

Daily update – March 19, 2020

Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry announced 40 new cases of COVID-19 in B.C. today, bringing the total number of confirmed cases in the province to 271. The vast majority of them are recovering in isolation at home. There are 17 people hospitalized in B.C., with nine of them in intensive care. Five cases have fully recovered and there are many more who no longer exhibit symptoms but are waiting for clearance from lab testing.

To date, there have been 152 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Vancouver Coastal Health. We are deeply saddened to announce that another case linked to the outbreak at the Lynn Valley Care Centre has passed away. Our hearts are with their loved ones and the staff who cared for them. A new case announced yesterday, a resident from Haro Park Centre, has been moved to hospital. In our on-going efforts to protect the health and safety of residents in care homes, our visitation guidelines are now for “essential visits” only. This includes compassionate visits for end-of-life, as well as visits that support resident care plans, such as assisting with feeding and/or mobility.

In her comments today, Dr. Henry emphasized the need to build a firewall against the disease, as the numbers of cases remain in an upswing. While there is an order in place to prohibit gatherings of more than 50 people, most instructions to implement social distancing, stay home and self-isolate are not an order, but they are also not optional. She said it’s important to remain connected even though we may be physically separated, especially to our vulnerable seniors, to keep them from feeling isolated.

Adrian Dix, B.C.’s Minister of Health, also announced that the MSP waiting period for people returning to B.C. or whose coverage has lapsed, will be waived, and those who have an expired services card can access services with their old number and using I.D.

Earlier today at a virtual council meeting, Vancouver City Council unanimously passed the state of emergency announced by Mayor Kennedy Stewart yesterday, which gives it expanded powers to deal with the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 outbreak. Those new powers can be used to close restaurants not obeying orders for social distancing, to ration food and supplies, or to take over space to help ensure homeless people can self-isolate.

Federally, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Theresa Tam warned that Indigenous people are also in the high-risk group because of health inequities, higher rates of underlying medical conditions and

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the unprecedented measures in place to contain the virus — such as travel restrictions, social distancing protocols and business closures — could be in place for weeks or months.





VCH Medical Health Officers, our provincial partners and the Public Health Agency of Canada continue to actively monitor the COVID-19 pandemic. We strongly urge anyone who has symptoms—including a fever, cough, sneezing, sore throat, or difficulty breathing—to self-isolate for 14 days. To protect yourself while out in public, wash your hands frequently and maintain social distance. Testing is available for people with respiratory symptoms who are hospitalized, or likely to be hospitalized; health-care workers; residents of long-term care facilities; or part of an investigation of a cluster or outbreak. A new self-assessment tool, developed with the BC Ministry of Health, will help determine whether you may need further assessment or testing for COVID-19. Find it at covid19.thrive.health.

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/>

