Daily update – May 12, 2020

Briefing with Dr. Henry

In today's daily briefing, Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, reported a total of seven new cases of COVID-19 in B.C., bringing the total number of people who have tested positive to 2,360 since the pandemic began. Of those, 874 have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region. The number of people in hospitals throughout B.C. sits at 63, including 16 people in critical care, and 1,832 people are considered fully recovered. There are still 19 active outbreaks in long-term care, assisted living, and acute care throughout B.C.

Please take the BC COVID-19 survey

Dr. Henry also called on all British Columbians 18 and over to take part in a new population health survey intended to gather information about how COVID-19 has impacted their health and well-being, and to help guide the COVID-19 pandemic response in the months to come. The BC COVID-19 survey: your story, our future is available online in English and simplified Chinese. At the end of the survey, participants are asked about their interest in taking part in two future initiatives: A serology survey (blood testing) to help determine immunity across the population, and planning for digital tools to help identify and manage COVID-19 infections.

VCH releases info about a COVID-19 clinical study

Also today, VCH distributed a news release about a clinical study examining the immune-system response of patients with COVID-19. A small team led Dr. Mypinder Sekhon, an intensive care physician at VGH and Dr. Cheryl Wellington, a Professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of British Columbia (UBC), are retrieving and processing blood samples from critically ill COVID-19 patients at Vancouver General and Surrey Memorial Hospital. In some patients it appears that an excessive immune response, rather than the virus
itself, leads to lung damage. If identified and treated, patients may improve more quickly. The research is funded in part by donations to VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation.

New federal measures to support seniors

Earlier today, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced new measures to support seniors. Those receiving Old Age Security will get an additional $300 to offset extra costs incurred because of the virus. Those who are eligible for the Guaranteed Income Supplement will also receive an extra $200. These measures are in addition to the $20 million in funding recently announced for the New Horizons for Seniors program so that organizations can provide delivery services and help seniors stay in touch with family during the pandemic. He also reminded Canadians to protect the health of our seniors by following guidance from Public Health, and to stay in touch with the seniors in our lives to help protect their mental health as well. He suggested writing a letter or a postcard to isolated seniors or volunteering with a local organization to fight the isolation of seniors.

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 [www.vch.ca/COVID19](http://www.vch.ca/COVID19).
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/.