

LATEST UPDATE – APRIL 14, 2022

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

Six-year anniversary of B.C.'s overdose emergency

April 13 marked the six-year anniversary of B.C.'s overdose emergency, and unfortunately, this crisis is not over.

In the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region, we lost many more lives to toxic drugs in the past two years than we did to COVID-19, as the situation was exacerbated by the pandemic, which reduced access to harm reduction services and in-person addiction treatment.

With the rise in deaths, we are committed to improving these outcomes. This trend cannot continue. This week's anniversary reminds us that we must work harder than ever to improve our system of addictions care, expand safer alternatives to the illicit drug supply for those at risk, and turn the tide on the toxic drug crisis in B.C.

Find a list of overdose prevention and response services and resources in the VCH region at <http://www.vch.ca/public-health/harm-reduction/overdose-prevention-response>. Read the B.C. government's joint statement on the six-year anniversary of B.C.'s overdose emergency at <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022MMHA0020-000564>.

Second booster doses

Immunize BC is rolling out a [second booster vaccine program](#) for seniors over the age of 70, Indigenous people over the age of 55, and residents of long-term care and assisted living facilities.

You are encouraged to register yourself and eligible family members for booster doses at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/register>, or call 1-833-838-2323. For general information about COVID-19 vaccination, please visit the [B.C. Centre for Disease Control website](#).

People who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) continue to be prioritized for their COVID-19 vaccinations. Those who have received their full three-dose primary series are eligible for their first booster dose about six months after their previous dose.

COVID-19 treatment updates

There is now additional guidance on the prescribing of COVID-19 therapies, sotrovimab and Paxlovid, to support delivery of care to eligible patients. Thanks to an increase in supply and operational capacity, all patients at risk for disease progression to hospitalization can now be offered treatment. To be eligible for treatment, patients must first test positive for COVID-19.

Provincial testing eligibility at public test sites has been updated accordingly to ensure those who are eligible for treatment are also eligible for testing if they develop COVID-19 symptoms. Updated eligibility includes people who are immunocompromised or clinically extremely

vulnerable, some unvaccinated or partially vaccinated people, and others who may be at risk of serious illness from COVID-19.

Find out more here: bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/treatments.

COVID-19 testing guidance

Currently, rapid antigen tests, in kits of five tests, are available to people aged 18 years and older through [community pharmacies](#). Citizens can now pick up rapid tests without needing to show their B.C. personal health number.

Self-reporting of COVID-19 test results through the online COVID Positive Test Result Reporting Form is no longer required.

If you have recently tested positive for COVID-19, visit the [COVID-19 Treatments](#) webpage to see if you may benefit from COVID-19 treatment. Please visit the [If you have COVID-19 webpage](#) for information on what to do if you have COVID-19 and how to manage your symptoms.

You can also call 8-1-1 anytime to talk to a nurse at HealthLinkBC. This service is available in 130 languages. If your symptoms worsen, or if you do not improve after five or six days, call 8-1-1, your family doctor or an Urgent and Primary Care Centre (UPCC), so they can determine if you need to be assessed again.

COVID-19 vaccination campaign

B.C. has one of the highest vaccinated populations in the world, and demand for vaccine appointments at community clinics has declined. VCH is now focusing on the delivery of pediatric vaccines to children aged five to 11, and working in partnership with pharmacies to ensure ongoing access to COVID-19 vaccines for everyone who is eligible.

To book a vaccine appointment, [register on the provincial system](#) or call 1-833-838-2323. [Service BC locations](#) can also help you register for a vaccine. Access a full list of VCH vaccination clinics, including pop-up clinics, by visiting <http://www.vch.ca/vaccine>.

COVID-19 vaccination information and resources, including guidance on how to prepare children for vaccination, can be found on [the BCCDC website](#) and more information on VCH supports for children can be found [here](#). This information is also available in Chinese [Simplified](#) and [Traditional](#) | [Punjabi](#) | [Vietnamese](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Farsi](#) | [Arabic](#)

Ministry of Health update

The Ministry of Health has moved from a daily to weekly COVID-19 reporting schedule. The updates provided in this section will reflect these weekly figures / information.

The new COVID-19 reporting approach aligns with a shift away from a "case-management" model to a "surveillance" approach that focuses on identifying meaningful changes in COVID-19 trends over time across different regions of the province. It is similar to how government monitors for other serious respiratory illnesses through FluWatch. [Read more.](#)

For the seven-day period of April 3 to April 9, 2022,

- 233 COVID-positive individuals were in hospital;
- 1,770 new cases, with 307 of those in the VCH area;
- 23 deaths; and
- 359,002 total cases of COVID-19 in B.C. since the start of the pandemic.

Read this week's report [here](#).

Lions Gate Hospital's emergency department gets an upgrade

Lions Gate Hospital is renovating its emergency department to improve patient care and experience.

The Psychiatric Emergency Assessment & Treatment (PEAT) unit will provide a safe, secure area within the emergency department for immediate triage and stabilization of clients presenting with mental health and substance use concerns. These changes will significantly improve safety for these patients, as well as for other emergency department patients and visitors, and staff and medical staff.

Construction on the PEAT unit will begin on April 19, 2022, and plans are in place to ensure the least amount of disruption for patients and staff in the emergency department. The upgraded PEAT unit is expected to be completed in fall 2022.

Community engagement opportunities

VCH values community input. Please consider participating in or sharing the featured community engagement opportunities below:

- [Feedback - Standardizing Cardiac Surgery Patient Resource Guide *New*](#)
The VCH / PHC Regional Cardiac Program is updating information resources to help patients prepare for cardiac surgery. The goal is to create a single guidebook that all cardiac surgery patients would receive before surgery. We would like your feedback on the draft patient guidebook so that we can make it clear and easy to understand.
- [Advisor recruitment - Trauma Informed Care in the ICU](#)
Vancouver General Hospital's (VGH) Intensive Care Unit (ICU) leadership team is looking to embed the principles of Trauma Informed Care (TIC) into the ICU. The team is looking to engage one or two advisors from the community for their insights in helping guide the development of TIC related learning materials and strategy.

Other resources

Find the Provincial Health Officer's orders [here](#).

To see a map of **COVID-19 cases by local health area**, visit [here](#).

For the **latest medical updates**, including case counts, prevention, risks and testing, visit:
<http://www.bccdc.ca/>

For **community engagement opportunities** at VCH, see: <https://engage.vch.ca/>

Thank you

We appreciate the time you spend reading these updates and hope you find the information and resources useful. If you no longer wish to receive the VCH Community Partner Update, please reply or send an email to ce@vch.ca with the word “unsubscribe”. Thank you.

Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that our places of work and the Vancouver Coastal Health facilities lie on the traditional homelands of the First Nation Communities of the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo-Xai'xais, Lil'wat, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, N'Quatqua, Nuxalk, Samahquam, shíshálh, Skatin, Squamish, Tla'amin, Tsleil-Waututh, Ulkatcho, Wuikinuxv, and Xa'xtsa.