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From: CLRInfo
Sent: April 30, 2021 8:26 AM
To: Ken McCormack
Cc: Maria Sushkova
Subject: COVID-19 Update - April 30

Importance: High

[CLR Members,](#)

Please find the latest updates on the COVID-19 situation.

[Vaccination program update](#)

Immunization eligibility. Age-based program

Anyone 18 years or older may now register through the [Get Vaccinated](#) online vaccine registration system. As of Thursday, April 29, appointments are being made for people 58 years and older (born in 1963 or earlier), Indigenous people – 18 years and older, as well as people who have received a letter indicating they are clinically vulnerable.

First responder and worker program

Health authorities are contacting workplaces to arrange for workers to be vaccinated. This program continues to be phased in, focusing on communities that are at highest risk.

AstraZeneca pharmacy program

In addition to the age-based and worker programs, vaccinations are expanding for people aged 30 and up, who are now also eligible to receive their AstraZeneca vaccine at participating pharmacies, with supply. This is being done after a careful review of the evidence that initially led to a pause in the expanded AstraZeneca vaccine program for younger workers.

Participating pharmacies are listed on the BC Pharmacy Association website: <https://www.bcpharmacy.ca/resource-centre/covid-19/vaccination-locations>.

Starting May 1, people who received their first dose of AstraZeneca in a pharmacy will need to register for their second dose at <https://www.getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca/s/>. They will then get a notification once they are eligible to book their second dose. More information can be found at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/register#AstraZeneca>.

High-transmission communities

In addition, specific AstraZeneca vaccine clinics will be established in the 16 communities with the highest identified in-community transmission. People 30 and older who reside in those communities will be able to get vaccinated there. For a complete list of the 16 communities, as well as information to assist in determining if you reside in one of these communities, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/neighbourhood>.

[COVID-19 outbreak declared at Site C project](#)

Northern Health has declared a COVID-19 outbreak among workers at BC Hydro's Site C dam project in northeast B.C. 34 lab-confirmed cases have been identified. Of those, 13 are active, and 100 workers are isolating at home or on site.

Northern Health says the outbreak is limited to several clusters and, as a result, work on the dam project does not need to stop. BC Hydro says the outbreak is among employees of Peace River Hydro Partners, the main civil works contractor on the megaproject.

According to BC Hydro, there are currently 1,448 workers at the camp.

There have been 93 confirmed COVID-19 cases at the camp since March 2020. Northern Health says there are plans to mass vaccinate the Site C workforce as soon as possible. Earlier plans to vaccinate workers at the site were disrupted by changes to the province's guidelines for the AstraZeneca vaccine.

The outbreak declaration will remain in place for at least 28 days.

[State of emergency extended to continue B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#)

Apr 27, the Province of British Columbia has formally extended the provincial state of emergency, allowing health and emergency management officials to continue to use extraordinary powers under the Emergency Program Act (EPA) to support the Province's COVID-19 pandemic response. The state of emergency is extended through the end of the day on May 11, 2021.

The extension of the provincial state of emergency is based on recommendations from B.C.'s health and emergency management officials. The original declaration was made on March 18, 2020.

The Province continues, with the support of police and other enforcement officials, to use measures under the EPA to limit the spread of COVID-19, including issuing tickets for owners, operators and event organizers who host an event or gathering contravening the PHO's orders.

On July 10, 2020, the COVID-19 Related Measures Act came into force, enabling provisions created for citizens and businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to continue as needed should the provincial state of emergency end.

[Rapid COVID-19 point of care screening program](#)

Point-of-care (POC) test kits are now available to support select screening initiatives in B.C. POC tests are devices that can be used as a screening tool for COVID-19 in people without symptoms. These tests are rapid and provide results at the point of testing usually within 15 to 20 minutes.

POC tests are more portable, but they are generally less sensitive at detecting COVID-19 infection than standard testing and can miss individuals who have COVID-19, making them suitable for screening programs.

