

primary care UPDATE

February 10, 2021

Plans in Place - Awaiting COVID-19 Vaccine Supply

As of February 9, Island Health has delivered 28,497 first doses of vaccine, including 1,612 second doses. Island Health and all other BC Health Authorities have not received any additional doses this week and have limited vaccine supply.

This week we are continuing to provide second doses for LTC and AL staff and physicians and first doses for medical-surgical staff and physicians who provide direct patient care. We are also actively planning the rollout for seniors aged 80+ and indigenous seniors aged 65 and above, and as we get more clarity on vaccine supply and immunization plans, primary care providers will be an important partner in getting information out to the 80+ population.

We understand that your patients in Phase 2 are seeking specific instructions on how to receive their vaccinations. Dr Bonnie Henry addressed this in her update to the province on Monday, Feb. 10, noting: "People who are over age 80 in our community, in the coming days and weeks, you will receive the information you need to know where your clinic will be or how you will receive vaccine."

Late last week, Dr. Henry also indicated there is a chance public health restrictions might change by March, but there is no official expiry date on the extended orders in British Columbia.

ACTIVE COVID-19 CASES

- The number of COVID-19 cases as of Feb 9 is provided in Table 1:
- As of Feb 10th :
 - 0 new deaths, with 20 total COVID-19 related deaths in Island Health
 - 265 people with active COVID-19 in Island Health
 - 16 in hospital – 5 in ICU/HAU - 0 outbreaks in Island Health facilities
- The latest COVID-19 Island Health Dashboard is available here: <https://www.islandhealth.ca/sites/default/files/covid-19/documents/public-health-covid19-daily-dashboard.pdf>
- The BC Center for Disease Control released their latest epidemiological modeling (February 5th, 2021) for BC available here: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/CovidBriefing_20210205.pdf

Table 1: Number of COVID-19 cases* by Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA)**

	Active Cases	Total Cases
South Vancouver Island	64	525
Central Vancouver Island	162	1,061
North Vancouver Island	9	289
Island Health Total	235	1,875

VACCINATION

- The exact timing of Phase II of the [Immunization Plan](#) is subject to change based on vaccine supply. Many physicians have offered to aid in providing vaccines – we thank you! Currently, the limiting factor is vaccine supply, not the number of immunizers. The best way to support is by continuing to provide:
 - Patient Guidance - <https://www.islandhealth.ca/sites/default/files/about%20us/documents/pnl-no-325-covid-19-vaccination-update-1.pdf>

Phase 1 Dec 2020-Feb 2021	Phase 2 Feb-March 2021
High-risk population	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents, staff, and essential visitors to long-term care and assisted living Individuals assessed for/awaiting long-term care Hospital health care workers who may provide care for COVID-19 patients Remote and isolated Indigenous communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors aged 80+ who are not yet immunized Indigenous seniors aged 65+, Elders, and additional communities not yet immunized Hospital staff, community GPs and medical specialists not yet immunized Vulnerable populations in select congregated settings Staff in community home support and nursing services for seniors
Phase 3 April-June 2021	Phase 4 July-Sept 2021
General population	
People aged 79 to 60, in five year increments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 79 to 75 74 to 70 69 to 65 64 to 60 People aged 69 to 16 who are clinically extremely vulnerable 	People aged 59 to 18, in five year increments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 59 to 55 54 to 50 49 to 45 44 to 40 39 to 35 34 to 30 29 to 25 24 to 18
Once more vaccines are approved/available, people 64 to 18 yrs who are front-line essential workers or work in specific workplaces/industries may be included later in Phase 3.	

