

LATEST UPDATE – September 9th, 2020

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

Ministry of Health update

In a joint statement, Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, and Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s provincial health officer, reported 100 new cases of COVID-19 today, for a total of 6,691 cases in British Columbia. Of those, 2,285 have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health region since the start of the pandemic. There are 1,378 active cases of COVID-19 in the province, 3,101 people who are under active public health monitoring as a result of identified exposure to known cases and 5,086 people who tested positive have recovered. Currently, 37 individuals are hospitalized with COVID-19, 15 of whom are in intensive care. The remaining people with COVID-19 are recovering at home in self-isolation. There are two new health-care facility outbreaks, including one at Royal Arch Masonic Home long-term care facility in VCH. In total, 12 long-term care or assisted-living facilities and three acute-care facilities have active outbreaks. There have been no new community outbreaks, although there continue to be community exposure events. Visit the VCH [Public Exposures page](#) to find the locations and times of known possible exposures to COVID-19 to the public in our region.

Fall and winter preparedness

Earlier today, Premier John Horgan announced the Province is investing \$1.6 billion in a fall and winter preparedness plan that will significantly build upon and strengthen measures that respond to the health-care requirements of COVID-19. The plan will provide new support to seniors in long-term care homes and assisted-living facilities, by ensuring more British Columbians than ever before can get a flu shot, and by reducing the chance for transmission of COVID-19 in B.C. hospitals. The plan includes \$44.1 million to launch the Health Career Access Program and recruit an estimated 7,000 health-care workers in long-term care homes and assisted-living facilities throughout the province. The program will provide a path for approximately 3,000 applicants who may not previously have had health-care experience to receive on-the-job training. New hires in the program will start in a health-care support worker position and receive paid training that leads to full qualification as a health-care assistant.

It also includes \$374 million to bolster public health measures, including significantly building out the fall flu immunization campaign. As part of this, 45,000 Fluzone-High Dose immunizations will be made available to all long-term care and assisted living residents. Fluzone-High Dose is a higher dose vaccine designed specifically to protect people over 65 from influenza. An additional 450,000 influenza vaccine doses will be made available in the 2020-21 influenza season, for a total of approximately two million doses.

Finally, the plan includes \$42.3 million to ease the pressures off B.C. hospitals and reduce the chance of COVID-19 transmission in the hospitals. Hospital at Home, an innovative program that has succeeded in Canada and around the world, allows patients who meet the criteria to be offered 24/7 care at home rather than being admitted to hospital. Through in-person and virtual visits, patients will receive safe, effective care from nurses and physicians experienced in hospital medicine and acute care. Hospital at Home will launch through the Victoria General Hospital, then through additional hospitals over the coming months.

To read the complete COVID-19 health-sector plan for fall/winter 2020-21, visit: http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/COVID-19_fall-winter_preparation.pdf

For more information on the Health Career Access Program, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/careersinhealth

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/>.