

## Daily Update – June 4, 2020

### Briefing with Dr. Henry

In today's daily briefing, Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, reported five new "test-positive" cases of COVID-19 in B.C. as well as four epidemiologically linked cases (since May 19), bringing the total number of cases to 2,632 since the pandemic began. Of those, 909 have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health region. There are 26 people with COVID-19 in hospitals throughout B.C., including six people in critical care, and 2,265 people are considered fully recovered. There are still six active outbreaks in long-term care or assisted-living facilities in B.C.

### Epidemiologically linked cases

Dr. Henry said we are now adding epidemiologically linked cases to our reporting, in which people may have had contact with a test-positive case and had symptoms, but did not get a test. They may have been asked to stay at home, had mild symptoms, or a test wasn't readily available. Serology testing will be done on these cases, to determine how many had COVID-19.

### Modelling

In today's modelling presentation Dr. Henry provided geographic data, identified by health service delivery area. In the Lower Mainland, Richmond has had the lowest percentage and number of cases, with 88 cases since the pandemic began, compared to 540 in Vancouver, and 259 in the North Shore Coast Garibaldi region.

Dr. Henry also said slightly more women than men have tested positive for COVID-19 in B.C., but men have been much more likely to have serious cases of the disease. About two-thirds of COVID-19 patients who have been hospitalized were male, a similar proportion to those in intensive care and those who have died. People over the age of 70 are much more likely to die from the virus, even though people between the ages of 30 and 60 account for the majority of infections.

The presentation also included information on genomic epidemiology. Although the earliest cases originated from China and Iran, they were contained early. Strains traced to Washington State, Europe and Eastern Canada were the largest source of COVID-19 infections in B.C.

Dynamic compartmental modelling suggests that since businesses and services began reopening on May 19, British Columbians have managed to keep their social contacts to between 30 and 40 per cent of what they were before the pandemic, and are succeeding in limiting transmission of the virus. Dr. Henry also said the partial reopening of schools that began on June 1 should have minimal impact on the spread of the virus, as long as adults maintain social distancing and those who are sick commit to self-isolating.



## Special payment for seniors

Earlier today, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that seniors eligible for the Old Age Security (OAS) pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) will receive their special one-time, tax-free payment during the week of July 6. Through this measure and others, the government is providing nearly \$900 more for single seniors and more than \$1,500 for senior couples, on top of their existing benefits, to help these vulnerable Canadians with extra costs during the pandemic.

## 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. 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 <http://www.vch.ca/covid-19>.

For more information and latest updates on COVID-19, follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter [@CDCofBC](https://twitter.com/CDCofBC) or visit the website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>.

