

Joleen Kaminski

From: CLRInfo
Sent: August 6, 2021 8:37 AM
To: Ken McCormack
Cc: Maria Sushkova
Subject: COVID-19 and Wildfire Situation Update - Aug 6

Importance: High

[CLR Members,](#)

Please find the recent updates on the COVID-19 and Wildfire situation.

[Vax for BC launches to get more people vaccinated, recognize pandemic heroes](#)

Working with health authorities throughout British Columbia, the Province is making it easier than ever for people to get vaccinated with the launch of **Vax for BC**, the next step in the Province's campaign to help as many eligible people as possible get vaccinated.

Beginning on Tuesday, July 27, 2021, and lasting throughout the month of August, community events, vax vans and mobile clinics are up and running in dozens of communities in B.C. to get more people vaccinated with their first and second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. While registration and booking using the provincial Get Vaccinated system is still encouraged, these events will allow eligible people to walk-in and receive a vaccine without a scheduled appointment.



In addition to drop-in events, Vax for BC provides a chance for people to share messages and notes of gratitude to pandemic heroes over the last 18 months. British Columbians are encouraged to share written messages online, in their windows at home and in-person at vaccination locations.

Along with regional events held by health authorities, Vax for BC also includes the first provincewide Walk-in Wednesday. On Aug. 4, 2021, clinics throughout the province reserved approximately 20,000 doses for walk-in vaccinations for anyone 12 years and older still needing

their first dose or people eligible to receive their second dose.

As more British Columbians get vaccinated through Vax for BC, the Province will gradually refocus its vaccine efforts from mass clinics onto programs targeting the hardest to reach people. In the weeks ahead, B.C.'s vaccine strategy will shift toward more local public health clinics, community outreach efforts, mobile programs and pop-up clinics. These will take place within specific communities and populations throughout the province, where the need is greatest.

A full list of Vax for BC events happening throughout the province is listed in the backgrounder section of the news release and is also available online: gov.bc.ca/vaxforbc.

Learn More:

People throughout B.C. can find their nearest Vax for BC event online by visiting: www.gov.bc.ca/VaxForBC

To register to get a first or second dose of COVID-19 vaccine, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/getvaccinated.html>

For immunization information, visit the BCCDC's website: www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine

For more information on what to expect when you go to get vaccinated for COVID-19, visit: www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine/getting-a-vaccine

To learn more about BC's Restart – a four-step plan to bring B.C. back together, visit: <https://www.gov.bc.ca/restartbc>

[Walk-in Wednesday clinics vaccinate thousands; B.C. COVID-19 pandemic update](#)

On Aug. 4, 2021, the Province set aside 20,000 doses for walk-in vaccinations for anyone 12 and older who needed their first dose, or for people eligible for their second dose. More than 80% of those doses were administered, with 37.6% being first doses.

As of Thursday, Aug. 5, 2021, 81.7% (3,785,216) of eligible people 12 and older in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 68.4% (3,172,287) have received their second dose. In addition, 82.6% (3,571,104) of all eligible adults in B.C. have received their first dose and 70.6% (3,053,283) have received their second dose.

B.C. is reporting 402 new cases of COVID-19, for a total of 151,375 cases in the province. There are currently 2,066 active cases of COVID-19 in the province, and 147,510 people who tested positive have recovered. Of the active cases, 58 individuals are currently in hospital and 21 are in intensive care. The remaining people are recovering at home in self-isolation.

Since December 2020, the Province has administered 6,965,062 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines.

Learn More:

For new health measures in the Central Okanagan, visit: http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/7-28_Interior_Health.pdf

People throughout B.C. can find their nearest Vax for BC event online by visiting: www.gov.bc.ca/VaxForBC

For information on breakthrough cases, visit: http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/7-27_breakthrough_cases.pdf or see the BC Centre for Disease Control's (BCCDC) weekly data summary: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/data#summary>

Detailed data is posted daily on the BCCDC dashboard: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/data> or: www.bccdc.ca

To register to be immunized or to learn about getting your second dose, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/getvaccinated.html> or: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/dose-2>

To learn about BC's Restart plan, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restart>

For recent modelling, visit: http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/6-28_PHO_presentation.pdf

For the provincial health officer's orders and guidance, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

For guidance on restrictions, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/restrictions>

[Provincial state of emergency extended](#)

The B.C. government has extended the provincial state of emergency through the end of the day on Aug. 17, to support the ongoing co-ordinated response to the wildfire situation and ensure public safety.

As of the morning of Tuesday, Aug. 3, 254 wildfires are burning in B.C., with 64 evacuation orders affecting approximately 4,305 properties. There are 99 evacuation alerts affecting approximately 21,049 properties.

The Province's decision to extend the provincial state of emergency will support the significant number of people who remain under evacuation orders and alerts, and continues to support the potential of a mass evacuation.

Current weather forecasts may lead to more severe fire behaviour and the potential for more evacuations. While extraordinary powers under the Emergency Program Act are not needed at this time, the declaration gives the Province the ability to move quickly, if the need arises.

