail ce@vch.ca

The survey will remain open until approximately mid-September.