

oneVCH COVID-19 Bulletin

January 20, 2022

COVID-19

Update to provincial COVID-19 testing guidelines: health-care workers still prioritized

The B.C. Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) published [new provincial testing guidelines for COVID-19](#), which change the eligibility criteria for testing at public, testing sites. The guidelines have changed based on a range of factors, including COVID-19 epidemiology, the severity of disease among different populations, vaccination coverage and efficacy, and the clinical management of COVID-19, among others.

With the emergence of the more transmissible Omicron variant, which has a lower risk of serious illness, the province is moving toward enabling individuals at low risk of serious outcomes to self-manage when symptoms develop, as they do for other common respiratory viruses. Most people will not require testing and can stay at home until they feel well enough to resume regular activities, including attending school or daycare. They will not be asked to adhere to prescriptive public health guidance.

Public health follow-up will be prioritized for individuals at highest risk of severe illness who many benefit from anti-viral treatment, and those living or working in higher risk settings.

Who is recommended to get tested?

Testing is recommended for people with symptoms compatible with COVID-19* **and** who are either at higher risk of experiencing severe illness and may benefit from treatment; or who live or work in high-risk settings, including health-care workers in clinical settings.

Those with COVID-19-like symptoms who are eligible for testing at public, testing sites or when admitted to hospital include:

- *Hospitalized individuals of any age where a positive result would impact treatment or care*
- *Individuals who may be at greater risk of developing severe disease and are currently eligible for treatment:*
 - Individuals who are [moderately to severely immunocompromised](#):
 - Have had a solid-organ transplant and are taking immunosuppressive therapy
 - Are on active treatment for a solid tumor or blood or bone marrow cancer
 - Have had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant
 - Have moderate to severe primary immunodeficiency
 - Have advanced or untreated HIV
 - Are on active treatment with immunosuppressive therapies
 - Are on dialysis and/or with severe kidney or renal disease
 - Individuals 18 years of age and older who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated (i.e. have not received at least two doses of a two-dose series or more than 14 days after receiving a single dose of a one-dose series)
- *Individuals who live or work in high-risk settings:*
 - Healthcare workers in hospitals, long-term care, assisted living or community clinics
 - First responders (police, ambulance, fire)
 - Staff and residents in congregate settings where a large proportion of the population is at risk for severe outcomes of COVID-19 such as long-term care facilities, shelters, correctional facilities and group homes
 - Communities with difficulty accessing testing and secondary or tertiary care such as rural, remote, isolated or Indigenous communities or work camps.

All children who are suspected of having multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) should also be tested. Infants less than 3 months of age who are febrile or who have suspected COVID-19 should be assessed by a health-care provider. For more information on the diagnosis and management of COVID-19, please refer to the clinical care guidelines on the BCCDC website.

Those not recommended to get tested

Testing is **not recommended** for other adults and children who develop mild symptoms. They are advised to stay at home and self-isolate until they feel well enough to resume their regular activities. Testing continues not to be recommended for anyone without symptoms, outside of public health investigations and other specific circumstances.

Clinical processes and practices have been adjusted, and guidelines will be implemented at testing sites in the days ahead. We appreciate the cooperation and support of our staff and community members as we respond to evolving provincial guidelines based on the latest evidence around COVID-19.

For further information about the guidelines, visit the [BCCDC website](#).

Those who have symptoms compatible with COVID-19 are advised to complete [B.C.'s COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) which will advise on whether you should access testing.

**Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever or chills, cough (either new, or worsening/exacerbation of chronic cough), loss or change of sense or smell or taste, shortness of breath, sore throat, loss of appetite, extreme fatigue or tiredness, runny nose, sneezing, headache, body or muscle aches, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.*

PARKING

Health authority parking sites will be available to those who need them most

With \$78 million in parking fees waived since April 1, 2020, pay parking will be reinstated at B.C. health authority sites to ensure that parking spots are available for patients, staff, volunteers and visitors, and so that free parking can continue to be extended to those who regularly receive certain treatments in acute-care settings.

This change comes into effect March 4, 2022.

"Maintaining across-the-board free hospital parking is making it hard for patients, staff, volunteers and visitors to find a spot, as non-hospital users are taking advantage of the situation to park for free while conducting business that's not hospital related," said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. "These hospital parking spots must be available for those who need them most."

Free parking at provincial health-care facilities will continue for patients receiving dialysis treatment or undergoing cancer treatment in acute-care programs, and for parents or caregivers of children staying in the hospital overnight. Volunteers will still be able to park for free, and financial hardship provisions will continue to be managed on a case-by-case basis by health authorities.

