

## From EARNSCLIFFE

### B.C. COVID-19 Update – April 2, 2020

#### New updates:

- In a press conference this morning, Social Development and Poverty Reduction Minister Shane Simpson announced that the province is [implementing a series of temporary supports and supplements](#) for the province's most vulnerable, including:
  - \$300 per month COVID-19 crisis supplement for British Columbians living on income and disability assistance who aren't eligible for emergency federal support programs. This also applies to low-income seniors who get the \$49 B.C. Senior's Supplement and recipients of income assistance or disability assistance who reside in special care facilities.
  - Temporary exemption of the Federal Emergency Response Benefit for those that also receive Provincial income and disability assistance.
  - Those on disability assistance who receive a bus card/transit card – the government will be putting the cost of the card (\$52) on to their next upcoming cheque.
- The province's new [Economic Recovery Task Force](#) to support the B.C. economy during and after COVID-19 kicked off its work today.
  - The task force, which will help advise the cross-government socioeconomic response to the COVID-19 crisis, will take the form of a weekly conference call between Premier Horgan; Carole James, Minister of Finance; Michelle Mungall, Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness; other members of cabinet and leaders from business organizations, First Nations organizations and the not-for-profit sector.
- The BC government also released [further action to support essential service providers](#) during pandemic by ensuring they cannot be held liable for damages caused by exposure to COVID-19 while continuing to operate, so long as they are complying with orders from the provincial health officer and other authorities.

#### ***Dr. Bonnie Henry & Minister Adrian Dix:***

- Dr. Henry asks British Columbians to cease all non-essential travel, particularly to smaller, remote communities. Minister Dix says now is 'just not the time to travel' within British Columbia or anywhere else. "This is the time to stay close to home."
- Addressing upcoming religious celebrations (Easter, Passover, Ramadan), Dr. Henry asks people to start thinking about ways to recognize these holidays without in-person gatherings. Faith leaders will be meeting again with the Province next week on this.
- Dr. Henry says she believes the numbers are growing in a manageable way because of the work British Columbians are doing to social distance and follow restrictions.
- On personal protective equipment, Dix says he is encouraged by the Federal government's announcement this morning. Respirators have arrived in Canada along with more masks.

#### Existing measures:

- Premier John Horgan extends BC state of emergency to April 14, 2020.
- The Province announces BC Hydro's new, [targeted bill relief](#) in response to COVID-19.
- [COVID-19 Supply Hub](#) unveiled on April 1.

- [Compliance and Enforcement Guidance about Public Health Orders with respect to Physical Distancing](#) published.
- [COVID-19 Ethical Decision-Making Framework](#) published.
- [Guidance provided to industrial camps during COVID-19](#) published.
- All episodic vending markets (i.e. farmers markets, community markets) mandated to only sell food, prohibiting the sale of all other merchandise.
- Ministerial orders [issued March 26](#) to secure supply chain; list of essential services.
- As part of the government's \$5-billion COVID-19 Action Plan, Minister Dix and B.C. seniors advocate Isobel Mackenzie announced new funding for the United Way's Better at Home and bc211 services to further support seniors. Full release [found here](#).
- As part of the government's \$5-billion COVID-19 Action Plan, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Selina Robinson and Premier Horgan announced [support for renters and landlords](#)
- [The Province closes certain parks, recreation areas](#), which is in addition to a previous suspension of services and facilities in provincial parks, including visitor centres, nature houses, washrooms and day-use areas. In alignment with Parks Canada, all campgrounds are closed until April 30, 2020.
- BC Legislature passed two new pieces of legislation:
  - o Bill 15, Supply Act (No. 2), which provides funding for ministry operations for the first nine months of the 2020-21 fiscal year, set to begin on April 1; and
  - o Bill 16, Employment Standards Amendment Act (No. 2), which allows workers to immediately take unpaid, job-protected leave if they are unable to work for reasons related to COVID-19.
- Minister James announces \$5-billion [BC COVID-19 Action Plan](#) to support people, essential services, businesses, and the economy
- Restaurants temporarily permitted to use unemployed servers to deliver liquor products
- BC public health order issued to close all personal service businesses
- Dine-in service prohibited at all restaurants across BC; mandating take-out and delivery only
- MSP wait times waived for those returning to BC from outside of province or outside the country who have been out longer than allowed.
- Community level initiatives in place to support women's shelters and all of our shelter systems
- The Minister of Public Services and Solicitor General declares a provincial state of emergency
- The Province declares a public health emergency under the [Emergency Health Services Act](#)
- Bars and clubs instructed to close; restaurants may remain open if they abide by crowd size rules and distancing measures
- K1-12 classes suspended until further notice
- Now available online: BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool (Available [here](#))
- B.C. health authorities move to outbreak response Phase 2, postponing all non-urgent surgeries/procedures, which will result in the cancellation of thousands of elected surgeries; staff who provide scheduled surgeries to be moved over to assist with critical care
- Lions Gate Hospital moves to Phase 3, only accepting emergency cases

- B.C. pharmacists permitted to refill prescriptions without requiring an additional physician's note
- Physicians to receive compensation for providing virtual care services
- Restricting visitors in long-term care facilities to essential visitors only
- Prohibition on gatherings larger than 50 people
- All casinos across B.C. remain closed; effective 11:59pm March 16
- Dedicated phone service for updated COVID-19 information 1-888-COVID19, info available in over 100 languages

#### Stakeholder comments:

- **North Van hospital foundation raises \$640K for COVID fund in one week** (Jane Seyd, North Shore News: [nsnews.com](https://www.nsnews.com))
- **COVID-19 Updates** (News Release, BC Federation of Students: [wearebcstudents.ca](https://www.wearebcstudents.ca))
- **COVID-19: The latest practice issues and resources for registrants** (News Release, Engineers & Geoscientists of BC: [egbc.ca](https://www.egbc.ca))
- **Exploring Digital Outreach: An Introduction to Livestream Site Tours** (News Release, BC Museums Association: [museumassn.bc.ca](https://www.museumassn.bc.ca))
- **COVID-19 Update: April 1, 2020** (News Release, Alliance of Beverage Licensees BC: [ablebc.ca](https://www.ablebc.ca))
- **Child care for essential service designated workers – COVID-19** (News Release, BCGEU: [bcgeu.ca](https://www.bcgeu.ca))