

oneVCH COVID-19 Bulletin

March 10, 2022



World's best hospitals

Vancouver Coastal Health boasts four of Newsweek's best hospitals in Canada

Vancouver General Hospital (VGH), UBC Hospital, Lions Gate Hospital and Richmond Hospital all made Newsweek's list of [Canada's best hospitals](#) in 2022 – four of the eight B.C. hospitals listed.

For the second straight year, Newsweek recognized Vancouver General Hospital as one of the world's best hospitals for its continued excellence and leadership in patient care. This year, VGH has been recognized in seven categories in Newsweek's global rankings of best hospitals and specialized hospitals.

The [World's Best Hospitals 2022 list](#) recognizes the best medical institutions from across 27 countries and is evaluated based on three key criteria: hospital recommendations from peers, patient experience and medical key performance indicators.

[Read the full story →](#)



COVID-19 Restrictions

B.C. takes next step in balanced plan to lift COVID-19 restrictions

As people in B.C. continue to step up and become vaccinated in record numbers, COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations have decreased, leading the provincial health officer to lift additional public health orders.

As of Mar. 11, 2022, B.C.'s indoor mask order is being repealed along with eased restrictions on long-term care visitors, faith gatherings and overnight camps for children and youth. Today's announcement also sets a pathway to lift additional COVID-19 restrictions, including the BC Vaccine Card requiring proof of vaccination, on Apr. 8.

[Read the full story →](#)

Face coverings

Face coverings in VCH health-care settings

The Provincial Order on Face Coverings will be repealed at 12:01 a.m. on Mar. 11, which for Vancouver Coastal Health, will apply to non-clinical, administrative buildings. New guidance about face coverings in non-clinical work spaces is expected to come shortly from Ministry of Health.

In the interim, continue to wear a surgical mask in all VCH health-care settings, and continue to follow [VCH Infection Prevention and Control guidelines](#) for direct clinical care.

COVID-19

New guidance for all VCH community health and public health services

With more than 90 per cent of Vancouver Coastal Health region residents age five and older vaccinated against COVID-19, low case counts and hospitalizations, and expanded access to COVID-19 treatments, restrictions are being lifted in the community, and this is positive news. Good public health policy means implementing restrictions that are the least intrusive available, based on scientific evidence, neither arbitrary nor discriminatory in application, of limited duration, respectful of human dignity and subject to review.

VCH Community Health and Public Health programs deliver important services to communities in our region. We can now resume providing all services at pre-pandemic levels, under ongoing guidance from VCH Public Health and Infection Prevention and Control.

New guidance for all VCH Community Health and Public Health services has been adapted from the latest provincial and regional guidance and will help our teams return to expected service levels safely. **Please note: this guidance is not for acute-care or long-term care settings. Information for those sectors will be forthcoming.**

Please visit [one.vch.ca/restart](#) for program-specific guidance, which includes :

- returning to full capacity for programs and events
- resuming in-person visits
- removing restrictions on physical distancing
- allowing visitors

Long-term care and assisted living

Long-term care and assisted living visitation

Today's announcement from the Province of B.C. on changes to province-wide COVID-19 restrictions are welcome news for family and friends of residents in long term care (LTC) and assisted living (AL) who will be able to resume social visits on [Mar. 18](#).

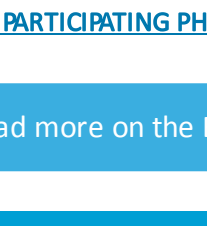
As Dr. Bonnie Henry highlighted today, operators may need some time to make arrangements to welcome additional visitors to LTC and in the next week. Sites will be sharing details about the processes for visiting on their websites and be informing residents and visitors in writing or by email.

Social visits will include the requirement for visitors to be fully vaccinated, to show proof of vaccination status prior to entry, undergo rapid POC testing (long-term care and seniors' assisted living co-located with long term care), and to follow the associated requirements for masks while visiting. Existing exceptions to the rapid testing (end of life, kids under 12) remain in place.

