

oneVCH COVID-19 Bulletin

January 13, 2022

COVID-19

Outbreak control measures in long-term care

As Dr. Bonnie Henry has stated in recent media briefings, the Omicron variant of concern has now taken over the Delta variant. In the Vancouver Coastal Health region, it is now the cause of most new COVID infections. Evidence from B.C. and elsewhere has shown that this virus is much more transmissible than other COVID-19 variants, but also less likely to cause severe disease, particularly in those who are fully vaccinated. Long-term care facilities in the Vancouver Coastal region have very high rates of vaccination coverage for their residents, and staff are now all required to be fully vaccinated.

Among vaccinated residents in long-term care, we have found Omicron infection usually results in only mild upper respiratory symptoms that are similar to symptoms caused by other cold viruses. Therefore, while vaccinated residents and staff may be infected with Omicron, the disease caused is usually mild and symptoms resolve quickly. The changing nature of Omicron has therefore resulted in adjustment of outbreak control measures in long-term care, particularly those measures that can result in harm to residents, such as long term isolation and restriction of activities.

VCH Public health continues to prioritize follow-up of newly identified cases of COVID-19 among residents and staff of long-term care homes. In care homes with identified cases, VCH Medical Health Officers will continue to recommend measures as appropriate to protect the health and safety of residents.

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, and guidance may change as a result.

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.

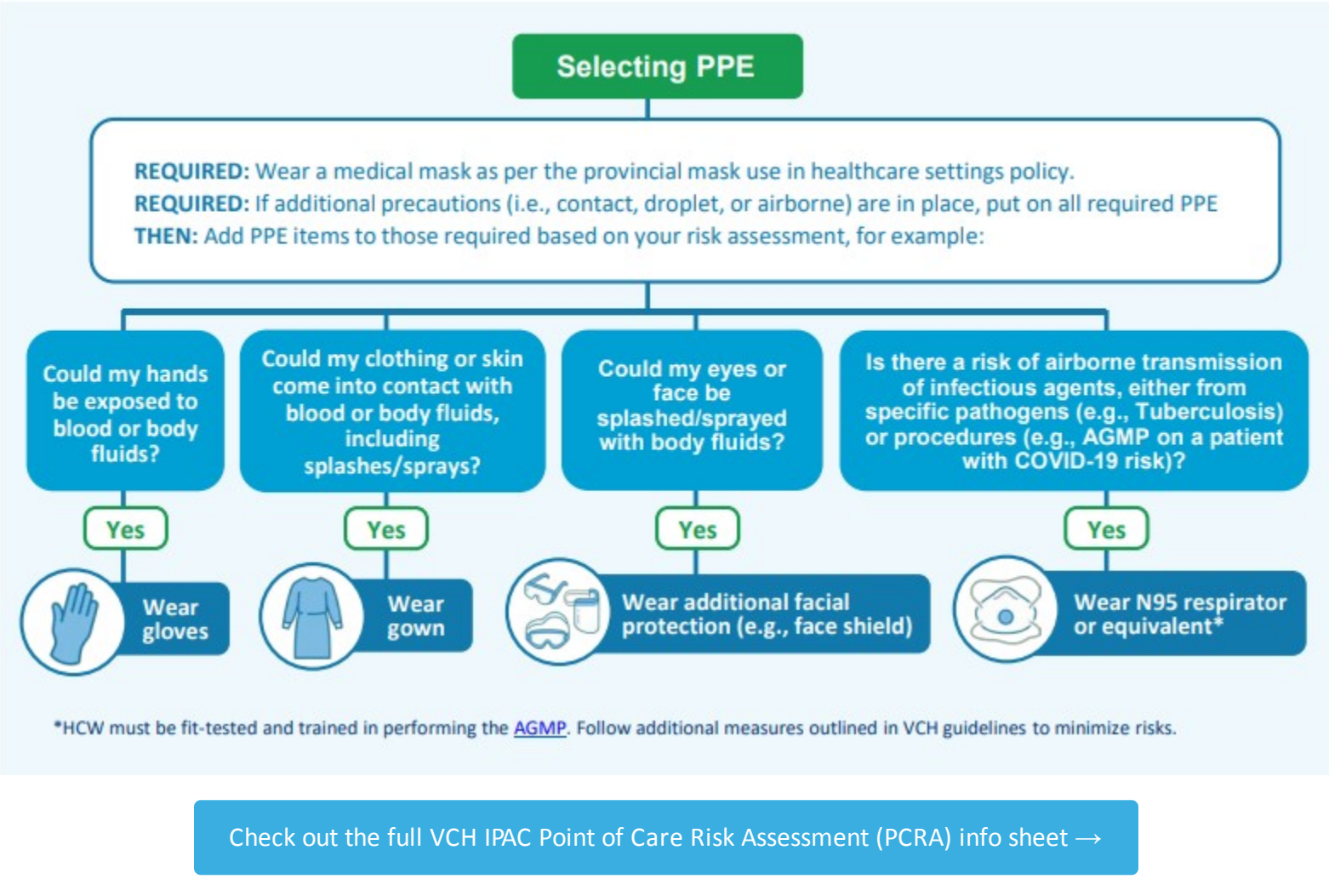
Additional PPE, such as N95 respirators, is provided in certain clinical settings where aerosol-generating procedures may be performed on patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Clinical staff in these settings can perform a point-of-care risk assessment (PCRA) to determine if an N95 respirator 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 VIRTUAL MEDICAL STAFF FORUM

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

Join us for a presentation from Dr. Manish Sadarangani, 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.

oneVCH COVID-19 VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

Did you miss today's oneVCH town hall?

