Daily Update – June 5, 2020

Ministry of Health Update

In a joint statement, Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, reported one new case of COVID-19 in B.C., bringing the total number of people who have tested positive to 2,632 since the pandemic began. Of those, 908 have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health region. The number of people in hospitals throughout B.C. is 21, including five people in critical care, and 2,272 people are considered fully recovered. There have been no new health-care facility outbreaks and the outbreak at the Berkley Care Centre has been declared over. In total, five long-term care or assisted-living facilities continue to have active outbreaks.

Use of technologies

The Province is extending a temporary ministerial order until Dec. 31, 2020, to continue to allow health-care workers and other public sector staff to use communication tools not normally permitted for use during the COVID-19 state of emergency. On March 26, Anne Kang, Minister of Citizens’ Services, approved a ministerial order under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA) to temporarily permit the use of vital software and technologies in the public sector that have proven useful in B.C.’s successful efforts to flatten the curve. The order allows:

1. Patient-care teams to use multiple communication tools, including things like smartphones, text messaging, chat programs and other applications during their response to the public-health emergency. This has made it easier to communicate between teams and follow up with patients using virtual platforms;
2. People in self-isolation to communicate with public health officials using chat apps they are most comfortable with, rather than having to learn how to use something new; and
3. K-12 schools and post-secondary institutions to provide online and digital learning platforms, so students can continue their studies while gatherings of 50 people or more are prohibited.

Support for Canadians with disabilities

Earlier today Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced support to help Canadians with disabilities deal with extra expenses during the pandemic. This support includes a special one-time, tax-free payment to individuals who are certificate holders of the Disability Tax Credit as of June 1, 2020, as follows:

1. $600 for Canadians with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate.
2. $300 for Canadians with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate and who are eligible for the Old Age Security (OAS) pension.
3. $100 for Canadians with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate and who are eligible for the OAS pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS).
Combined with the special payments of $300 for Canadians who are eligible for the OAS pension and the additional $200 for those eligible for the GIS, all seniors with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate will receive a total of $600 in special payments. People who are eligible for this special payment will receive it automatically.

**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](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](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](http://twitter.com/CDCofBC) or visit the website: [http://www.bccdc.ca/](http://www.bccdc.ca/).