

Daily update – April 2, 2020

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) – in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Providence Health Care, Health Emergency Management BC, the Canadian Red Cross and B.C.'s Mobile Medical Unit – is mobilizing an alternate care site at the Vancouver Convention Centre, as part of its COVID-19 preparedness planning. While VCH continues to be cautiously optimistic that the COVID-19 curve can be flattened, precautionary steps continue to be taken, including setting up an alternate care site, as part of the pandemic response.

The purpose of the alternate care site is to add more bed capacity for lower acuity, non-COVID-19 patients to allow additional capacity within regional hospitals for critically ill COVID-19 patients who may need access to our critical care units.

The alternate care site will increase health-care capacity across the province, augment existing hospital infrastructure and provide additional bed capacity across VCH and the province.

The number of cases continues to rise, although at today's briefing, Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry expressed cautious optimism that we are flattening the curve in British Columbia, and asked the public to continue to do its part with physical distancing. She said 55 more people have tested positive for COVID-19, bringing the total to date in B.C. to 1,121 confirmed cases. Currently 149 people are hospitalized throughout the province as a result of the virus, with 68 patients in critical care. Well over half of all patients in B.C. — 641 — have fully recovered.

In the Vancouver Coastal Health region, there have been 525 confirmed cases since the pandemic began. There were no new cases announced in long-term care facilities today, but sadly, three more people have died in the VCH region, all related to outbreaks in long-term care. Our thoughts are with their families and those who cared for them. Efforts continue to make it possible for workers to provide services at a single location, reducing the risk of transmission between facilities.

Both Dr. Henry and Health Minister Adrian Dix reminded travellers of the requirement to self-isolate for 14 days after returning to Canada, and Dr. Henry also asked the public not to do any non-essential travel to B.C.'s small and remote towns during this crisis, as many don't have capacity to care for additional patients.



Earlier today, Premier John Horgan announced a new Economic Recovery Task Force that will bring together leaders from business, labour, First Nations and not-for-profits to help ensure the Province's economic response to COVID-19 is effective and responsive to the needs of British Columbians. Other new measures announced in B.C. today include:

Steps to protect those providing essential services by ensuring they cannot be held liable for damages caused by exposure to COVID-19 while continuing to operate, so long as they are complying with orders from the provincial health officer and other authorities.

A series of temporary supports and supplements to ensure B.C.'s most vulnerable — including people on income or disability assistance and low-income seniors — do not encounter additional barriers during the COVID-19 crisis.

Federally, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Canada received over a million masks on Wednesday evening — in addition to 10 million over last few days — and is working to validate and distribute them across the country. He also said hockey gear maker Bauer is manufacturing face shields for Canada's doctors and nurses.

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.

We strongly urge anyone who has symptoms —including a fever, cough, sneezing, sore throat, or difficulty breathing — to self-isolate for 10 days. Testing is available for people with respiratory symptoms who are hospitalized or likely to be hospitalized, including pregnant women in their third trimester; health-care workers; residents of long-term care facilities; or part of an investigation of a cluster or outbreak. 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/>

