



April 21, 2021 – Health System Capacity, Registration Ramp-Up, and New Public Health Measures

Since our last update, Island Health and other BC health authorities witnessed a day-over-day incremental surge in public illness, emergency visits, and COVID-19 hospitalizations. Our acute care system experienced significant occupancy issues and challenging staffing levels that had our designated COVID hospital sites working at capacity for several days. With [increased systemic pressure](#) at the provincial level, Dr. Bonnie Henry and health officials enacted several [new province-wide restrictions](#) in effect until May 25th, 2021 (see section below). Moreover, [British Columbia's vaccination program](#) has been expanded in communities with higher COVID rates as a key lever to prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed.

More than 1.8 million British Columbians are being invited to register for their COVID-19 vaccine this week, and a new schedule for age cohorts to register is now in place with the following cohorts up next:

- **Wednesday, April 21** – Registration opens for people aged **30 and up**
- **Thursday, April 22** – Registration opens for people aged **25 and up**
- **Friday, April 23** – Registration opens for people aged **18 and up**

By the end of this week, we will have delivered over 250,000 first doses (all vaccine brands), and approximately 1 in 3 people in the region will have been vaccinated. People in B.C. aged 40 and over are now eligible for the AstraZeneca vaccine through pharmacies, and in some hot spot area special clinics where communities are seeing high levels of COVID transmission. [AstraZeneca is a safe and effective vaccine](#) that has been made available to the 40+ population as a means of reducing that cohort's overall higher risk for COVID-19 infection. People who wish to get the [AstraZeneca vaccine through a pharmacy](#) need to book their shot with the pharmacy itself (vaccine supply subject to change).



Here is the April 20, data for Island Health:

- 33 people have newly-confirmed COVID-19, for a total of 4,344
- 0 new deaths, for a total of 33 COVID-19 related deaths in Island Health
- 326 people with active COVID-19 in Island Health – 29 in hospital – 5 in ICU/HAU
- 1 outbreak in Island Health facilities (Click [Active](#) under “Outbreaks” for more info)

In response to increased system pressures, Island Health has re-activated our Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) at the local, program, operations and executive-level to ensure we have quick and effective escalation and decision making in place. Through this structure, we are actively monitoring all parts of our Island Health system. We are prepared to scale down some services to scale up others if necessary, in order to ensure we are meeting the needs of the population we serve. We are also executing our pandemic Health Human Resources plan to ensure we have the right people, in the right place, at the right time.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

AstraZeneca

- The eligible age for the AstraZeneca COVISHIELD vaccine being administered at pharmacies across BC is now lowered to age 40.
- People who wish to get the [AstraZeneca vaccine through a pharmacy](#) need to book their shot with the pharmacy itself (vaccine supply subject to change).
- Adults 40 and older in COVID hotspots will also be prioritized for the AstraZeneca vaccine through special clinics, including in Dawson Creek, Surrey, North Delta, South Langley Township, West Abbotsford, Port Coquitlam, and Squamish.

New Public Health Restrictions

To further curb transmission of COVID-19, health officials have enacted several [new province-wide restrictions](#) in effect until May 25th, 2021:

- The variance allowing indoor religious gatherings and worship services between March 28 and May 13 is suspended
- Indoor low intensity group exercise classes are [cancelled](#)
- Restaurants, pubs and bars are [closed for indoor dining](#). Outdoor patio seating and take-out or delivery is allowed
- Workplaces with a COVID-19 exposure may be ordered to [close for a minimum of 10 days](#)
- Non-essential travel on and off Vancouver Island is strongly discouraged and people should strive to live, work and play close to home – BC Ferries will not allow recreational vehicles onto Vancouver Island.

[Dr. Bonnie Henry – Protecting People Presentation – April 19, 2021](#)

- Dr. Bonnie Henry provided a comprehensive analysis of COVID-19 cases and the demands on the healthcare system in British Columbia.

[BCCDC Epidemiology & Modelling Presentations](#)

- Latest information about the epidemiology of COVID-19 in the province and latest modelling to understand the impact of the virus and public health measures.

[End of Day Doses at Mass Immunization Sites](#)

- Remaining end of day doses at Island Health immunization clinics are not for patients or members of the public who have not scheduled their vaccination. [Read](#) about the ways people can register for vaccination, and share the word that it is not our practice to issue any remaining doses to people who go to immunization clinics without a booked appointment for vaccination. Island Health tightly manages our vaccine supply and ensures that any leftover vaccine is prioritized for eligible populations. We do not maintain a standby list.

[Primary Care Grand Rounds - Thursday, April 22, 2021 - 8:00am to 9:00am](#)

- *Vaccines and Variants: A COVID-19 Update with Dr. Reka Gustafson*
- Presenter: Dr. Reka Gustafson MD FRCPC
Vice President, Public Health and Wellness, Provincial Health Services Authority & Deputy Provincial Health Officer of British Columbia
- Why not make things more interesting and [ask a question?](#)



[BC Budget 2021 Health Spending Priorities](#)

In yesterday's budget, these health priorities were identified:

- Keeping people safe during the pandemic with \$900 million in new funding for testing, contact tracing, personal protective equipment and the largest vaccine rollout in B.C.'s history.
- Helping patients get faster access to surgeries and shorter wait times for diagnostic imaging.
- Better care for seniors, including thousands of new staff in long-term care facilities and improved home care.
- More mental health supports in schools, more Foundry centres, quadrupling the number of integrated child and youth support teams, and expanding the response to the overdose crisis – the largest investment in mental health and addictions services in B.C.'s history.
- Providing better care closer to home by building hospitals, including the new Surrey hospital and cancer centre, and new urgent and primary care centres in communities around B.C.
- Addressing systemic racism in health care and ensuring Indigenous peoples have access to culturally appropriate care.

LINKS, RESOURCES & FAQs

BCCDC Resources:

- [New Today](#): This section of the website highlights the latest guidance documents and updates to the website for health professionals.
- [About the vaccines](#)
- [Resources for Health Professionals](#)

Doctors of BC:

- [Info for doctors getting or giving the vaccine](#)
- [Updated toolkit for doctors' offices](#)
- <https://www.doctorsofbc.ca/news/cev-attestation-form-available-doctors>

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- [Reporting adverse events](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

- [ImmunizeBC FAQ](#)