



## COVID-19: Update for Stakeholders

April 1, 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.

This update is being sent to IH partners and stakeholders on a 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](mailto:COVIDquestions@interiorhealth.ca).

## Provincial Updates

As of March 31, there have been 107 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Interior Health. \*There have been no deaths to date in Interior Health.

As of March 31, there were 1,013 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 31, 2020.](#)

On Friday, March 27, the Minister of Health and Provincial Health Officer provided [details about modelling work](#) that has been done to anticipate the number of cases in B.C. and to prepare hospitals to care for critical and acute patients.

See the slides from the March 27, 2020 press briefing:

- [COVID-19 Critical Care and Acute Care Hospitalization Modelling Technical Briefing – full version](#)
- [COVID-19 Critical Care and Acute Care Hospitalization Modelling Technical Briefing – condensed version](#)

## 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](tel:1-888-COVID19) or [1-888-268-4319](tel:1-888-268-4319)

# IH Updates

## Town Hall

Susan Brown, Interior Health's President & CEO, and Chief Medical Health Officer Dr. Sue Pollock participated in an Town Hall livestream event on March 27, hosted by Norm Letnick, MLA for Kelowna-Lake Country. It was an opportunity for people in real time to ask questions about Interior Health's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you missed it, here is a link to the [recording](#) of the event, or read the [transcript](#).

IH also regularly updates the [IH COVID-19 webpage](#), including new questions and answers in the FAQ.

## Pay parking

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, [Interior Health is temporarily suspending pay parking](#) for the public, staff and physicians at its sites where pay parking exists, effective April 1 until further notice.

This step is intended to help support the public, as well as our dedicated staff and physicians, during this challenging time, and also reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission from the continued use of pay parking machines.

## Supporting people experiencing homelessness during COVID-19

COVID-19 continues to be a concern for people experiencing homelessness in our local communities. Shelters, drop-ins, out-of-the-cold programs and other social services provide an essential service for the people they serve. Special considerations are needed to contain COVID-19 spread for people experiencing homelessness – they are vulnerable to contracting the disease and are at higher risk of food insecurity and drug misuse and/or overdose due to social isolation.

Visit the Interior Health website for suggestions about how to support this vulnerable population in your community, and for other information relevant to local and regional governments in our new [Information for Communities](#) section.

## 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 remain on heightened alert about stopping the spread of COVID-19 in our communities – as the provincial state of emergency continues.
- We continue to urge everyone to stay home as much as possible, and avoid unnecessary outings and interactions. This is especially important for those people who are sick and experiencing symptoms of illness.
- Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 – fever, new cough, or difficulty breathing – should immediately self-isolate for 14 days and limit contact with others.
- Physical distancing measures put in place in mid-March continue to be important to breaking the chain of transmission of this virus. Make sure you are keeping a distance of two metres (six feet) or more between yourself and other people.
- Dr. Henry said on Monday: “We are at a critical juncture in our provincial COVID-19 response. We have two paths ahead: we will begin to see evidence of a flattened curve or our rates of infection will rise even more. Our entire government is doing everything we can to address this challenge, and we need every person in our province to do the same. Let us be united in this singular purpose: in these next two crucial weeks we must be 100% committed to flattening the curve and lessening the devastating impacts of this virus.”

## Questions & Answers

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

### Can I donate homemade masks?

- Thank you for your generous offer, however, at this time Interior Health is not accepting donations of handmade masks.
- We can assure residents that there are processes in place to ensure personal protective equipment (PPE) and other required supplies are distributed appropriately across Interior Health, and made available where and when needed.
- There has been unprecedented demand on PPE supplies in recent weeks in B.C., which is the reason for establishing a centralized supply process. We have already heard initial success stories as supply hubs are being established in IH and sites are finding they had more stock than they realized.
- The Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) is the lead for supply chain across B.C. and is overseeing PPE supplies at the provincial level.

### Can I make masks for my family and others?

- When you are sick, wearing a face mask may help to stop the spread of germs from you to others. Wear a face mask when you are in the same room with other people and when you get medical care. If your mask gets wet or dirty, change it and wash your hands right away. You and those you live with do not need to buy and wear other types of masks, such as an N-95 respirator mask.

- Any mask, no matter how efficient at filtration or how good the seal, will have minimal effect if it is not used together with other preventive measures, such as frequent hand washing and physical distancing.

## 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).
- You can find more information about testing at [IH's COVID-19 webpage](#).
- 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
- First Nations Health Authority

