

oneVCH COVID-19 Bulletin

January 6, 2022

IPAC

Infection prevention and control measures continue to be important with Omicron

With the arrival to our region of Omicron, the new COVID-19 variant of concern, we've seen an notable increase in cases and much higher demand on testing services. We continue to assess safety measures and implement guidelines to ensure the safety of staff as well as patients, residents and clients across our organizations.

Guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), issued on Dec. 23 with consideration of Omicron, emphasizes the importance of continuing to adhere to, reinforce, evaluate and monitor the full range of existing COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures and guidance, which includes vaccination, screening, environmental cleaning, and engineering controls.

In line with the guidance, all staff, medical staff and contracted staff with direct contact with patients, clients and residents in acute care, critical care, long-term care and community care must wear a medical mask at all times, including in common areas and break rooms unless eating and/or drinking.

Additional PPE, such as N-95 respirators, is provided in certain clinical settings where aerosol-generating procedures may be performed on patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Clinical staff in these settings can perform a point-of-care risk assessment (PCRA) to determine if an N-95 respirator is needed. The PCRA is based on professional judgment about the clinical situation, as well as up-to-date information on how the specific health-care facility has designed and implemented appropriate physical (engineering) and administrative controls, and the use and availability of PPE.

Occupational Health and PICNET have reviewed this guidance and confirmed that it is consistent with [current infection prevention and control guidance](#) in B.C.

Check out the [BCCDC COVID-19 patient screening tool](#) for direct care interactions and [routine PCRA tool](#) for guidance on conducting a PCRA.

Read all of the recommendations on the [Government of Canada COVID-19 website](#).

Please remember to follow Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) guidelines in addition to practicing excellent **hand hygiene** (check out IPAC's info sheets on [how to hand wash](#), [how to hand rub](#)), respecting personal space and staying home if sick.

COVID-19

Guidance on testing and self isolation

At this time, increased levels of COVID-19 are circulating and we are seeing many more cases due to the Omicron variant. For those who are fully vaccinated, most cases have been mild and resolve quickly. Thank you to everyone for continuing to keep each other and our patients, clients and residents safe by following [COVID-19 prevention practices](#).

WHEN TO GET TESTED

VCH continues to strongly advise that **anyone without symptoms** of COVID-19 **not** to visit VCH testing sites, as testing capacity is needed for those who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. This allows VCH sites to prioritize testing to those who are sick, and most in need of care. People without symptoms who require testing for travel purposes can find a [private pay testing site](#).

Please use the B.C. [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to see if you need to be tested for COVID-19. Testing for health care workers is only recommended if you have symptoms, even if you have been in contact with a case. Current recommendations for testing can be found on the [B.C. Centre for Disease Control website](#).

PEER TESTING FOR ACUTE AND COMMUNITY HEALTH-CARE STAFF

Health-care workers who work in a clinical setting who begin to develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while at their worksite are eligible for peer testing. This new program allows staff and medical staff to have a nasopharyngeal swab rapid antigen test administered by a colleague if they develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 **while on shift**. These tests cannot be self-administered or taken at home.

- Staff and medical staff, who require testing services while at work, should inform their supervisor/manager that they have COVID-19-like symptoms and to consider peer testing options.
- Staff will receive a rapid antigen test which must be completed in situ.
- Peer testing options are available to staff members. A list of the peer-testing sites is available on the [oneVCH COVID-19 testing for staff intranet page](#). Please phone ahead to ensure they have capacity.
- All tests administered will be documented to the individual being tested for appropriate internal follow-up.

Staff and medical staff who develop symptoms **outside of the worksite setting** can access testing at any [health-authority operated tested site](#) in the community, as required.

CLOSE CONTACTS

If you are a contact of someone who has COVID-19, including a household contact, **you can come to work as long as you don't develop symptoms**. You are not required to isolate, but should monitor for symptoms for 14 days. Please continue to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) as guided by Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC).

If you are self-monitoring, you and your household can continue with your normal daily activities. If you have children in school, it is recommended you continue to send them to class.

IF YOU HAVE TESTED NEGATIVE FOR COVID-19

Health-care workers who have tested **negative** for COVID-19 and have **mild symptoms** may continue to work if they feel well enough. They must wear PPE as outlined by Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) guidelines.

IF YOU HAVE TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

You will need to self-isolate for **five days** from when **symptoms** began or from your test date (whichever is earlier), and to follow the Public Health guidance found on our [website](#). If the exposure is work-related, you will be contacted by the Provincial Workplace Health Call Centre (PWCC) or Physician Occupational Safety and Health (POSH). Please contact the employee absence call line at **604-639-4297** for any work absences as a result of being sick.