Learn More:

For information on evacuation orders and alerts, visit Emergency Info BC: <https://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/>

Keep up to date on the provincial wildfire situation: www.bcwildfire.ca

British Columbians help reduce COVID-19 impacts on Province's finances

The strength of B.C.'s economy and the resilience of British Columbians has helped to keep provincial finances on more stable ground during the pandemic.

The province ended the 2020-21 fiscal year with continued strong credit ratings and a deficit of \$5.5 billion, which is \$2.7 billion lower than projected in Budget 2021. This is attributed to some sectors of the economy faring better than worst-case scenarios, which resulted in lower-than-expected spending and higher-than-expected revenues.

Spending on COVID-19 support and recovery programs reached \$10.1 billion by the end of March 2021.

Overall, the Province's expenses increased by \$8.6 billion over fiscal 2019-20, with increased investments in health, community supports, K-12 education and social services. Revenue increased by \$3.5 billion over revenues in 2019-20. Much of the higher revenues can be attributed to some sectors proving resilient during the pandemic, federal contributions for COVID-19 support and more savings and higher earnings at ICBC.

While a provincial deficit is expected for the next several years due to the severity of the pandemic's impacts and the need to support people and businesses to seize the opportunities that recovery will offer, the ministry is forecasting declining deficits over the next three years.

Public Accounts 2020-21 show B.C. is in good financial standing, with affordable debt levels at the end of the fiscal year. British Columbia continues to lead the country in credit ratings from the major international ratings agencies.

Learn More:

To access Public Accounts online, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/finances/public-accounts>

The technical PowerPoint presentation is available online: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/PA21.pdf>

Have your say on B.C.'s permanent paid sick leave

British Columbians are invited to provide input into the development of permanent paid sick leave. In addition to outreach to key stakeholders and Indigenous partners, a public consultation process is now open and can be accessed through government's engagement site.

Two phases of consultation include:

- Phase 1 (Aug. 5 to Sept. 14) – surveys will gather information from employers and workers on the kinds of paid illness and injury leaves currently provided, and how they are meeting workers' needs; and
- Phase 2 (Sept. 20 to Oct. 25) – informed by the surveys, options will be prepared for various paid sick leave models, including the numbers of paid days and other supports, and will be posted for public feedback and input.

In May 2021, amendments to the Employment Standards Act laid the groundwork for establishing minimum standards for a permanent paid sick leave entitlement. Following the public engagement process, paid sick leave will be established through a regulation, and come into effect on Jan. 1, 2022.

Learn More:

To participate in the consultation process, visit: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/paidsickleave/>

For more information on B.C.'s employment standards, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards>

Federal government extends COVID-19 benefits and business supports to support stronger economic recovery

July 30, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Chrystia Freeland, and Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, announced the extension of COVID-19 support measures for Canadians and Canadian businesses. These extensions include:

- Extending the eligibility period for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy and Lockdown Support until October 23, 2021, and increasing the rate of support employers and organizations can receive during the period between August 29 and September 25, 2021.
- Extending the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB), the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB), and the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB) until October 23, 2021.
- Increasing the maximum number of weeks available for the CRB, by an additional 4 weeks, to a total of 54 weeks, at a rate of \$300 per week, and ensuring it is available to those who have exhausted their employment insurance (EI) benefits.

In addition, the government is proposing to offer businesses greater flexibility when calculating the revenue decline used to determine eligibility for the wage and rent subsidy programs and the new Canada Recovery Hiring Program. The government is also releasing draft legislation that provides further clarity on [previously announced](#) changes to the wage subsidy for furloughed employees.

More details on the extension and these proposed changes to COVID business supports are available in the [backgrounder associated with the announcement](#).

[Investing in skills training for B.C.'s workers](#)

British Columbians whose jobs have been affected by COVID-19, and people facing barriers to employment, can get new skills training and job opportunities through new training projects.

Part of B.C.'s Economic Recovery Plan, the funding of \$95 million is being allocated to organizations around B.C. to provide skills training and employment services and supports for over 9,000 British Columbians.

Skills training providers, service organizations, and industry employers are providing opportunities via three provincewide funding streams, including:

- Community Workforce Response Grant program: \$33 million to train 3,700 British Columbians affected by COVID-19 for in-demand work and jobs with changing skill requirements. Short-term skills training projects are prioritized for low-skilled workers, youth, women, older workers 55+, Indigenous people, recent immigrants, people of colour and those with employment history in an industry or sector impacted by the pandemic.
- The B.C. Employer Training Grant program: \$2.8 million to train British Columbians who are, or were, working in sectors that have been affected by COVID-19, and to support training for persons with disabilities.
- Skills Training for Employment programs: \$59.2 million for 117 new agreements that will provide skills training leading to employment, along with relevant wraparound supports, to 5,200 British Columbians in 2021-22. The new programs also include Industry Training Authority pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship trades training for persons with disabilities and pre-apprenticeship trades training programs for youth and equity-seeking groups.