To watch the virtual town hall, please click the link below.

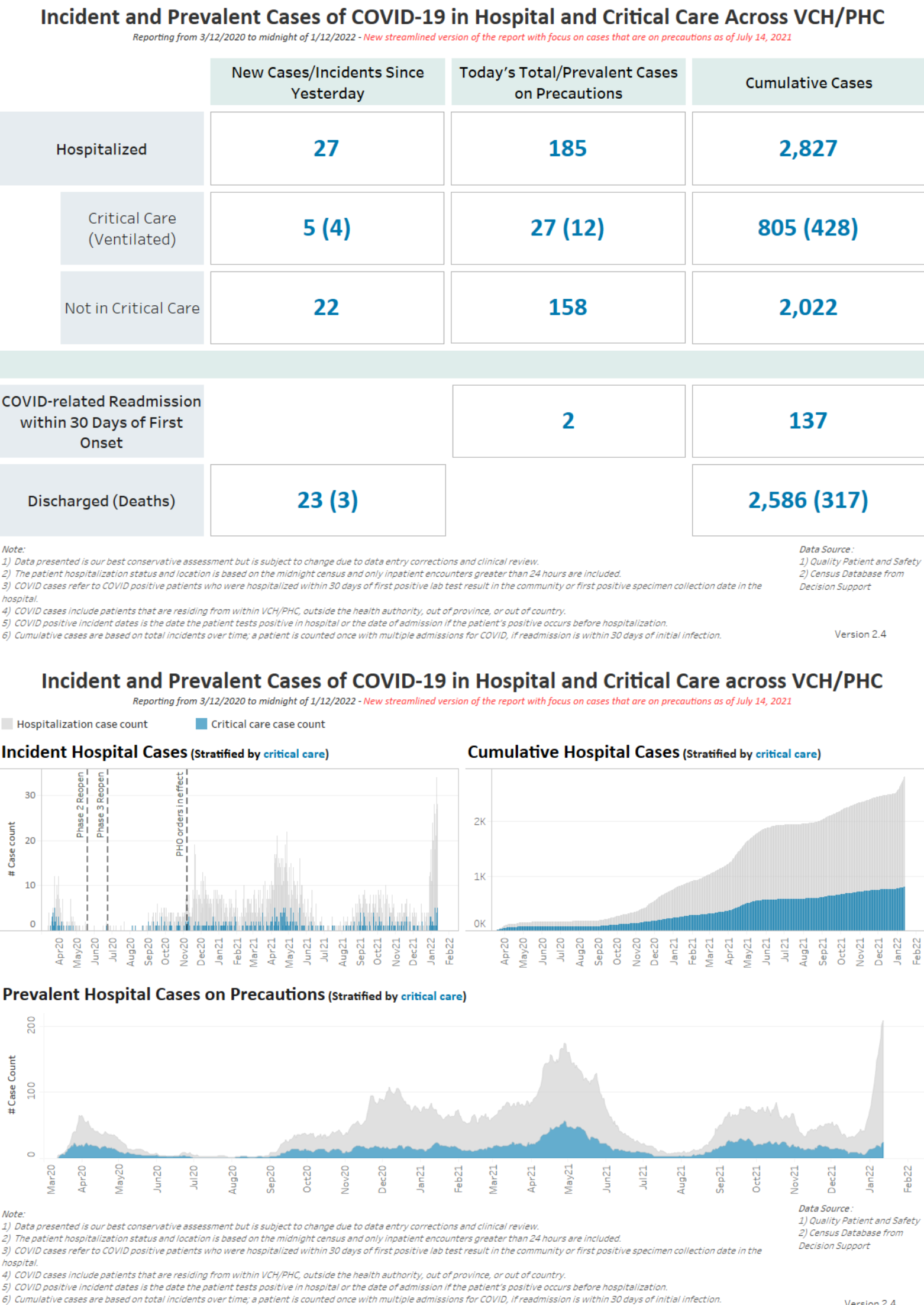
[VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH COVID-19 TOWN HALL UPDATE – JANUARY 13, 2021 11:00 AM WEBCAST](#)

UPDATE ON NEW AND EXISTING COVID-19 CASES – January 13, 2022

- B.C. is reporting 2,554 new cases of COVID-19, for a total of 291,246 cases in the province.
- 36,049 active cases
 - Fraser: 885 new cases for a total of 16,972 active cases
 - Vancouver Coastal Health: 485 for a total of 9,762 active cases
 - Interior Health: 462 for a total of 4,882 cases
 - Northern Health: 304 for a total of 1,231 active cases
 - Island Health: 412 for a total of 3,193 cases
 - People who normally reside outside of Canada: Six new cases for a total of nine active cases
- 534 hospitalized
- 102 currently admitted to ICU
- 249,458 people who tested positive have recovered
- Seven new deaths have been reported in the past 24 hours, for an overall total of 2,462

As of Thursday, Jan. 13, 2022, 88.9% (4,433,294) of eligible people five and older in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 83.3% (4,150,713) have received their second dose. In addition, 92.3% (4,277,097) of eligible people 12 and older in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, 89.5% (4,150,305) received their second dose and 29.2% (1,352,152) have received a third dose. Also, 92.6% (4,006,935) of all eligible adults in B.C. have received their first dose, 90.0% (3,893,147) received their second dose and 31.2% (1,351,017) 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 EOC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

- [COVID-19 VCH-PHC Regional 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](#).