CODING FOR MANAGERS

If a staff member is **instructed** to self-isolate at home due to COVID-19, they will be paid sick time if they have symptoms. If they are asymptomatic, they will be paid general paid leave.

If a staff member cannot work due to school or daycare closures, or is staying home to take care of an ill family member (e.g. sick child), they may request to work from home, if operationally feasible. Otherwise, staff may request vacation, unpaid COVID-19 leave, or banked overtime, depending on collective agreement provisions.

oneVCH COVID-19 VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

You're invited! Join us on Jan. 13 for the first oneVCH town hall of the year

You are invited to participate in a virtual town hall on **Thursday, January 13, 2022, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

Please note the link will **NOT** open using Internet Explorer as it is no longer a supported browser by Microsoft. You can watch the event using alternative browsers such as Chrome. To join the virtual town hall, please click on the link below:

[VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH COVID-19 TOWN HALL UPDATE – JANUARY 13, 2021 11:00 AM WEBCAST](#)

To submit questions, please go to [slido.com](#) and enter event code **#oneVCHtownhall**

COVID-19 VIRTUAL MEDICAL STAFF FORUM

Vaccine efficacy against Omicron and COVID-19 updates on Jan. 19

Join us for a presentation from Dr. Manish Sadarangani (MS), Director, Vaccine Evaluation Centre, BC Children's Hospital Research Institute, on vaccine effectiveness against Omicron, as well as a COVID-19 update and live Q&A session.

Date: Wednesday, Jan. 19, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Panelists: Dr. Ross Brown, Dr. Patricia Daly, Dr. Chad Kim Sing (host), Dr. Manish Sadarangani, Dr. Titus Wong

REGISTER AT: <https://bit.ly/3mwPTDQ>

We want to hear from you! Add your comments in advance using the Zoom registration link, or via email to: Darren.Piper@vch.ca

See [VCH Medical Staff Intranet](#) for previous medical staff forum recordings, transcripts, Q&A.

MEDICAL STAFF COVID-19 Q&A FOR PHYSICIANS, NURSE PRACTITIONERS, MIDWIVES AND DENTISTS

Vaccinations and long-term effects of COVID-19

Q: For those who are fully vaccinated and infected with COVID-19, what is the incidence and severity of long COVID?

A: There are some reports of fully vaccinated people having longer term COVID symptoms, however more long-term data is needed. The likelihood of having symptoms at the eight week mark is about 50 percent less for those who are vaccinated, compared to the unvaccinated, so it appears there is a significantly lower chance of long COVID occurring following vaccination.

