
STATEMENT

For Immediate Release
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Ministry of Health

Joint statement on update on new and existing COVID-19 cases in B.C.

VICTORIA – Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, and Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s provincial health officer, have issued the following joint statement regarding updates on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) response in British Columbia:

“We are announcing seven new cases of COVID-19 for a total of 53 cases in British Columbia. The individuals are in the Vancouver Coastal and Fraser health regions and were confirmed positive, based on BC Centre for Disease Control testing.

“Three cases are connected to the Hollyburn House Retirement Residence, three cases are travel-related and one is a community case.

“The three individuals are connected to the Hollyburn House Retirement Residence in West Vancouver include case 48, a male in his 40s and case 49, a female in her 40s, both of whom are health-care workers at Hollyburn. Case 47 is a man in his 90s, a resident. Public health teams are on site and actively working to investigate and contain potential transmission to other residents and workers. The outbreak at this facility is linked to the outbreak at Lynn Valley Care Centre.

“Case 50 is a man in his 40s who returned from travel in the United Kingdom and lives in the Vancouver Coastal region.

“Case 51 is a man in his 40s. Case 52 is a woman in her 40s. Both cases 51 and 52 live in the Vancouver Coastal Health region and are returning from a group trip to Egypt.

“Case 53 is a man in his 50s and is a community case identified through laboratory surveillance. He is self-isolating at his home in the Vancouver Coastal Health region.

Of B.C.'s 53 COVID-19 cases, four people have fully recovered and one woman in her 60s remains in hospital in the Fraser Health region in stable condition. All other individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 are in isolation at home with care and support from public health teams.

“With the increasing transmission of COVID-19 at mass gatherings and events, in addition to the escalating risk of community transmission, we must do our best to slow transmission of COVID-19 and protect our communities.

“Our schools and our workplaces are operating safely, and we want to keep it that way.

“We are recommending against all non-essential travel outside of Canada, including to the United States. Effective today, anyone who chooses to travel outside of Canada will be asked to

stay away from work or school for 14 days upon their return. We know that this is a voluntary measure, but it is our expectation that people will follow this direction as part of their civic duty.

“Effective today, we also directing all event organizers to cancel any gathering larger than 250 people. This includes indoor and outdoor sporting events, conferences, meetings, religious gatherings or other similar events. This threshold has been selected, as it is much easier to maintain important social distancing to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

“Some post-secondary institutions have classes with more than 250 students, and we are working with them to take measures to address this situation.

“Over spring break the B.C. government will also work with school districts to develop procedures to be implemented with students and staff when classes resume.

“We are asking employers to excuse staff for sick leave without requiring a doctor’s note, if their employees are ill or required to self-isolate. We are also reinforcing that if you have symptoms and may have been exposed to COVID-19, you must call your local primary care provider, or 811, to arrange for safe testing.

“We have heard reports of employers requiring all their staff to get tested. Only a health-care professional can determine whether you require a test – and employers should not require employees to have a test if a health-care provider has recommended against it.

“We recognize this will have a significant economic and social impact, and want to reassure British Columbians that these are temporary measures required to protect the health of the public at this critical time of pandemic. We will be reassessing these conditions on an ongoing basis as the pandemic evolves.

“Our 811 navigators and nurses are doing an incredible job with record high call volumes - providing support to 3,291 callers yesterday, March 11, 2020. We are adding more staff and more phone lines to resolve the intermittent busy signals some people have experienced.

“The British Columbia Pandemic Provincial Coordination Plan details the preparations and comprehensive toolkit to respond to the evolving outbreak. This will be an ongoing resource for the province.”

Learn More:

For guidance on mass gatherings from the BC Centre for Disease Control, visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/mass-gatherings-risk-assesment.html>

For federal government recommendations on cruise ship travel, visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html#cruise>

For recommendations on protecting yourself and your community, visit:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel))

For the COVID-19 pandemic preparedness and planning materials, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/pandemic-influenza>.

For more information and latest updates on COVID-19, follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter @CDCofBC or visit its website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

For the latest audio clips of COVID-19 media availabilities, visit: <https://soundcloud.com/bcgov>

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