Learn More:

For more information about all available Community Workforce Response Grant projects, visit:

<https://www.workbc.ca/getmedia/e42bc3c1-af89-49b2-9d1a-1d09f7dec0ff/CWRG-Economic-Recovery-Projects.aspx>

For employers seeking funding to train new or existing staff, see B.C. Employer Training Grant:

<https://www.workbc.ca/Employer-Resources/BC-Employer-Training-Grant.aspx>

[B.C. COVID-19 cases surge in young people as health officials urge more people to get vaccinated](#)

Health officials in British Columbia said Thursday the province is experiencing a surge of COVID-19 cases in younger people who are unvaccinated or have one dose and urged residents to get their shots one day after walk-in clinics opened throughout B.C.

Cases are increasing at the highest rate among young people, according to [the most recent statistics](#), with more than half of the new cases in the last week of July among people aged 15-29. The advice to get vaccinated comes after experts say the number of cases caused by the delta variant is doubling every seven to 10 days in the province.

Dr. Bonnie Henry said many young people have not yet had the chance to get immunized and that new walk-in clinics would offer "quick and easy" ways for them to access vaccines.

Henry said 95% of people who have COVID-19 right now in B.C. have not been vaccinated or have received only one dose. She also said everyone in critical care in B.C.'s Interior were people who haven't yet been vaccinated.

Following the news that Quebec [would be implementing](#) a vaccine passport system in the coming weeks, Henry would neither endorse one nor rule it out, but said all options were being considered.

Henry said officials would not deny people essential services based on their vaccination status, but she was clear that the province needed to make sure the health-care system is protected.

Henry said the delta variant and the gamma variant first seen in Brazil were now prevalent across most of the province, and that officials were monitoring how the mutations spread among young children.

[WorkSafeBC: Interior Health announces new health measures to contain COVID-19 outbreak](#)

Interior Health (IH) has declared a COVID-19 outbreak in the Central Okanagan due to significant increases in COVID-19 transmission, and is announcing measures to contain the outbreak.

IH's website outlines measures that took effect at midnight on July 28 and that will remain in place for at least 14 days and until the region experiences lower cases and higher vaccination rates.

For more details, read [Interior Health's announcement](#) and the Medical Health Officer's [Order on Mandatory Face Coverings - Central Okanagan](#).

What employers need to do

As part of the management of communicable disease in their workplace, employers are required to monitor for communicable disease related information from their regional public health officials and the provincial health officer related to their area and industry, and to follow that guidance and direction should additional measures be necessary in their workplace. Learn more about [responding to elevated risk](#) and [additional measures](#) you may need to follow in these instances.

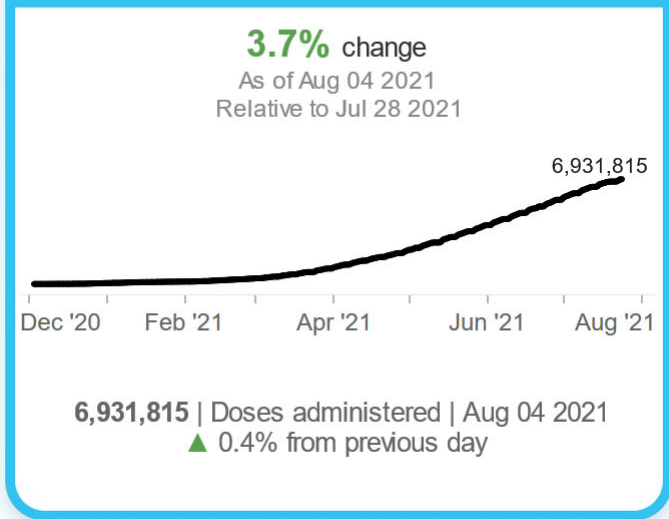
Employers in the Central Okanagan are required to follow a mandatory mask order for people 12 and older in all public indoor spaces in the communities of Peachland, West Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, Kelowna, and Lake Country. See [Interior Health's announcement](#) for specific details.

All employers are reminded that the risks associated with COVID-19 are still present, and that a sustained focus on communicable disease prevention is an essential part of keeping workers and the public safe. WorkSafeBC has a [communicable disease prevention guide for employers](#) that provides information and support on how to ensure your plan responds to elevated risks of communicable disease, such as COVID-19, that may occur at a local or regional level or within a workplace.

WorkSafeBC will share any specific workplace health and safety guidance stemming from these measures, but continue to visit the [Interior Health website](#) for the latest updates.

[Immunization dashboard](#)

Vaccination in BC is levelling off



Stay safe.

Ken McCormack | President & CEO

#

97 Sixth Street,
New Westminster, BC V3L 5H8

📞 604-524-4911

📠 604-524-3925 📠 604-968-4911

✉ kenm@clra-bc.com 🌐 www.clra-bc.com

CONFIDENTIALITY DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this transmission may contain privileged and confidential information. It is intended for review only by the person(s) named above. Dissemination, distribution or duplication of this communication is strictly prohibited by all recipients unless expressly authorized otherwise. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply email and destroy all copies of the original message. Thank you.