Daily update – April 15, 2020

Today Premier John Horgan thanked British Columbians for our efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19, and said there is more work to do, which is why he announced that the provincial state of emergency is extended through the end of day April 28, giving the government continued power to take any steps necessary to respond to the health-care crisis and preserve the province's supply chains.

During today’s Ministry of Health briefing, Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry announced 44 new cases of COVID-19 in the province, bringing the total to date to 1,561 confirmed cases. Currently 131 people are hospitalized throughout the province as a result of the virus, with 59 patients in critical care, and 955 people fully recovered. In the Vancouver Coastal Health region, there have been 670 confirmed cases since the pandemic began. There are still 21 long-term care and assisted living residences that are under outbreak protocol. Dr. Henry reported three more deaths since yesterday; one of them was in the VCH region. Our thoughts are with all of the families who have lost loved ones to this disease.

Earlier today, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that part-time and seasonal workers are now eligible to claim the $2,000 Canada Emergency Response Benefit, and said he is also working with the provinces to boost wages for essential front-line staff to keep them on the job.

VCH Medical Health Officers, our provincial partners and the Public Health Agency of Canada continue to actively monitor the COVID-19 pandemic. To protect yourself while out in public, wash your hands frequently and maintain social distance. Anyone who has symptoms — including a fever, cough, sneezing, sore throat, or difficulty breathing — should self-isolate for 10 days, and seek medical care if symptoms do not improve 5-7 days following symptom onset.

Testing is available for the following groups if they develop a fever (over 38 degrees Celsius) and new onset (or exacerbation of chronic) cough or shortness of breath:

- Health care workers, including community pharmacists
- Residents of remote, isolated or Indigenous communities
- People living in congregate settings, such as work camps, correctional facilities, shelters, group homes, assisted living and seniors’ residences
- People who are homeless or have unstable housing
- Essential services providers, including first responders
- Returning travellers identified at a point of entry to Canada
Testing is also recommended for the following groups if they develop any respiratory or gastrointestinal symptoms, however mild:

- Residents and staff of long-term care facilities
- Patients requiring admission to hospital or likely to be admitted, including pregnant individuals in their third trimester, patients on hemodialysis, or cancer patients receiving radiation or chemotherapy
- Patients who are part of an investigation of a cluster or outbreak as determined by the Medical Health Officer

Any physician can order a test for COVID-19 based on their clinical judgement. People who are asymptomatic should not be tested for COVID-19.

A self-assessment tool, developed with the BC Ministry of Health, will help determine whether you may need further assessment or testing for COVID-19. Find it at covid19.thrive.health, or download a self-assessment app for smartphones.

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/