

Daily Update – April 23, 2020

At today's Ministry of Health briefing, Dr. Bonnie Henry announced 29 new cases of COVID-19 in British Columbia, which brings the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases to 1,824 since the epidemic began in B.C.; 755 of those cases have been in Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH). Currently 103 people are hospitalized throughout the province as a result of the virus, with 44 patients in critical care, and 1,090 people are fully recovered. There are 20 long-term care and assisted living homes currently affected by Covid-19, as well as three acute-care unit outbreaks, including one at Lions Gate Hospital. There were also three additional deaths in VCH — our hearts go out to their loved ones and those who cared for them.

Dr. Henry also said to reopen the economy we must have a manageable number of cases, and to do so it's critical to ensure timely identification of new infections and their contacts to prevent transmission. In line with that, today VCH issued new guidelines for COVID-19 testing as follows:

- Test all individuals with new respiratory or systemic symptoms compatible with COVID-19, however mild. Symptoms may include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, odynophagia, rhinorrhea, nasal congestion, loss of sense of smell, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, or loss of appetite.
- Prioritize individuals in the following groups:
 - Residents and staff of long term care facilities
 - Individuals requiring admission to hospital or likely to be admitted, such as pregnant individuals near term, patients on hemodialysis, or cancer patients receiving radiation or chemotherapy
 - Health care workers
 - Individuals with a higher probability of being infected with COVID-19 such as contacts of a known case of COVID-19 and travellers just returned to Canada
 - 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 service providers, such as first responders
- Health care providers can order a COVID-19 test for any patient based on their clinical judgment.
- COVID-19 testing is not recommended for individuals without symptoms.
- The Medical Health Officer may recommend testing for others, such as those who are part of an investigation of a cluster or outbreak.

At today's federal briefing, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced more than \$1 billion in support of a national medical research strategy to fight COVID-19 that includes vaccine development, the production of treatments and tracking of the virus: <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/04/23/prime-minister-announces-new-support-covid-19-medical-research-and>



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 with cold, influenza or [COVID-like symptoms](#) can now be assessed and get a COVID-19 test from a physician, nurse practitioner or an urgent and primary care centre. You can also call 8-1-1 to find a testing centre near you or visit <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing>. If you think you need testing, please call ahead before visiting your GP, NP or health clinic.

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/>.