POC testing for COVID-19 has been used by Health Authorities in B.C. for public health reasons such as outbreak management for COVID-19. Access to publicly funded POC tests has now expanded to include industries and organizations meeting the indications outlined in [BC's Rapid Point of Care Testing Strategy](#).

At this time, nasal swab collection can be done by a health care professional or a trained individual. Self-collected nasal swabs are now permitted when observed by a health care professional or a trained individual.

When a POC screening program is in place, this does not replace or allow for the relaxing of existing public health measures. Among other things, it means that the use of personal protective equipment and physical distancing must be maintained.

Organizations interested in Rapid COVID-19 POC tests can email RapidPOCTeam@phsa.ca for an intake assessment. Priority will be given to industries and organizations whose settings or activities are associated with an increased risk of transmission of COVID-19 or outbreaks due to high-contact between workers including:

- Food processing plants
- Sites with congregate living
 - Farms with congregate housing
 - Work camps in the natural resources sector.

[Legislation for paid COVID-19 vaccination leave now in force](#)

Amendments to the Employment Standards Act providing workers with up to 3 hours of paid leave to get each dose of their COVID-19 vaccine are now in effect, retroactive to April 19, 2021.

Bill 3 is now law and ensures that an employee will not lose pay if they need time away from work to get vaccinated. Both full-time and part-time employees can take up to 3 hours of paid leave.

The legislation extends the regulatory change made on April 1, 2021, that provides unpaid job-protected leave for workers to take the time they need to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. This unpaid leave remains in place to supplement the new paid time off, for example to accompany dependant family members to get vaccinated or in the event a worker needs more than three hours of paid leave to travel to their vaccine appointment.

The amendment will be in place until repealed by regulation.

Learn More:

For more information on B.C.'s employment standards, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/time-off/taking-unexpected-time-off#covid>

[B.C.'s \\$500-million investment fund to help small, medium-sized businesses](#)

B.C. has introduced legislation to convert an investment initiative into a Crown corporation with the authority to make independent decisions aimed at stimulating economic recovery after the pandemic.

The \$500-million [InBC investment fund](#) was created last September as a way for the province to invest alongside the private sector to support small and medium-sized companies, which make up 98% of all businesses in B.C.

The fund aims to make investments that achieve a financial return by meeting the government's social, economic and environmental policy objectives that include building a more innovative, low-carbon economy.

The corporation is expected to be operational by the fall and would be led by a yet-to-be hired chief investment officer responsible for decisions without interference from outside parties or government.

Premier John Horgan says the fund will support start-ups, help promising companies scale up and attract world-class talent to the province, supporting economic recovery in all regions.

[Increased funding, expanded eligibility to help almost 20,000 businesses](#)

The B.C. government is adding more than \$75 million to the **Circuit Breaker Business Relief Grant**. The grant remains open to the 14,000 restaurants, bars, breweries, wineries, gyms and fitness facilities impacted by the March 31, 2021, provincial health officer's orders. The orders remain in place until May 25.

The grant is now also open to the more than 5,300 hotels, motels and other short-term accommodations impacted by the April 23 emergency order to restrict travel between B.C.'s regional zones.

With this increased funding in place, almost 20,000 businesses can apply for relief through the Circuit Breaker Business Relief Grant. Eligible businesses will receive up to \$20,000 to help with expenses like employee wages, rent, maintenance and utilities. The individual amount a business received will be based on the number of employees.

Learn More:

For more information on the Circuit Breaker Business Relief Grant, including the application process and eligibility, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/business-relief

For more information on the Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant program, including the application process and eligibility, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/business-recovery-grant>

For more information on StrongerBC, visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/>

[Government of Canada secures vaccine supply beyond 2021](#)

Apr 23, Anita Anand, Minister of Public Services and Procurement, announced that Canada has secured COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer for 2022 and 2023, with options to extend into 2024.

