



COVID-19: Update for Stakeholders

March 24, 2020

The information around COVID-19 – and how it impacts our communities – is changing daily, and sometimes hourly, and we know there are many questions.

Starting today, this update will be sent to IH partners and stakeholders on regular basis, as a means of providing shared messaging and resources. Information is also available on the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) website and the [Interior Health](#) website.

If you have questions about the content of this update, please email: COVIDquestions@interiorhealth.ca.

Provincial Updates

As of March 23, there have been 30 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Interior Health. *There have been no deaths to date in Interior Health.

As of March 23, there were 472 identified cases in B.C.



For up-to-date case counts provincially, see the [BCCDC webpage](#).

Joint statement by Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry and Health Minister Adrian Dix - March 23, 2020

Mobile App and Online Symptom Checker available

A self-assessment tool for COVID-19 is now available on the BCCDC website and can be downloaded as a mobile app: <https://bc.thrive.health/>

Provincial call centre available for COVID-19 questions

The provincial government has implemented a helpline for non-medical questions: BC Govt. COVID-19 Helpline: 1-888-COVID19  or 1-888-268-4319 

IH Updates

Reducing Visitor Access

To keep our patients, families and staff safe, and in keeping with the Provincial Health Officer's recommendations for social distancing, IH is limiting the number of visitors entering all sites, effective immediately. Until further notice, we will be limiting visitors to essential visits only.

Essential visits include, but are not limited to:

- Visits for compassionate care (e.g., end of life and critical illness).
- Visits considered paramount to patient/client care and well-being (i.e., caregivers and support persons), such as assistance with feeding or mobility.

To further limit the number of people entering sites at this time, the same caregiver or support person should attend each essential visit wherever possible.

Shareable Resources

All organizations and leaders are able to support and share the messages of Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry, including the importance of social distancing, self-isolation and a high awareness across all of our communities. To help you in your communications, shareable resources are available on our [Interior Health website](#), including content appropriate for social media and email distribution. Additionally, please direct people to the [BC CDC website](#) for the most up-to-date provincial information, as well as the self-assessment tool/mobile app.

Key Messages

- All British Columbians should be on heightened alert about stopping the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. We are in a provincial state of emergency.
- The Provincial Health Officer has made clear orders aimed at breaking the chain of transmission: putting a halt to public gatherings; closing restaurants to all but take-out orders and delivery; and closing personal service establishments such as barbershops, salons, nail estheticians, health spas, massage parlours and tattoo shops.
- All health-care facilities across IH and the province have essential visitors only limitations in place.
- While spending time outdoors is important, people still need to stay away from groups in any environment, to prevent bringing the virus into their homes. If you are outside, maintain safe social distance with other people (two metres or more).
- As Dr. Bonnie Henry says: "The gravity of the situation cannot be overstated. Everyone must do all they can to support our efforts to break the chain of transmission and flatten the outbreak curve."
- The time is now – the actions we take today will benefit us two weeks and two months from now.

Questions & Answers

We recognize that you receive many questions about COVID-19. Below is information that may help you respond:

How is Interior Health responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Interior Health is working closely with the Ministry of Health, the BC Centre for Disease Control and other health system partners. IH has an emergency operation centre (EOC) in place which is overseeing all aspects of our response to COVID-19.

Why doesn't Interior Health release the locations of COVID-19 positive patients?

The provincial health officer is urging all British Columbians, in all communities, to take action and to assume COVID-19 may be circulating within their community.

These measures include: stay home whenever possible; practise social distancing when this is not possible; cough or sneeze into your elbow; stay home especially when you are sick; and if you need medical attention, please call ahead before going to hospital or your health-care provider.

How can I be tested for COVID-19?

COVID-19 testing locations are operational across the region. Please note that people are being asked **NOT** to go to testing locations without an appointment. Testing is available for all who need it, but not everyone needs a test.

To determine whether a test is required, individuals experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should contact:

- Their primary care provider, or
- HealthlinkBC (811)

Also see BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool: <https://bc.thrive.health/>

Trusted Resources

- Interior Health
- BC Centre for Disease Control
- HealthLink BC
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- World Health Organization