

Daily update – March 24, 2020

B.C. provincial health officer Dr. Bonnie Henry announced 145 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in B.C. on Tuesday, bringing the total to 617, with 330 of those cases in the Vancouver Coastal Health region. The numbers represent two days of new reported cases: 67 on March 23 and 78 in last 24 hours. There are now 59 people in hospital in the province, with 23 being treated in intensive care. The vast majority are recovering at home in isolation, and 173 people now listed as fully recovered.

Many of the new cases are in long-term care and assisted living residences. In VCH, that includes Lynn Valley Care Centre, with 42 residents and 21 staff testing positive to date; Hollyburn House, with one resident testing positive; Haro Park Centre, with 15 residents and 25 staff testing positive; the German-Canadian Care Home, with one staff member testing positive; and Little Mountain Place, with one staff member testing positive. There is a concerted effort across B.C. to assign staff to work at only one long-term care home throughout the outbreak; this should be complete by end of week.

Health Minister Adrian Dix said testing capacity has increased to about 3,500 tests per day. Dr Henry explained the strategy for testing is to focus on cases of community transmission, on clusters and outbreaks, on increased surveillance of vulnerable populations, and on health-care workers, in order to protect the health-care system. Planning and preparation continues, and according to Minister Dix, there are 3,866 more beds available for those who will need them in the coming weeks.

Directions, rules and orders for social distancing — staying two metres from others — are in place and now enforced as all levels of government have implemented measures. 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/>

