

February 14, 2020 – 3:58 p.m.



All-staff bulletin

PHSA's weekly novel coronavirus update

Sent on behalf of Dr. Réka Gustafson, Vice President of Public Health & Wellness and Deputy Provincial Health Officer

Great work is underway across the province as we continue to prepare and respond to the outbreak of novel coronavirus, which as of Tuesday has officially been named Coronavirus Disease, or COVID-19, by the World Health Organization (WHO). Our gratitude goes out to the various teams that are involved in this work for their continued efforts and dedication.

The outbreak continues to be concentrated in China, especially in Hubei Province. The WHO released an analysis of more than 17,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in China, showing the majority of cases, or 82%, were mild, 15% were severe and 3% were critical. These estimates are based on confirmed cases, and likely do not include mild infections for which people do not seek care.

Last Friday, I sent an [all-staff bulletin](#) and committed to sending regular Friday bulletins while the situation is active, offering a round-up of the week's updates and relevant information. As an organization, it's critically important that we continue the dialogue, education and information-sharing around this virus.

The situation in B.C.:

- As of February 14, four people in BC have tested positive for COVID-19. One additional individual in the Interior Health region has a presumptive positive test, which was announced earlier today. All cases and close contacts of these cases are being followed closely by public health officials. [Read today's statement](#) from the health minister and provincial health officer.
- As of February 13, 491 individuals in BC have been tested by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) Public Health Laboratory.
- British Columbia is following Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) guidance. Please continue to check the [national case definition](#) frequently, as criteria for screening, testing and public health management are subject to frequent updates. Based on new case definitions, we are advising physicians that the criteria for testing people for COVID-19 has expanded to include anyone presenting with:
 - Compatible symptoms (e.g. fever, cough or difficulty breathing) **AND**

- Travel to mainland China (including Hubei province and Wuhan City) within 14 days of symptom onset **OR** close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 **AND**
- No clear alternative diagnosis
- The advice from the Public Health Agency of Canada for returning travellers has not changed. Travellers returning from Hubei province (including Wuhan city) in China are recommended to take extra precautions, such as staying away from others for 14 days as they monitor for symptoms. This includes staying home from school or work during this period.

The situation in Canada:

- Outside of British Columbia, three confirmed infections of the virus have been reported in Canada.
- PHAC continues to assess the public health risk associated with the virus as low for Canada.
- A second Canadian-operated repatriation flight carrying returning Canadians from Wuhan, China arrived at YVR airport in Vancouver late on Feb. 11. The aircraft refueled and proceeded to Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Trenton in Ontario.
- No crew members or passengers remained in BC. As with the last plane, the returning travellers, staff and flight crew will spend 14 days at CFB Trenton and will receive any necessary social and medical support. Canada's Chief Public Health Officer has authorized the release of Canadian Armed Forces medical staff who accompanied the returning travellers from Wuhan as they do not pose a risk of significant harm to public health.

Hot topics for staff:

Sick time and self-isolation

- Because some people coming back from Hubei province may not recognize their symptoms immediately, PHAC is now asking travellers returning from Hubei province (including Wuhan city) in China to take extra precautions by staying away from others for 14 days as they monitor for symptoms. **This includes staying home from school or work during this period.**
- If you are a PHSA employee and you are required to self-isolate as a result of exposure or potential exposure to the virus, you may use your existing sick leave balance. The same leave processes apply as they would for another disease or virus, like influenza, and are covered by your Collective Agreement or your Terms and Conditions of Employment.
- Sick leave is the period of time an employee is permitted to be absent from work without loss of salary by virtue of being sick, disabled, exposed to contagious disease, or because of an accident for which compensation is not payable under the Worker's Compensation Act.
- If you are a PHSA employee and you are required to self-isolate but you do not have a sufficient sick leave balance, you may use other banked time (e.g. overtime banks,

CTO banks). If you have no banked time available, please connect directly with your supervisor and HR advisor for guidance.

- As a reminder, anyone who is concerned they may have been exposed to, or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, should contact their primary care provider, local public health office or call 811. Translation services for 811 are available in more than 130 languages.

Posters for health care settings

- The provincial committee has created a poster that has been approved for posting at BC health care settings.
- You can [download the poster from POD](#).

N95 mask supply updates

- Updated bulletins were distributed to specific clinical areas on Feb. 10 outlining the processes for N95 masks supply at clinical sites.
- You can find the updated bulletins (one specifically for C+W and one for other areas of the organization) on the [coronavirus section on POD](#).

Your sources of information:

- The BCCDC website has a publicly accessible, [dedicated area](#) for health professionals.
- PHSA has a new [dedicated area on POD](#). BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) alerts and updates are on the [BCAS intranet](#) and in the [BCEHS Handbook](#). [Note: you must be on the respective PHSA and BCEHS networks to access these links].
- For site-specific questions, please check in with your manager or clinical leadership.
- For trusted information from around the world, please check the [World Health Organization](#) website.

Respect people | **Be compassionate** | **Dare to innovate** | **Cultivate partnerships** | **Serve with purpose**