Social visits could continue to be suspended in the future where there's a site outbreak at the direction of the Medical Health Officer. The current infection Prevention and Control guidance regarding masking in health care facilities is still in place. All visitors in LTC homes, including fully vaccinated, are required to wear a medical mask for the duration of their visit (indoor and outdoor), including in a resident's private room.

All visitors at a seniors' AL site are required to wear a medical mask when moving through and in common areas of the residence. Masks aren't required when fully vaccinated visitors are visiting a resident in a single occupancy unit.

The B.C. Ministry of Health will be providing an update to the visitation guidance and associated Q&A and will be provided next week.



COVID-19 testing

Rapid antigen testing kits are now free for people 60+ at pharmacies

Rapid antigen testing kits are free for residents of B.C. 60 years and older who have a Personal Health Number (PHN). If you're under the age of 60, kits will be available soon. One kit contains five individual tests.

You are allowed one kit every 28 days. This makes sure that everyone who wants a kit can get one.

A test should only be used by people who develop symptoms of COVID-19 and want to confirm a positive or negative result. The tests are not suitable for international travel requirements.

[FIND A PARTICIPATING PHARMACY HERE](#)

[Read more on the B.C. Government website →](#)

COVID-19

PHO finalizes order for health-care professionals

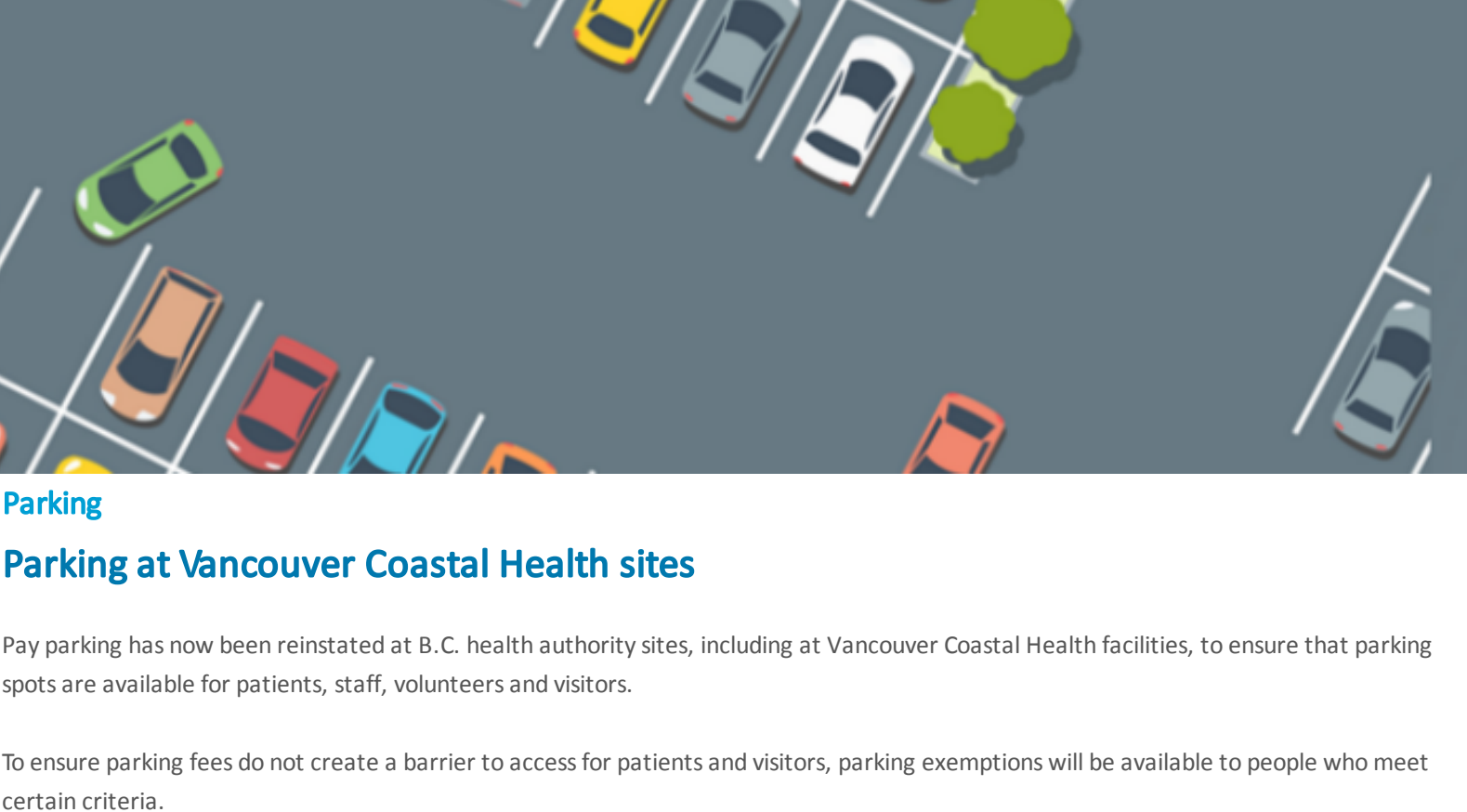
The Office of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) has posted a new provincial health officer order requiring the reporting of health-care professionals' COVID-19 vaccination status.