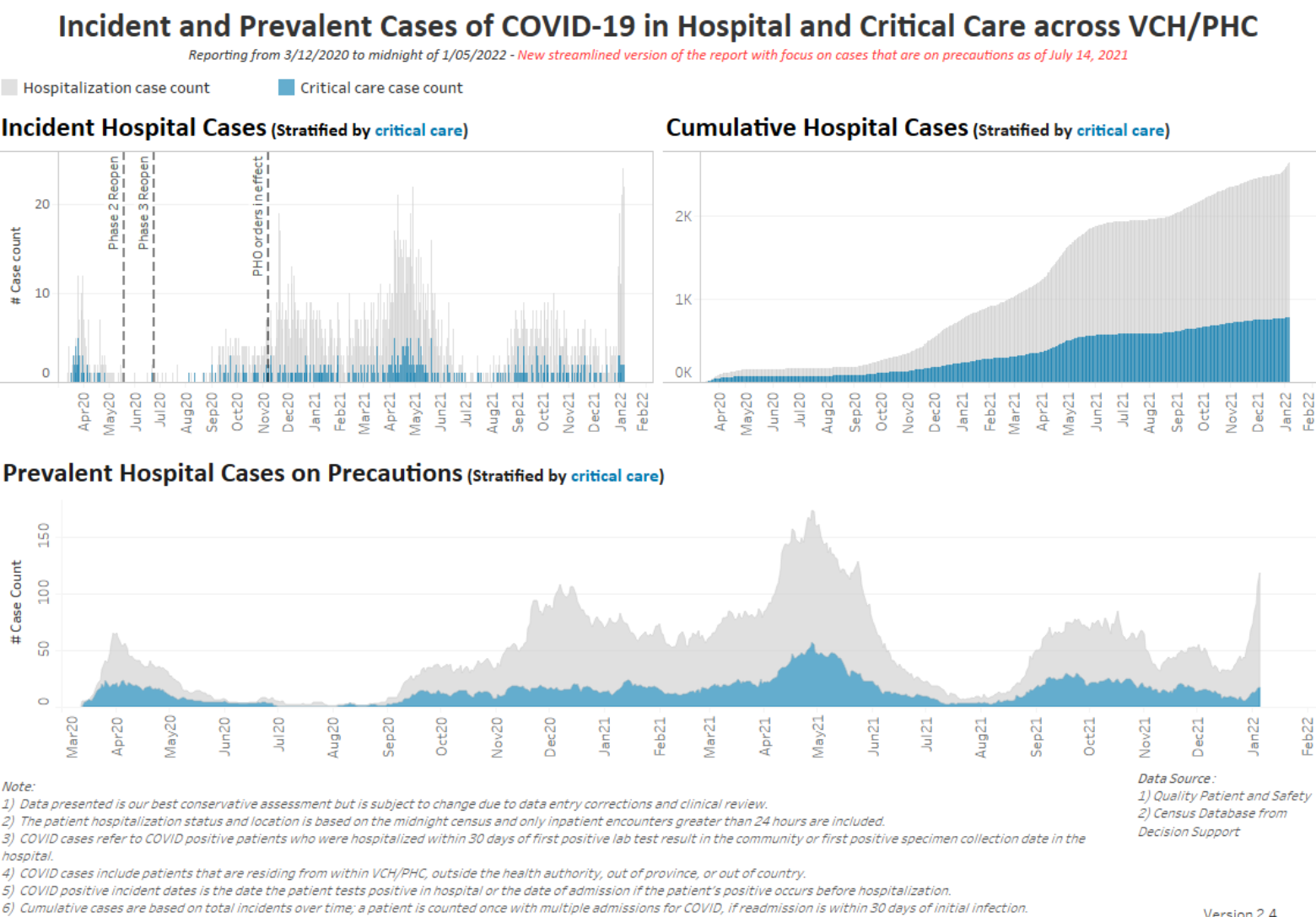
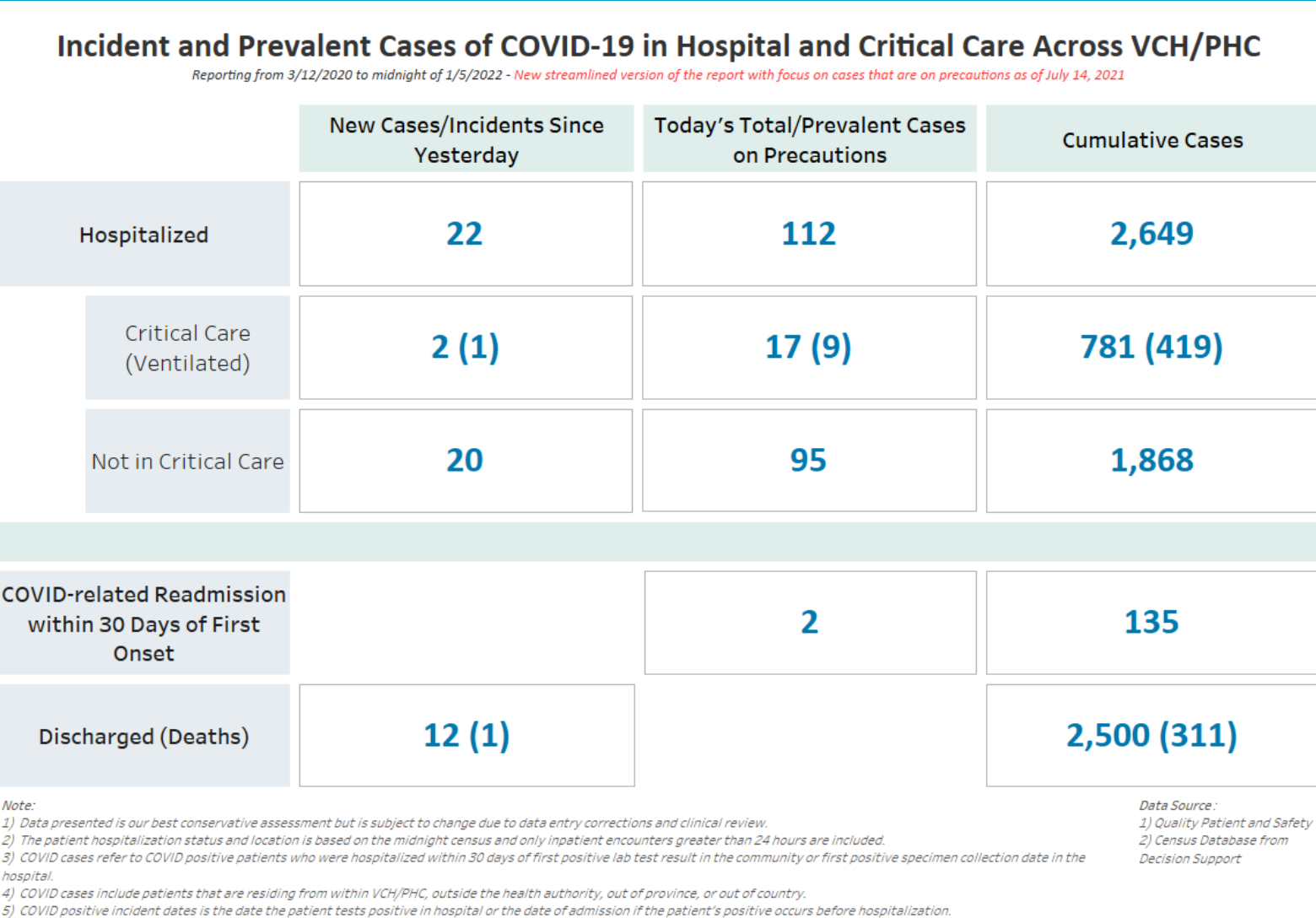
The question & answer were generated during the Dec. 15 Medical Staff Forum. If you missed the session, click [here](#) for the Dec. 15 forum video recording (we respectfully request that you do not share the link). The session transcripts and slides will be available on the [Medical Staff COVID-19 Intranet](#) site for this and previous forums.