Parking rates have been frozen for more than four years, and this freeze will continue.

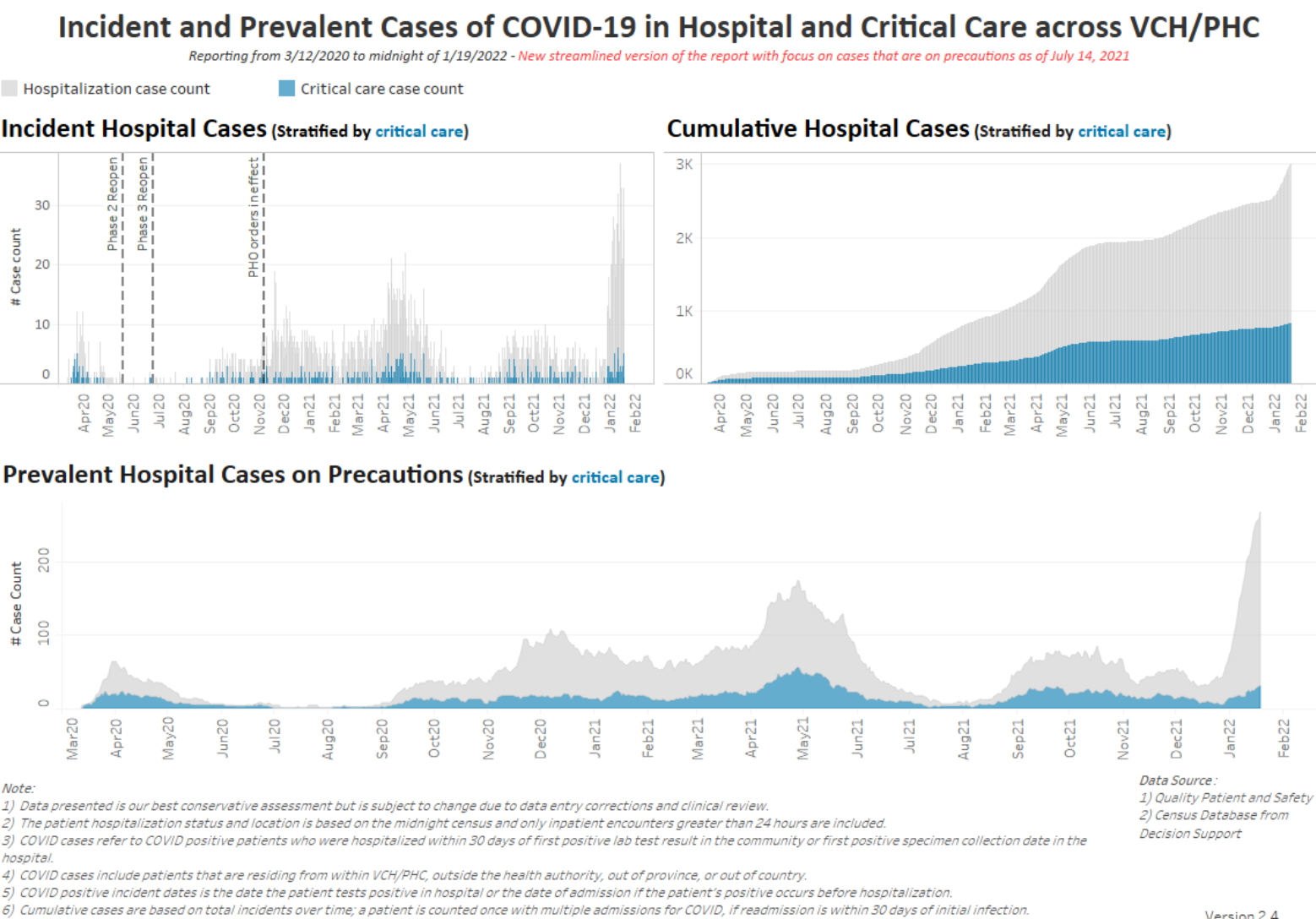
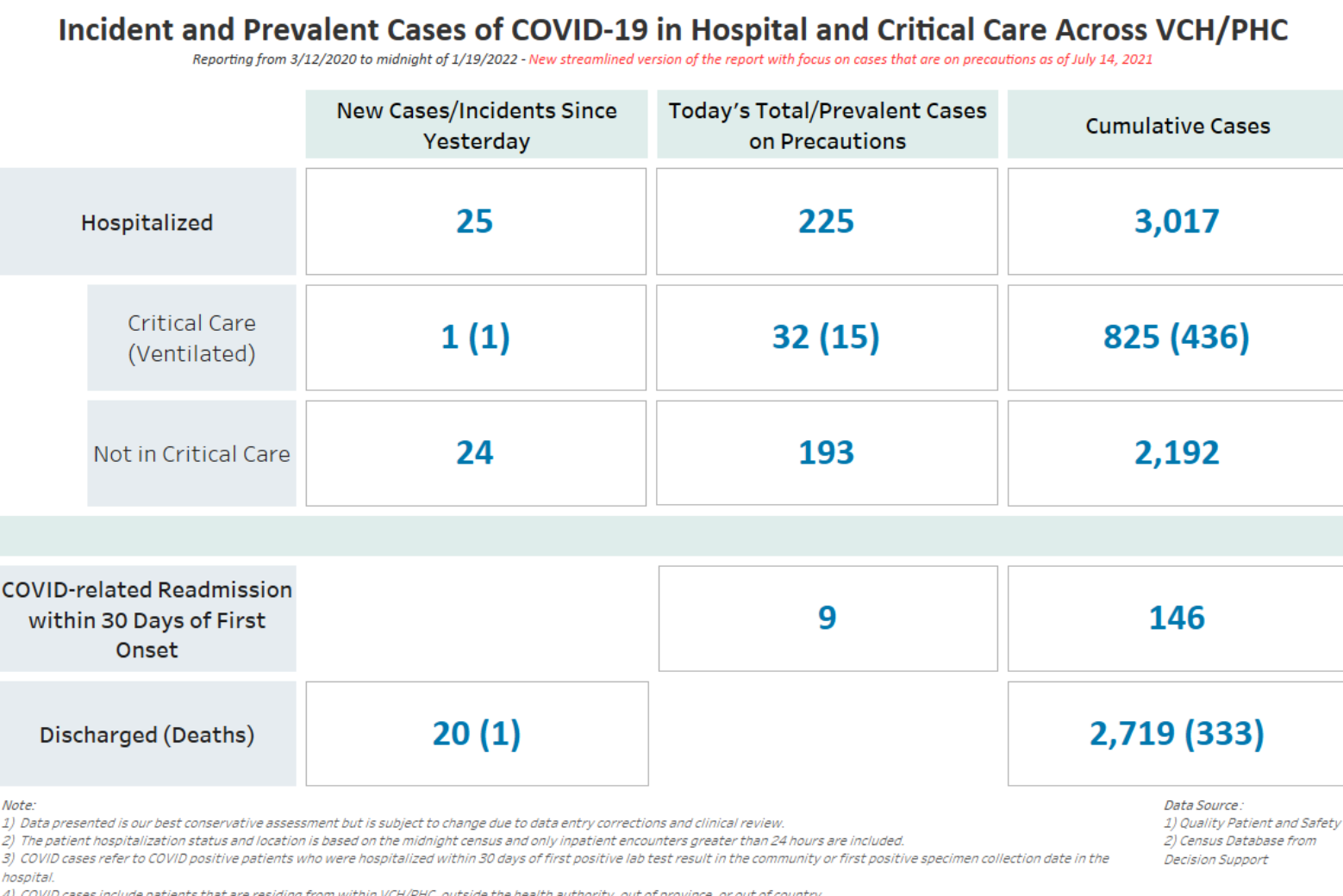
[Read the full B.C. Government news release →](#)