The order requires professional health colleges to provide personal information about their registrants to the Ministry of Health. This enables the ministry to match the data to the provincial immunization registry to obtain registrants' vaccination status. The provincial government notified colleges regulating these professionals of this requirement on Mar. 4, 2022.

Under the order, registrants for whom vaccination status is not found must provide vaccination records to their college by Mar. 31, 2022. Colleges will be required to disclose the vaccine status information of their registrants on request by the PHO or medical health officers.

This order covers the health professions of the following colleges:

- British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives
- College of Chiropractors of British Columbia
- College of Dental Hygienists of British Columbia
- College of Dental Technicians of British Columbia
- College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia
- College of Denturists of British Columbia
- College of Dietitians of British Columbia
- College of Massage Therapists of British Columbia
- College of Naturopathic Physicians of British Columbia
- College of Occupational Therapists of British Columbia
- College of Opticians of British Columbia
- College of Optometrists of British Columbia
- College of Pharmacists of British Columbia
- College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia
- College of Psychologists of British Columbia
- College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia
- College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of British Columbia



Parking

Parking at Vancouver Coastal Health sites

Pay parking has now been reinstated at B.C. health authority sites, including at Vancouver Coastal Health facilities, to ensure that parking spots are available for patients, staff, volunteers and visitors.

To ensure parking fees do not create a barrier to access for patients and visitors, parking exemptions will be available to people who meet certain criteria.

To learn more about parking at VCH, including exemptions and reimbursements, please visit [www.vch.ca/parking](#).

COVID-19

Q&A for medical staff (physicians, nurse practitioners, midwives & dentists)

Question: Can COVID-19 cause Alzheimer's-like cognitive impairment after recovery? If yes, is there data on whether this could be permanent, or reversible?

Answer: We aren't able to make any conclusions at this point. There is an international [consortium](#) run by the Alzheimer's Society in conjunction with the World Health Organization that is looking closely at this. There is some interesting data, among the hospitalized cohort at least, showing elevation of certain neurological and inflammatory markers that have also been seen in Alzheimer's.

The question and answer were generated at the Feb. 16 Medical Staff Forum. The session slides and important links, as well as those from previous forums, will be available on the [VCH Medical Staff Intranet](#).

Medical staff forum

Upcoming medical staff forum to focus on planetary health; COVID-19

Join us for a presentation from Dr. Andrea MacNeill, Regional Medical Director for Planetary Health, Vancouver Coastal Health and Founder of the UBC Planetary Healthcare Lab, on the environmental effects of the health-care industry and how medical staff can help make a positive impact. There will also be a COVID-19 update and live Q&A session.

