

From EARNSCLIFFE

B.C. COVID-19 Update – April 6, 2020

New updates:

*1:30 PM - Monday April 6 - BC Public Health Update - Dr. Bonnie Henry and Minister Dix*

**Dr. Bonnie Henry, Chief Medical Officer**

In today's press conference, Dr. Henry said that we are in the middle of our critical weeks – we must do our commitment to 'hold the line.' She noted, "it has been challenging for people – we have to continue to be kind to healthcare workers, grocery stores, pharmacies – they are here to help.

Dr. Henry said that her focus for this week is to make sure we continue doing what we are doing to ensure distancing measures is prioritized. We need to support each other virtually, for example through websites such as [Anxiety Canada](#) and [Bounce Back BC](#).

On wearing non-medical PPE (i.e., face masks), Dr. Henry says that medical masks need to be saved for health care workers. Non-medical masks is effective in protecting others, but may not protect you. Dr. Henry says it is "the equivalent of sneezing into your sleeve"

Dr. Henry said that they are looking at impact based on socio-economic status and the impact that this will have on people. This data is not clear yet.

On public health updates, Dr. Henry said that there is a new outbreak at a federal corrections facility in BC.

**Minister Adrian Dix, Minister of Health**

Minister Dix said that the BC Government is doing their part to secure PPE, in an undoubtedly difficult environment. He noted that they received a small supply from the Federal Government. Dix said "we need to ensure that the PPE we are supplying to health care providers is safe for use" and that the government is focusing on ensuring all measures are taken.

The BC Government is continuing to work with the Government of Canada to secure PPE and Minister Dix said that he hopes that the BC Government can soon announce a partnership with the Government of Canada to do this.

Minister Dix said that we must reflect on the feelings of community members and families. Dr. Henry and Minister Dix gave thanks to the volunteer organization, Sikh Nation who is organizing a blood drive and working with Canadian Blood Services on COVID-19 efforts.

Existing measures:

- 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.
- 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.
  - \$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.
  - 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 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.
  - 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:
  - 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:

- **BC Ferries layoffs may leave workers in the lurch** (News Release, BCFMWU: [bcmfwu.com](http://bcmfwu.com))
- **Pulse-check survey shows many B.C. businesses in need of life support** (News Release, BC Chamber of Commerce: [bccchamber.org](http://bccchamber.org))
- **COVID-19: Survey shows BC businesses fear for future** (G. Luymes, Vancouver Sun: [vancouver.sun.com](http://vancouver.sun.com))
- **COVID-19 Resources for the BC Environment Industry** (News Release, BCEIA: [bceia.ca](http://bceia.ca))
- **School board wired for Tuesday public meeting** (T. Clarke, Prince George Citizen: [princegeorgecitizen.com](http://princegeorgecitizen.com))
- **Revelstoke tourism roundtable focuses on the future** (M. Jameson, Revelstoke Mountaineer: [revelstokemountaineer.com](http://revelstokemountaineer.com))

- **Service levels adjusted due to COVID-19 pandemic** (News Release, BC Ferries: [bcferries.com](http://bcferries.com))
- **Here's where Canadian artists and freelancers can find help during COVID-19 shutdowns** (CBC Arts: <https://www-cbc-ca.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/www.cbc.ca/amp/1.5503360>)
- **COVID-19 Updates & Resources** (Music BC: <https://www.musicbc.org/resources/covid-19/>)
- **COVID19 Response** - a collaborative task force bringing together arts, culture, and heritage leaders and organizations in Canada to develop and implement shared strategies that respond to and evaluate the impacts of COVID-19 across regional and disciplinary silos (Arts Pond: <https://artspond.com/actions/COVID19/>)
- **COVID-19 Update for the Creative Industries of BC** (Creative BC: <https://www.creativebc.com/about-us/news/covid-19>)