UPDATE ON NEW AND EXISTING COVID-19 CASES – January 20, 2022

- B.C. is reporting 2,150 new cases of COVID-19, for a total of 305,715 cases in the province.
- 34,835 active cases
 - Fraser: 576 new cases for a total of 16,516 active cases
 - Vancouver Coastal Health: 454 for a total of 8,553 active cases
 - Interior Health: 563 for a total of 6,067 cases
 - Northern Health: 203 for a total of 1,582 active cases
 - Island Health: 354 for a total of 2,104 cases
 - People who normally reside outside of Canada: Six new cases for a total of nine active cases
- 891 hospitalized
- 119 currently admitted to ICU
- 265,765 people who tested positive have recovered
- 15 new deaths have been reported in the past 24 hours, for an overall total of 2,520

As of Thursday, Jan. 20, 2022, 89.4% (4,455,046) of eligible people five and older in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 83.5% (4,161,148) have received their second dose. In addition, 92.5% (4,286,419) of eligible people 12 and older in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, 89.8% (4,160,597) have received their second dose and 36.7% (1,700,206) have received a third dose. Also, 92.8% (4,015,411) of all eligible adults in B.C. have received their first dose, 90.2% (3,902,659) have received their second dose and 39.3% (1,698,882) 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 \(IPC\) 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](#).

