

Daily update – March 23, 2020

Newly established criteria for recovery from COVID-19 meant that at today’s briefing, Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry was able to announce 100 people in British Columbia have now recovered.

Dr. Henry also announced 48 new cases of COVID-19, for a total of 472 confirmed cases in British Columbia, with 248 of them in the Vancouver Coastal Health region. Of the province’s total number, 33 people are currently hospitalized, with 14 in intensive care, and the vast majority are recovering at home in isolation. We are saddened to report that two more patients in VCH have passed away: a resident at the Lynn Valley Care Centre, and a resident at the Haro Park Centre. Our thoughts are with their loved ones.

Dr. Henry and Health Minister Adrian Dix also announced growing capacity for testing and for providing information to British Columbians. Testing capacity has increased to about 3,000 tests per day, with more coming online this week, and the number of 811 calls answered has grown to more than 4,000 calls per day, as a result of adding 12 more nurses and 42 more navigators to our call centres.

Directions, rules and orders for social distancing — staying two metres from others — continue to be issued and now enforced as all levels of government implement new measures. Only by keeping our distance from each other can we “flatten the curve”: stagger the number of new cases over a longer period, so that sick people have better access to care.

To help mitigate the impact of the virus and the necessary steps taken to fight it, today Premier John Horgan announced the COVID-19 Action Plan: the government’s first step to provide relief to people and businesses in British Columbia. The \$5 billion plan includes immediate measures to help individuals and families cope with potential illness, financial strain or precarious employment. It also adds funding to key services, such as health care, housing and social services, to make sure they continue to support British Columbians and help contain the spread of COVID-19.

Protecting health-care workers, sites and equipment is also a priority. New satellite testing centres began operating last week for health-care workers as well as clear guidance for use of personal protective equipment.



Today Vancouver Coastal Health also announced it is restricting visitors to essential visits only at all of our facilities including our hospitals, community, long-term care, assisted living sites, community health centres and clinics.

Essential visits include:

- Compassionate care (e.g. end of life, critical illness);
- Visits paramount to patient/client/resident care and well-being, such as assistance with feeding or mobility;
- Existing registered volunteers providing services related to the above.

Additional measures for [long term care homes can be found here](#). Visitors who are unwell with cold or flu-like symptoms cannot visit patients, residents or clients in any VCH facility.

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 10 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, including pregnant women in their third trimester; health-care workers; residents of long-term care facilities; or part of an investigation of a cluster or outbreak.

A 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, or download a self-assessment app for their phones.

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/>