UPDATE ON NEW AND EXISTING COVID-19 CASES – January 6, 2022

- B.C. is reporting 3,223 new cases of COVID-19, for a total of 273,731 cases in the province.
- 31,817 active cases
 - Fraser: 1,538 new cases for a total of 14,794 active cases
 - Vancouver Coastal Health: 662 for a total of 9,594 active cases
 - Interior Health: 408 for a total of 2,807 cases
 - Northern Health: 194 for a total of 850 active cases
 - Island Health: 417 for a total of 3,765 cases
 - People who normally reside outside of Canada: Four new cases for a total of 7 active cases
- 324 hospitalized
- 90 currently admitted to ICU
- 238,524 people who tested positive have recovered
- Three new deaths have been reported in the past 24 hours, for an overall total of 2,430

As of Thursday, Jan. 6, 2022, 88.4% (4,406,651) of eligible people five and older in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 83.1% (4,140,207) have received a second dose. In addition, 92.1% (4,267,843) of eligible people 12 and older in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, 89.3% (4,139,941) have received their second dose and 22.5% (1,042,480) have received a third dose. Also, 92.4% (3,998,399) of all eligible adults in B.C. have received their first dose, 89.8% (3,883,599) have received their second dose and 24.1% (1,041,515) have received a third dose.

[Click here to see more updates on the BC COVID-19 Dashboard](#)



COVID-19 DATA

More COVID-19 data, including for long-term care, assisted living and independent living sites, is available on the B.C. Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) website, including outbreak and case information.

[Visit the BCCDC site →](#)

KEY LINKS

Text Alerts: Physician sign up keyword: COVID19

Text Alerts: Staff sign up keyword: ALERT

Staff supports during COVID-19

Medical staff resources during COVID-19

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- [BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- [Wellness Together Canada: Mental Health and Substance Use Support](#)
- [COVID-19 Multilingual Resources](#)
- [LifeWorks Employee and Family Assistance Program Services](#)
- [VCH Virtual Health website](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control \(IPAC\) website:](#) Staff resources on how to assess, test and treat patients and protect patients and staff.
- [Infection Prevention and Control Policy:](#) Ministry of Health
- [VCH Regional Pandemic Outbreak Response Plan:](#) VCH Communicable Disease Control website
- [VCH Intranet:](#) COVID-19 updates

REGIONAL AND LOCAL EOC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

- [COVID-19 VCH-PHC Regional EOC](#)
- [COVID-19 Vancouver Acute EOC](#)
- [COVID-19 Vancouver Community EOC](#)
- [COVID-19 Coastal EOC](#)
- [COVID-19 Richmond EOC](#)
- [COVID-19 Providence Health Care \(PHC\) EOC](#)

COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS?

[Please click here to submit questions or comments.](#)

REMINDER ABOUT MEDIA

If you receive a media inquiry, please contact our Public Affairs team immediately for support. Our media line is **604-202-2012** or email media@vch.ca.

The bulletins are distributed on Thursdays. Past bulletins are available on the [COVID-19 section of our VCH staff intranet](#).

Vancouver Coastal Health

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