

Latest Update — August 25, 2020

Ministry of Health update

At yesterday's Ministry of Health briefing, Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, and Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s provincial health officer, reported 269 new cases of COVID-19 in British Columbia over three 24-hour reporting periods:

- Aug. 21 to 22: 109 new cases.
- Aug. 22 to 23: 81 new cases
- Aug. 23-24: 79 new cases.

There have been 5,184 cases since the pandemic began; of those, 1,651 cases have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health region. There are 913 active cases of COVID-19 in the province, 2,594 people who are under active public health monitoring as a result of identified exposure to known cases, and 4,068 people who tested positive have recovered. Currently, 18 people are hospitalized in B.C. with COVID-19, five of whom are in intensive care. In total, nine long-term care or assisted-living facilities and one acute-care facility have active outbreaks. There continue to be community exposure events, including in Vancouver Coastal Health, and on flights into and out of British Columbia. Check the Vancouver Coastal Health [Public Exposures](#) page for the locations and times of known possible exposures to COVID-19 to the public in our region.

Finding the balance

Dr. Henry said our goals are clear as we live with COVID-19 in our communities: to prevent cases through our personal safety measures, detect new cases as quickly as possible and respond just as quickly to contain the spread of the virus. Public health teams continue to closely watch our key indicators to ensure we are staying where we need to be. This includes monitoring the level of community spread, as well as the percentage of positive tests. In both cases, right now we are staying within the range of where we need to be. We still have low transmission and we want to keep it that way as our summer continues and we look to the fall. It is about finding the balance – protecting vulnerable people and keeping our activities going. Our COVID-19 response in B.C. is about all of us doing our part and taking the right precautions based on our circumstances. It is about protecting those around us and protecting ourselves. While there are a few that have disregarded public health measures, new enforcement rules are in place to shore up the gaps that have emerged. This is how we will get through this storm together – supporting each other, adjusting our approach as we learn more about the virus and

tailoring our activities to the circumstances before us. Let's stay strong and continue to use the basic steps to live safely while COVID-19 is still a part of our lives.

Return to sport

Also yesterday, Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, announced the Province is moving to Phase 3 of the Return to Sport Guidelines. The BC Centre for Disease Control has reviewed viaSport's Return to Sport Guidelines for Phase 3. The guidelines contain recommendations for how different types of sports now can progressively add activities back again while continuing to adhere to current public health recommendations. This new guidance addresses contact activities, cohorts, competitions, high-performance training environments and travel. Under Phase 3 of the Return to Sport Guidelines, amateur sport activities may be able to engage in:

- additional training opportunities;
- modified games and matches; and
- league play and competitions within sport cohorts.

In June 2020, viaSport released its Return to Sport Guidelines to support the amateur sport sector through the careful and gradual restarting of sports in B.C. communities. With Phase 3, each provincial sport organization can use the overarching guidelines to develop or revise its sport-specific plans. To date, 60 organizations have completed their return to play plans.

Canada announces funding for Indigenous mental wellness support

Earlier today, the federal Minister of Indigenous Services, Marc Miller, announced \$82.5 million in mental health and wellness supports to help Indigenous communities adapt and expand mental wellness services, improving access and addressing growing demand, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Culturally appropriate and timely mental health supports are critical to promote the well-being for anyone struggling to cope with the added stress and anxiety caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Indigenous-led, community-driven supports that offer a more holistic approach to mental wellness are necessary to respond to the needs of youth, families and elders. Prior to the pandemic, demand for counselling and mental wellness support was already trending upward. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the need for mental health support, innovative solutions are particularly needed now. The funding announced today responds to the advocacy of many Indigenous leaders who have pushed for enhanced mental supports. This funding will support the Government of Canada's work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners and communities in distinctions-based envelopes. The funding will help partners and communities to adapt mental wellness services to the current COVID-19 context, including:

- expanding access to culturally appropriate services such as on the land activities, community-based health supports and mental wellness teams;
- adapting mental health services, such as virtual counselling, to meet increased demand; and
- supporting Indigenous partners in developing innovative strategies to address substance use and to improve access to treatment services.

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 centres can be found by visiting: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing> or by calling 8-1-1. In Vancouver, the City Centre and REACH urgent and primary care centres can provide testing as well as the St. Vincent's drive-up location at 4875 Heather Street, and another at Vancouver Community College, 1155 East Broadway (entrance on 7th Avenue). The Richmond Assessment Centre is located at 6820 Gilbert Road, in the parking lot of the Richmond Tennis Club. On the North Shore, testing is available at the North Vancouver Urgent and Primary Care Centre. If you think you need testing, please call ahead before visiting your doctor, urgent and primary care center or health clinic.

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. 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/>.