Panelists: Dr. Chad Kim Sing (host), Dr. Ross Brown, Dr. Patty Daly, Vivian Eliopoulos, Dr. Andrea MacNeill and Dr. Titus Wong

Date and time: Apr. 20, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Topic: Planetary health and COVID-19 updates

[REGISTER HERE](#)

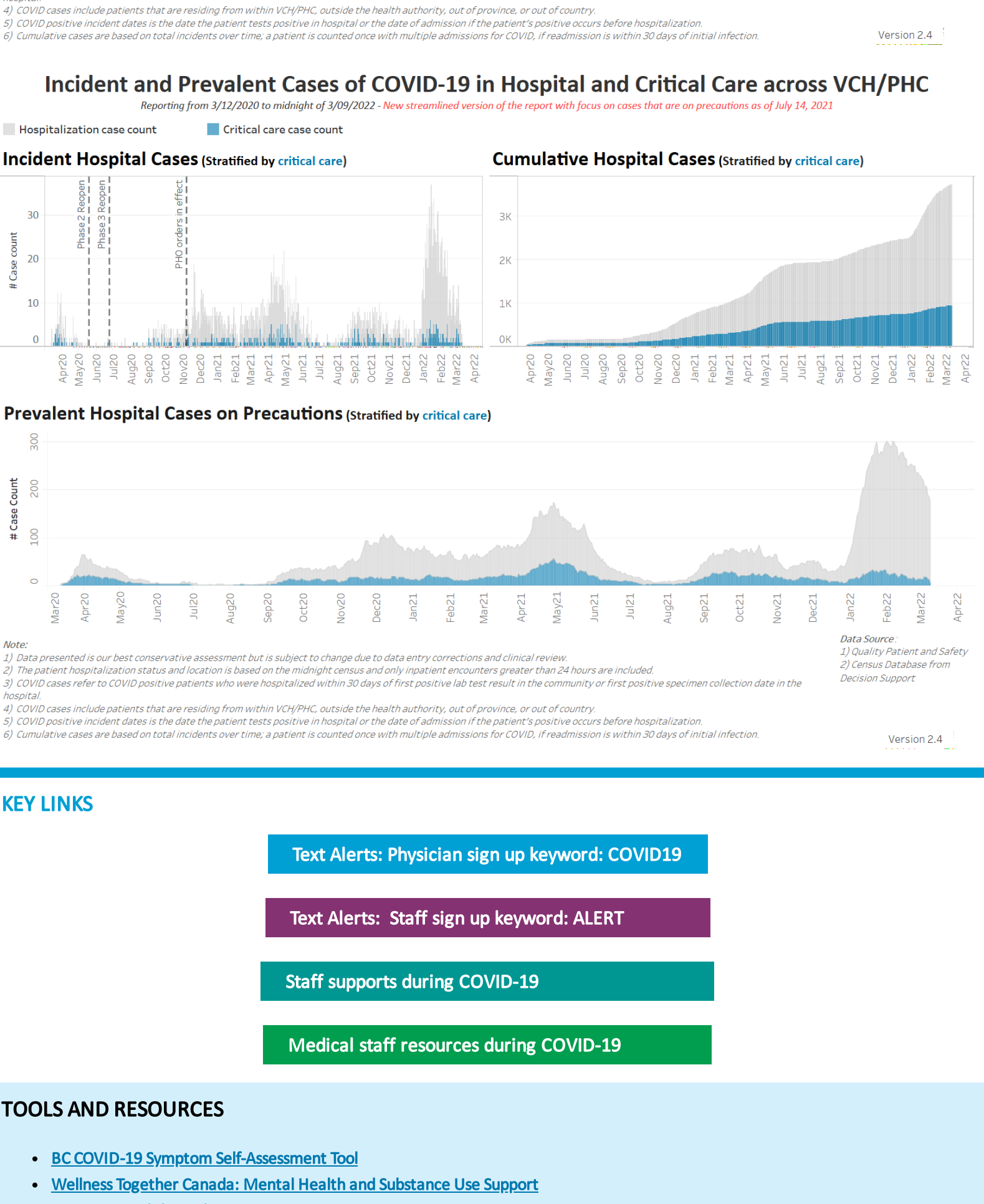
Submit questions in advance using the registration link, or via email to: [Darren.nijer@vch.ca](#).

See [VCH Medical Staff Intranet](#) for content from previous medical staff forums. Note: there will not be a Medical Staff Forum in March 2022 due to scheduling and time constraints.

COVID-19 DATA

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.

[BC COVID-19 Dashboard →](#)



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 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](#).

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