- Medical management and reporting of adverse events following immunization - <https://www.islandhealth.ca/sites/default/files/mho/newsletter/pnl-326-covid19-vaccination-update.pdf>
- The timeline for B.C.'s COVID-19 Vaccination Plan is dependent on vaccine supply and is subject to change due to vaccine availability; all people in B.C. recommended to receive the vaccine will have the opportunity in 2021.
- If, due to your work with long-term care or emergency departments, you have received your first dose, you will be contacted by Island Health's call centre when it is time for your second appointment. Second doses are being scheduled to take place 42 days after the first dose. The BCCDC is the best source for the [latest guidelines on first and second dose timelines](#).
- Primary care providers who did not receive their vaccine in Phase 1 will be eligible in Phase 2 (February and March).
- Island Health is actively planning the vaccination process for seniors aged 80+ and Indigenous seniors aged 65+.
- Many individuals in this age range, as well as their families and caregivers, are eager for more information about the process. Patients and families do not need to take any action at this time to secure a vaccination appointment. More information will be available in mid to late February. **We appreciate your support sharing this information with your office staff, patients and their families.**
- The B.C. government is developing a registration process for Phases 3 and 4. More information will be available in late February.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Adverse Events Following Immunization

- The Chief Medical Officer's latest Newsletter (Feb 3) provides important context on identifying and reporting an adverse event following immunization (AEFI): <https://www.islandhealth.ca/sites/default/files/mho/newsletter/pnl-326-covid19-vaccination-update.pdf>
- The BC Center for Disease Control (BCCDC) website provides comprehensive information, guidance with forms and procedures for the reporting of AEFIs. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/adverse-events-following-immunization>

Genomic Sequencing for COVID-19 Variants

Dr. Pamela Kibsey shared that whole genome sequencing is performed in Vancouver at BCCDC on COVID positive samples. Island Health sends all positive samples to BCCDC and WGS is done every day. The turnaround time is approximately two to four weeks but keep in mind there is a long backlog of tests. We can request samples from certain high-risk patients and from outbreaks to be fast tracked and this takes about 2 weeks. Currently we are investigating a faster method to confirm samples with Variants of Concern (VOC). All three variants from the UK, South Africa and Brazil have a unique gene sequence N501Y that we can pull out of the WGS. We are planning to implement this new PCR test into our molecular diagnostics laboratory once validation is complete. Reagents to perform this test are in short supply worldwide but we hope to secure enough so that we can run this PCR test daily on all our new positive samples.

COVID-19 Patient Discharge

The procedure for [Discharge of Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Patients](#) has been updated to better emphasize the use of the d/c checklist *prior to* discharge, and to better prepare and support patients who are being discharged to rural/remote and/or Indigenous communities who need to self-isolate with the needed resources.

Patient-Client Handouts

[My Safety Plan](#) updated to better emphasize the use of the d/c checklist *prior to* discharge, and to better prepare and support patients who are being discharged to rural/remote and/or Indigenous communities who need to self-isolate with the needed resources.

Screen, Assess and Prioritize

[COVID-19 Daily Screening chart form](#) has been updated to the current BCCDC symptom profile list for screening.

LINKS, RESOURCES & FAQs

Immunization Training Resources:

- Physicians who are looking for COVID-19 immunization education can access the following webinars on [LearningHub](#), which are about 45 minutes in total:
 - [BCCDC COVID-19 Immunization Webinars](#)
 - [COVID-19 Vaccine Overview](#)
 - [COVID-19 mRNA Vaccines](#)
- This training will be required for those supporting Health Authority Mass Immunization Clinics.

Additionally, physicians who are looking for a refresher course for immunization practice in general (i.e., not specific to COVID-19), the [Pearls for Immunization Practice](#) course is a great option, as it provides practical immunization information to assist immunizers in the practice setting as well as highlights important immunization resources. This online course is posted on the UBC Continuing Professional Development website, and is CME accredited.

Post COVID-19 Recovery:

- [The Post COVID-19 Interdisciplinary Clinical Care Network](#) coordinates care, research, and education for recovery. Visit the programs and services section of the Provincial Health Services Authority website.
- [Rapid Access to Consultative Expertise \(RACE\)](#): The provincial post COVID-19 Rapid Access to Specialist Consultation (RACE) line is staffed Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. Call 1-604-696-2131. An account is required. Specialty area name: COVID-GIM-Post-Infection Care.

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](#)
- [Reporting adverse events](#)

Doctors of BC:

- [Info for doctors getting or giving the vaccine](#)
- [Updated toolkit for doctors' offices](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

- [ImmunizeBC FAQ](#)