Latest Update – August 4, 2020

Ministry of Health update

In today’s briefing, Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, reported 146 new cases of COVID-19 in B.C. since last Friday, including:

- July 31-Aug. 1: 43 cases
- Aug. 1-2: 29 cases
- Aug. 2-3: 46 cases
- Aug. 3-4: 28 cases

That brings the total number of cases to 3,787 since the pandemic began. Of those, 1,119 have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region. There are 319 active cases of COVID-19 in the province and 3,273 people who tested positive have recovered. The number of people in hospitals throughout B.C. is eight, including four people in critical care. There are three long-term care facilities in B.C. that continue to have active outbreaks.

New cases

Dr. Henry said health officials knew events from the last few weeks had exposed people to the virus, those happened before the long weekend. Many of the new cases are related to gatherings or private parties. Some include travel within Canada, some from outside the country and some workplace exposures. The factors that lead to transmission are all the same, it’s what we do with each other when we’re having close interactions with people over a period of time. Thankfully, the vast majority of the cases we know where people have been exposed, and we know many are overlapping social circles. Minister Dix pointed out the average of 36 new cases per day is more than we had in June, and advised against going to private parties at this time. He urged people not to attend parties if you don’t know who will be there, or the numbers — this is the time to keep numbers small.
Hospital and PPE Update

Minister Dix reported there were 6,324 visits to Emergency Departments yesterday, which is similar to what we had before the pandemic. He also provided an update on personal protective equipment (PPE): since last week, the Ministry of Health has obtained 40,754 n95 respirators; 7.58 million surgical masks; 5,080 eye protection; and 51,310 gowns.

Funding boost for overdose response

Earlier today, Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, announced $10.5 million in funding that will accelerate the response to an increasingly toxic illicit drug supply due to COVID-19. The Minister said a record number of lives were lost to overdose last month – all the more heart-breaking since before COVID-19, we had managed to bring deaths down for the first time. The funding will further scale up overdose prevention services, expand access to safe prescription alternatives to separate people from toxic street drugs and add new outreach teams to help prevent overdose deaths, save lives and connect more people to treatment and recovery throughout the province. To reduce the number of people using alone, funding will be used to open 17 new supervised consumption services and 12 new inhalation services in communities hit the hardest by the overdose crisis. The funding will be used to expand access to safe prescription alternatives for people at high risk of overdoses. Forty-two new full-time registered nurses, psychiatric nurses, social workers and peer support workers will be added to 14 new and existing interdisciplinary outreach teams throughout the province. Working in groups of three, these workers will help connect people with substance-use challenges, including those who use drugs alone, to treatment, recovery and services that best suit their needs. In addition, these teams will be vital in bringing services to people who may be unable to access services as a result of COVID-19.
Testing

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. The Richmond Assessment Centre is located at 6820 Gilbert Road, in the parking lot of the Richmond Tennis Club. 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 or visit the website: http://www.bccdc.ca/.