

Daily Update – May 15, 2020

In a statement today, Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, and Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, reported 15 new cases of COVID-19 in B.C., bringing the total number of people who have tested positive to 2,407 since the pandemic began. Of those, 878 have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health region. The number of people in hospitals throughout B.C. sits at 51, including 12 people in critical care, and 1,908 people are considered fully recovered. They also announced an additional death in the VCH region. We offer our condolences to the family, friends and caregivers of these five individuals, and to everyone who has lost their loved ones.

Keeping patients safe as scheduled elective surgeries resume

Earlier today, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and Providence Health Care (PHC) announced new measures to help keep patients, clients, staff and medical staff safe as scheduled elective surgeries resume in the coming weeks. The plan to restart elective surgeries will be implemented in stages:

- To start, all patients who had surgeries postponed will be contacted.
- Patients who had their elective surgery postponed will be rescheduled with their surgeon.
- Urgent surgeries will be prioritized, and will proceed in a way that maintains patient and staff safety.
- New clinical guidelines will ensure patients are pre-screened for symptoms.

With the gradual restart of additional health care services, patients can expect additional screening and infection prevention and control measures. In an effort to provide health care services to as many people as possible, procedures that do not require an operating room or an overnight stay in hospital may be performed at an ambulatory clinic or in an alternative health care facility. Patients who require urgent, emergent and oncology-related surgeries will continue to receive safe, priority care, as they have been throughout the pandemic. For more information about the BC government's surgical renewal plan, please visit <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/conducting-health-research/surgical-renewal-plan.pdf>

Students can return to school June 1

Earlier today, B.C. premier John Horgan announced students in kindergarten to Grade 12 will have optional in-class instruction beginning on June 1. Parents will have the choice of bringing their children back to class on a part-time basis this school year as part of BC's Restart Plan, with the goal of returning to full-time classes in September 2020, provided it is safe to do so. To make sure schools are safe for students and staff, the number of students in school each day will be reduced, with most receiving in-class instruction part time. School districts will determine scheduling for classes and transportation arrangements. For kindergarten to Grade 5, this means most students will go to school half time (such as alternating days), while grades 6 to 12 will go to school about one day a week. Children of essential service workers and students needing additional supports will have the option to attend school full time. Families that decide not to send their children to class may continue learning from home.

WorkSafeBC releases initial guidelines for reopening

Also today, Harry Bains, Minister of Labour, said the Province welcomes the release of the initial set of WorkSafeBC guidelines that will help businesses and organizations develop their plans to reopen safely in the coming days and weeks. Industry-specific guidelines and resources were shared for the following sectors:

- restaurants, cafes and pubs;
- salons and personal services;
- museums, art galleries and libraries, real estate;
- education;
- health services;
- retail;
- in-person counselling;
- office space.

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> 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 <http://www.vch.ca/covid-19>.

For more information and latest updates on COVID-19, follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter [@CDCofBC](https://twitter.com/CDCofBC) or visit the website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>.

