Daily Update – June 11, 2020

Briefing with Dr. Henry

In today's daily briefing, Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, reported 14 new cases of COVID-19 in B.C., bringing the total number of cases to 2,694 since the pandemic began. Of those, 917 have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health region. There are 183 active cases of COVID-19 in the province and 2,344 people who tested positive have recovered. The number of people in hospitals throughout B.C. is 13, including five people in critical care. Five long-term care or assisted-living facilities continue to have active outbreaks in B.C.

Modified health order for food service establishments

Dr. Henry also announced Thursday that she is modifying the restrictions on restaurants that required them to operate at 50 per cent of their regular capacity. Instead, restaurants must determine how many people they can serve while still maintaining a two-metre distance between groups. Operators are required to monitor their premises to make sure that capacity isn't exceeded and those distances are maintained, including in line-ups. The order says there can be no more than six people in any party, and if a two-metre distance can't be maintained between tables, a Plexiglas partition should be installed.

Highest number of overdose deaths in May

The BC Coroners Service has published updated reports on illicit drug toxicity deaths and fentanyl-detected drug deaths to the end of May 2020. The 170 illicit drug toxicity deaths reported in May mark the highest monthly total ever in British Columbia.

Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, said in a statement that with the immense pressure of two public health emergencies, many unprecedented factors are bearing down swiftly on us all at once. Borders are closed and the usual illegal supply chains are disrupted, leading to drugs that are more toxic than ever. Unemployment, social isolation, declining mental health and increased alcohol and substance use are the reality for many. Measures taken in the past three months to try and protect people include providing safe prescription alternatives, support for overdose prevention and supervised consumption sites to remain open under new COVID-19 protocols, and the new Lifeguard app to help protect people who are having to use alone right now. Next week, a 24/7 helpline for prescribers and pharmacists will launch that will provide live, in-the-moment support to doctors, pharmacists and nurse practitioners while they are treating patients with opioid use disorder.

If you, or someone you love, uses illicit drugs, those drugs are incredibly toxic and even more poisoned than before. Have a plan. Buddy up so you’re not using poisoned drugs alone. Use the Lifeguard app – it will signal for help if you need it. Continue to visit OPS and supervised consumption services sites. They are open and are essential services in B.C. Carry naloxone. You can pick up your kit free at any pharmacy. Know the signs of an overdose so someone can call 911 to get help right away.
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 centre 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. 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/.