

February 21, 2020 – 3:38 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***

Thank you – to the programs and services across many areas of PHSA working on things related to COVID-19 – for your continued dedication and vigilance.

While our understanding and response to the COVID-19 outbreaks evolves, we will be sending weekly updates to PHSA staff. Please find the previous Friday all-staff bulletins with updates on COVID-19 in the [coronavirus resources section](#) on POD.

The World Health Organization (WHO) officially named the disease caused by the virus as *coronavirus disease* (COVID-19) and the virus that causes it as *severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2* (SARS-CoV-2). Please be aware that you may still see the infection and the same virus being referred to as 2019-nCoV.

This week, China published a description of over 72,000 cases of COVID-19, which provided valuable information on this disease. The majority of infections are considered mild.

Only a small proportion of infections were reported in children. Like other coronaviruses, the likelihood of severe illness increases with age, and mortality increases substantially after age 70.

#### The situation in B.C.:

- As of Feb. 18, 652 individuals have been tested for COVID-19 in B.C.
- As of Feb. 21, six people in B.C. have tested positive for COVID-19.
- The latest individual in B.C. who tested positive (on Feb. 20) had travel history to Iran. This is a country that has not reported widespread community spread of the virus to date, but detection and reporting in some countries is likely to be incomplete.
- Local public health is managing the close contacts of those who were infected, including household and airline and community contacts.
- All individuals in B.C. who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 have had mild disease, and are recovering or have recovered.
- People diagnosed with COVID-19 no longer need to self-isolate once their symptoms have resolved and they have had two successive, negative test results 24 hours apart. As of Feb. 20, one individual has met these criteria.

- B.C. 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.

### The situation in Canada:

- Outside of B.C., 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.
- Over the next few days, Health Canada is releasing the Canadians who were repatriated from China from 14 days of quarantine in Trenton, Ontario.
- Canadian citizens who have been quarantined aboard a cruise ship off the coast of Japan have started to return to Canada. We are advised there will be no flights landing at YVR.
- Fourteen days is believed to be the longest incubation period for COVID-19. These individuals will no longer be required to self-isolate or take any additional precautionary measures, beyond those measures that help protect us from other respiratory illnesses at this time of year.

### Hot topics for staff:

#### Videos

- PHSA has supported the development of a number of informational videos about COVID-19.
- You can find the videos on YouTube playlists in the following languages:
  - [English](#)
  - [Mandarin](#)
  - [Cantonese](#)

#### Posters

- The BCCDC's website now includes translated posters for facilities:
  - [Facility poster in Punjabi](#)
  - [Facility poster in simplified Chinese](#)
  - [Facility poster in traditional Chinese](#)
- You can also download the English version of the poster, meant for the entrance to health care settings and reception areas:
  - [Small](#) (8 1/2" X 11")
  - [Large](#) (11" X 17")

#### Prevention reminders

- Follow the same advice that public health officials recommend for the cold and flu season: wash your hands often with soap and water, cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, avoid others who are unwell, and stay home when you are sick.
- The most important thing you can do to prevent coronavirus and other illnesses is to wash your hands regularly and avoid touching your face.

- Cover your mouth when you cough so you're not exposing other people. If you are sick yourself, stay away from others. Contact your health-care provider ahead of time so you can be safely assessed.

**Your sources of information:**

- The BCCDC website has a publicly accessible, [dedicated area](#) for health professionals.
- There is also [comprehensive information for the public](#), including videos, Q&A and information sheets in several languages
- PHSA has a new [dedicated area on POD](#). 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.

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