

Daily update – March 16, 2020

VCH Medical Health Officers, our provincial partners and the Public Health Agency of Canada continue to actively monitor the situation regarding COVID-19, which has been assessed by the World Health Organization as a pandemic.

Today, Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, and Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s provincial health officer, announced 30 new cases of COVID-19 in British Columbia, which brings the total number of confirmed cases in the province to 103. We are deeply saddened to announce that three of those cases, all of whom were residents of the Lynn Valley Care Home, have recently passed away. We offer our heartfelt condolences to their loved ones and the staff who cared for them during this difficult time.

Currently, there are six people in acute care, five have fully recovered and all others are self-isolating at home.

A significant number of new cases are related to the Pacific Dental Conference 2020 held at the Vancouver Convention Centre on March 6 and 7, 2020. We are asking anyone who attended to self-isolate until March 22, 2020.

Vancouver Coastal Health is also notifying people who visited the Showcase Restaurant and Bar in the Vancouver Marriott Pinnacle Downtown on March 10, 11 and 13, about a possible exposure to COVID-19. A staff member in the restaurant had mild, non-respiratory symptoms of COVID-19 during this time. Public Health Officials have completed a risk assessment and concluded that the risk to people at the restaurant at the time was low, but as a precaution, we are advising people who attended the restaurant on those dates to monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days.

It was also announced today that we're taking a number of additional steps to ensure our health-care system is best positioned to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. All hospitals in the province are moving to Outbreak Response Phase 2, which means they will undertake only urgent and emergency procedures and will postpone all non-urgent scheduled surgeries. Hospitals will review operating-room capacity daily to prioritize urgent and emergency cases. Lions Gate Hospital in the Vancouver Coastal Health region is moving to Outbreak Response Phase 3, which means the hospital will accept only emergency patients. Lions Gate Hospital is also preparing to open a dedicated COVID-19 unit to provide care to those with the virus. These measures will help us redeploy and train staff, and ensure sufficient medical supplies to respond to the potential for a surge of COVID-19 patients requiring acute care.



Further, we are moving to restrict visitors in long-term care to essential visits only. Essential visits include compassionate visits for end-of-life care and visits that support care plans for residents.

Most cases in B.C. continue to be travel-related, so today, the Government of Canada announced it would be denying entry to Canada for people who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents and their immediate families, with exceptions for diplomats and U.S. citizens. Canadians returning home must avoid contact with others for 14 days, and closely monitor themselves for symptoms. This includes remaining home from school or work and avoiding crowded places.

Dr. Henry also issued an order prohibiting events or gatherings of more than 50 people, including indoor and outdoor sporting events, conferences, meetings, religious gatherings and other similar events to help limit cases of community transmission.

The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to focus efforts on containing the virus and prevent further spread of COVID-19. The public is asked to help by following proper hand-washing etiquette, maintaining social distance, and staying home if they're experiencing any symptoms of illness.

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/>