The agreement guarantees access to 65 million doses of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine, with access to up to 120 million more if all options are exercised. In addition to providing booster vaccine doses, the agreement provides flexibility to procure future COVID-19 vaccine formulations from Pfizer, such as those to protect against variants of concern and vaccines developed for children.

These doses are in addition to the 48 million doses of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine arriving before the end of September 2021 as part of Canada's existing agreement.

[Government of Canada funds two new projects to encourage vaccine uptake in Canada](#)

Apr 29, during National Immunization Awareness Week, Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, announced an investment of \$2.25 million through the Immunization Partnership Fund (IPF) for two projects to support vaccination efforts. These projects will support vaccine uptake by ensuring Canadians have access to credible information on vaccination, as well as equipping healthcare providers and Canadians with proven strategies to manage pain and fear during vaccination.

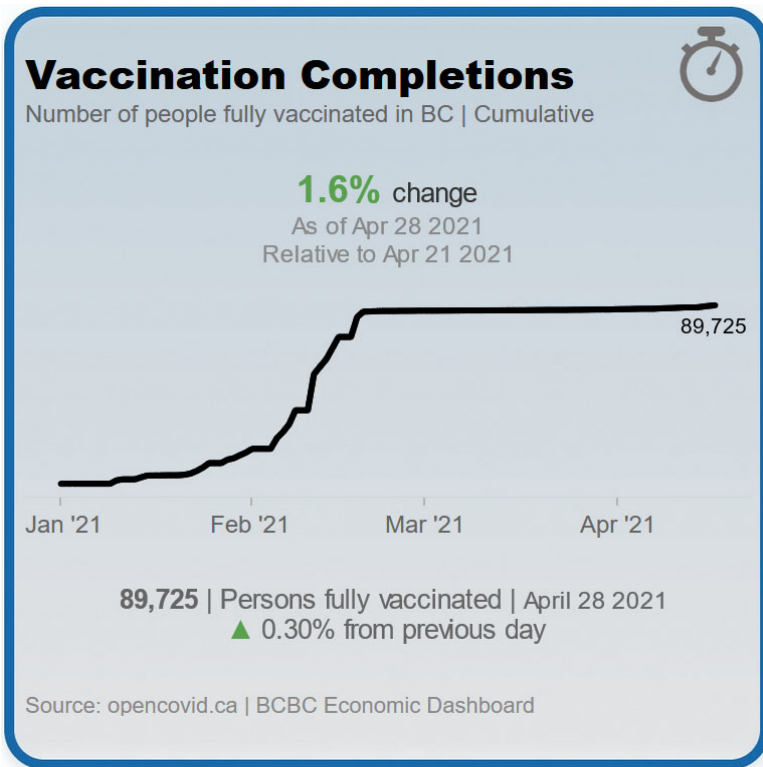
The Canadian Association of Science Centres, in partnership with COVID-19 Resources Canada and the Health Law Institute at the University of Alberta, have created **ScienceUpFirst**, a project to address misinformation in Canada by giving Canadians the tools to spread science-based information about COVID-19 and vaccines. This initiative aims to debunk misinformation with credible COVID-19 facts, as well as reach vulnerable populations with culturally relevant and scientifically accurate COVID-19 information.

The Government is also supporting the University of Toronto's **CARD (C-Comfort, A-Ask, R-Relax, D-Distract) System** project, which addresses fear of needles among adults through pain management. This initiative will design and implement pain mitigation strategies for adults during vaccination to reduce their fears and encourage them to get vaccinated. The information and strategies developed through this project will be shared among health care networks, and the general public, to help people feel more comfortable when it's their turn to get vaccinated.

[Provincial stats](#)

The information below is current as of 1pm on Thursday, April 29, 2021:

- New cases: 853
- Total cases: 128,742
- Deaths in last 24 hours: 1
- Total deaths: 1,577
- Total recoveries: 118,937 (92%)



Stay safe.

Ken McCormack | President & CEO

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