

Daily Update – May 7, 2020

Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, reported 33 new cases of COVID-19 in B.C. today, bringing the total number of people who have tested positive to 2,288 since the pandemic began. The number of people in hospitals throughout B.C. sits at 76, including 20 people in critical care, and 1,512 people are considered fully recovered. There are 21 active outbreaks in long-term care, assisted living, and acute care, and 18 outbreaks have now been declared over. Dr. Henry also reported another death in VCH related to COVID-19. As always, our hearts go out to those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19.

At a briefing this morning, Health Minister Adrian Dix announced an extensive surgical renewal plan that will clear the backlog of non-urgent surgeries created by COVID-19, and keep up with demand for new surgeries. In mid-March, the decision was made to postpone non-urgent surgeries to prepare our health care system for a potential surge of COVID-19 patients. By May 18, 2020 — when surgical procedures are set to resume — an estimated 30,000 scheduled surgeries will have either been postponed or left on a waitlist due to COVID-19. A further 24,000 patients could also be without a referral to a waitlist.

The five-step plan will take between 17 to 24 months to catch up on procedures, and could be further delayed if there is a resurgence of COVID-19. It includes adding new capacity, hiring and training more staff, opening new and unused spaces, and doing procedures during longer hours, including on weekends.

Minister Dix said the province will begin calling patients who had their surgeries cancelled on Thursday to confirm whether they want to go ahead with the procedure during the pandemic or continue waiting. Urgent surgeries will be prioritized, and will resume in a way that maintains patient and staff safety while keeping some bed space free for any patients with COVID-19. New clinical guidelines will ensure patients are pre-screened for symptoms, contacts queried, and repeated on the day of surgery. The team will make an assessment of risk and determine what PPE is required, which will then determine the volume of surgeries that can be done that day. Patients with no symptoms will have standard procedures and pre-COVID PPE protocol. For patients with symptoms, an assessment will be made about whether surgery proceeds and the level of PPE needed. Minister Dix also said supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) have been confirmed, as have the beds required to care for both surgical patients and those with COVID-19. Surgeries will not restart in hospitals with ongoing outbreaks, such as Lions Gate Hospital and Richmond Hospital. Read more about the plan [here](#).

Also today, Vancouver Coastal Health added its voice to those raising concerns about the increasing reports of anti-Asian incidents related to the current pandemic. While an infectious disease outbreak of the scale and magnitude of COVID-19 can create fear and mistrust, there is no excuse for racial and discriminatory responses. From a health care perspective, the COVID-19 virus does not discriminate, and we cannot make any assumptions about who may be infected, or cast blame on others, based on their cultural background. Such views have no basis in public health, and no place in our society. Now, more than ever, Canadians must stand united and true to our shared values of diversity, inclusion and respect. Freedom from discrimination and racism is a key determinant of health. Vancouver Coastal Health remains committed to supporting the diverse communities it serves and reducing health inequities to create more equitable conditions and opportunities for everyone.



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 www.vch.ca/COVID19.

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/>.

