

Daily Update – May 27, 2020

Ministry of Health update

In a joint statement, Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, reported nine new cases of COVID-19 in B.C., bringing the total number of people who have tested positive to 2,550 since the pandemic began. Of those, 899 have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health region. The number of people in hospitals throughout B.C. sits at 37, including seven people in critical care, and 2,144 people are considered fully recovered. There have been no new health-care outbreaks, there are still 14 active outbreaks in long-term care, assisted living, and acute care in B.C.

Better ICU outcomes for local COVID-19 patients

New research, published today in the CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal), found the overall mortality rate for COVID-19 patients admitted to intensive care units (ICUs) across the Lower Mainland during the first peak of infection was significantly lower than in other regions around the world. The case series tracked the outcomes of 117 patients with COVID-19 admitted to six intensive care units in Metro Vancouver between Feb. 21 and April 14. As of May 5, 85 per cent of the patients were recovered or still recovering, and 61 per cent had been discharged home.

Researchers compared the overall mortality rate of 15 per cent for patients in ICUs at Vancouver General Hospital, Surrey Memorial Hospital, Lions Gate Hospital, St. Paul's Hospital, Royal Columbian Hospital and Richmond Hospital with those from previous case series which had recorded mortality rates as high as 62 per cent for patients in intensive care in Wuhan, China; 50 per cent in Seattle, Washington; 26 per cent in Lombardy, Italy; and 23 per cent in New York. Patients in the local study had similar demographics and severity of illness as patients in the Lombardy, Seattle, New York, and Wuhan case series, noted the authors. Also similar were the critical care interventions used in each region, which included mechanical ventilation, prone ventilation, and high-flow oxygen therapy.

One notable difference, said researchers, was the ready capacity in our intensive care units. We did not get overwhelmed by a surge of patients with COVID-19 as they did in other parts of the world, and we had the capacity to ensure that all patients with COVID-19 had access to critical care if they needed it.

Read more [here](#).

Provincial state of emergency extended

Earlier today, Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, announced a two-week extension to the provincial state of emergency to support continued co-ordination of B.C.'s COVID-19 response, making this the longest state of emergency in our province's history. The extension of the provincial state of emergency is based on recommendations from B.C.'s health and emergency

management officials. Farnworth made the original declaration on March 18, 2020, after Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, declared a public health emergency the previous day.

Changes to clinical trials process

Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, has authorized changes for a more flexible process for clinical trials related to COVID-19. Before new therapies can be made available to Canadians, they must be shown to be safe and effective, and clinical trials are a critical part of that process. To date, Health Canada has approved 37 clinical trials for potential COVID-19 therapies and vaccines. To accelerate these efforts, Minister Hajdu has authorized the following changes for a more flexible process, without compromising the safety of participants or the reliability of trials' findings:

- Allow a wider range of health professionals, such as nurse practitioners, to be involved in running clinical trials. Under current regulations, only physicians and dentists can conduct clinical trials for drugs;
- Allow a wider range of investigators, such as physicians, to be involved in running clinical trials for medical devices. Under current regulations, only manufacturers can conduct clinical trials for medical devices;
- Reduce the burden associated with labelling and record-keeping requirements for clinical trials involving drugs that are already marketed for other indications and are being studied to treat COVID-19;
- Enable multiple-stream clinical trials to continue even when one stream has been stopped; and
- Enable more clinical trials by allowing trials where direct interaction with the participant is not feasible, for example when participants who live in remote locations are unable to travel.

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/>.