

Joleen Kaminski

From: CLRInfo
Sent: August 19, 2020 8:55 AM
Cc: Paul Strangway; Joleen Kaminski
Subject: COVID 19 Update: August 18, 2020

CLR Members,

Unfortunately, it appears that many British Columbians are not getting the message about how serious a second wave of the pandemic in BC can be.

Health authorities and officials are warning that if BC continues on its current upward trend in cases of COVID-19, there will soon be more new cases of COVID-19 than at the pandemic's previous peak. The province's latest modelling numbers, released last week, showed that cases will continue to rise into September if people don't change their behaviour. B.C.'s provincial health officer said last week that the biggest concern continues to be indoor private parties and gatherings with people from outside their bubble. On Tuesday, the B.C. government once again extended the provincial state of emergency, which will now remain in place until the end of the day on Sept. 1, 2020.

Here is the latest update on cases in Canada and BC:

Location	Confirmed	New cases (last 60 days)	Cases per 1 million people	Recovered	Deaths
 <u>Worldwide</u>	21,991,954		2,828	13,981,129	777,018
 Canada	123,154		3,243	109,357	9,045
British Columbia	4,677		1,010	3,704	198

Federal Updates

Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, issued the following statement yesterday as an update on COVID-19 in Canada:

"There have been 122,087 cases of COVID-19 in Canada, including 9,026 deaths. 89% of people have now recovered. Labs across Canada have tested 4,778,360 people for COVID-19 to date. Over the past week, an average of 43,000 people were tested daily, with 0.9% testing positive. Over the last several weeks, national daily case counts have ranged between 350 to 500 cases, with over 380 cases being reported daily during the most recent seven days.

*As public health authorities and all Canadians continue with efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19, we are closely monitoring disease activity indicators such as daily case counts, number of cases hospitalised and percentage of people testing positive. Currently, our efforts indicate that we are keeping COVID-19 spread under manageable control but **the virus is still circulating in Canada and we must not let down our guard. The shape of our national epidemic curve over time, including what impact COVID-19 might have this fall, will be influenced by our collective commitment and actions to keep infection rates low.***

*Epidemic modelling tells us that COVID-19 control depends on how quickly and completely local public health authorities can detect and isolate cases and trace and quarantine contacts to limit the spread of the virus. At the same time, our modelling shows us that **public health authorities can't control COVID-19 alone.** While we continue to increase capacity across the country to test and trace, **individual Canadians remain our first line of defense to limit the spread and impact of COVID-19.***

Our epidemic modelling simulations, and the future scenarios that they predict could happen, are influenced by the number of close contacts between individuals. The fewer close contacts people have, the lower the overall number of cases and contacts that local public health authorities need to follow up and manage if an exposure does occur. Protecting this capacity is vital to ensuring chains of transmission can continue to be interrupted quickly enough to keep COVID-19 at a "slow burn" and prevent a large resurgence of cases.

There are several public health actions and everyday individual level precautions that everyone can take to reduce the risk of getting infected and spreading the virus to others who may be at high risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes. Understanding the risks, following local public health guidance and taking appropriate precautions will help us make informed decisions to keep us, our families, and our communities safer. You can find additional information and guidance at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2020/07/information-and-resources-on-covid-19-epidemiology-and-reducing-your-risks-for-infection-and-spreading-the-virus.html>."

Provincial Updates

We have been providing updates to you on the changes that were proposed to the Workers' Compensation Act under Bill 23. I appreciate though that unless you have been following it closely from the beginning, it can be difficult to digest. The CLR are members of an Employer's Forum and below is the summary that was put together by that group. I hope you find it helpful.

*On Friday, August 14, **Bill 23** received royal assent. The new legislation, which introduces changes to the Workers Compensation Act (the Act), contains 34 provisions that include housekeeping amendments and changes relating to compensation, assessment, and occupational health and safety matters. Those changes include the following, effective immediately:*

- *Preventative health care may be provided on pending claims, if medical evidence supports that without such services or supplies, the worker is at risk of a significant deterioration in health.*
- *An explicit reference to mental disorders has been added to section 151(3) of the Act in order to distinguish mental disorders from personal injuries for the purpose of the one-year time limit for filing a compensation claim.*
- *WorkSafeBC is able to reconsider a decision after 75 days have elapsed, if the decision contains an obvious error or omission.*
- *The 90-day waiting period regarding the effective date of the presumption relating to infections caused by communicable viral pathogens, including COVID-19, has been removed. (WorkSafeBC's Board of Directors approved the addition of the presumption to Schedule 1 of the Act at its July 22 meeting).*
- *WorkSafeBC can demand that a third party who is indebted (or is likely to become indebted) to an employer that owes an amount to WorkSafeBC pays all or part of that debt directly to WorkSafeBC.*
- *Directors of a corporation at the time a debt to WorkSafeBC is accrued are now jointly and severally liable with that corporation for the debt.*

- *The court may issue search and seizure warrants to WorkSafeBC where there are reasonable grounds to believe an offence against the Act has been or is being committed.*
- *The laying of an information in respect of an offence no longer requires approval of the Board. (The laying of an information is what allows a prosecution to commence.)*

As of Jan. 1, 2021, the following three provisions will take effect:

- *The maximum insurable earnings threshold and maximum wage rate will increase to \$100,000 (from \$87,100) for 2021.*
- *Permanent partial disability benefits will be based on the higher of a loss of earnings or loss of function calculation.*
- *Retirement age for a worker may be determined after a worker has reached age 63.*

For further information please see the Ministry of Labour's <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020LBR0020-001278>. We will provide further details on how WorkSafeBC will be implementing these changes as we move forward.

Please stay safe and well.

Sincerely,

Ken McCormack | President & CEO

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