

## Joleen Kaminski

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**From:** CLRInfo  
**Sent:** April 1, 2021 12:20 PM  
**To:** Ken McCormack  
**Cc:** Maria Sushkova  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Update - April 1

**Importance:** High

### [CLR Members,](#)

Please find important updates on the COVID-19 situation:

#### [Three-week circuit breaker to bend the curve, protect people](#)

Effective midnight, Mar 30, the provincial health officer amended the provincial public health orders to address rising COVID-19 case counts, protect people and communities and help break the chain of COVID-19 transmission.

New and amended orders and guidelines are in effect through April 19, 2021, and include:

- For restaurants, bars and pubs, all food and liquor-serving premises must only provide take-out or delivery service. Dine-in service is prohibited, except for outdoor patios. People dining on patios should do so with their immediate household or core bubble.
- Indoor, adult group fitness activities of any kind are also paused. Gyms and fitness centres are restricted to individual or one-on-one activities only.
- The previously announced class variance for limited indoor worship services has been suspended. Outdoor worship services under the current variance may continue.
- Travel continues to be limited to essential travel, work or medical reasons only.
- Whistler-Blackcomb ski resort is closed through to April 19, 2021, to address and prevent community spread related to non-essential travel.
- All workers are strongly encouraged to work from home, where possible.
- Public health guidance for schools has also been amended to support and encourage students down to Grade 4 to wear masks while at school.

To learn about amended and existing provincewide restrictions, [visit](#).

To learn about B.C.'s COVID-19 Immunization Plan, visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/bcseniorsfirst](http://www.gov.bc.ca/bcseniorsfirst) and: [www.gov.bc.ca/covidvaccine](http://www.gov.bc.ca/covidvaccine).

For technical immunization information, visit the BC Centre for Disease Control's website: [www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine](http://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](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine/getting-a-vaccine).

#### [Immunize BC, pharmacists move up vaccines for ages 55-65 on Lower Mainland](#)

A partnership between Immunize BC and community pharmacists to make the COVID-19 AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine available to those aged 55 to 65 living on the Lower Mainland launched on Wednesday, March 31.

To help combat high numbers of COVID-19 cases in the Lower Mainland, Immunize BC is partnering with community pharmacies in the Vancouver Coastal and Fraser health regions to provide vaccinations ahead of B.C.'s COVID-19 Immunization Plan's age-based schedule.

Beginning March 31, those aged 55 to 65 may call their local pharmacy and book an appointment to receive the vaccine. Drop-in service may be an option at the more than 150 participating pharmacies.

A complete list of participating pharmacies can be found here: <http://www.bcpharmacy.ca/resource-centre/covid-19/vaccination-locations>.

**More resources:**

- [Find a pharmacy near you](#)
- [Book your appointment](#)
- [Fraser Health Immunization clinic locations](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal Health Immunization clinics](#)
- [Getting a vaccine: find out what to expect when you get a COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- Stay Informed: [gov.bc.ca/COVID](http://gov.bc.ca/COVID), [bccdc.ca](http://bccdc.ca)

**[Use of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine in younger adults](#)**

On March 29, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization recommended an immediate pause in the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine in all individuals less than 55 years of age in Canada. This is based on evidence of rare instances of vaccine-induced pro-thrombotic immune thrombocytopenia (VIPIT) following AstraZeneca vaccination reported in Europe, with associated high case fatality and related serious outcomes.

Following population-based analyses of VIPIT, assessing the risk of COVID-19 by age, and considering availability of other vaccines (i.e., mRNA vaccines), from what is known at this time there is substantial uncertainty about the benefit of providing AstraZeneca vaccine to adults under 55 years of age given the potential risks associated with VIPIT. At this time the use of AstraZeneca vaccine to adults under 55 years of age is paused, pending further risk/benefit analysis. Adults 55 years of age and older may still be offered the AstraZeneca vaccine, given the increased risk of hospitalization and death due to COVID-19 in this population and since VIPIT reports have been even rarer in that age group. While these reported adverse events have occurred primarily in women, investigations are ongoing as it is possible that more women received the AstraZeneca vaccine making it difficult to assess risk based on sex.

The BC Centre for Disease Control published the updated “**Use of AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions**” on their website. The document can be found [here](#).

**[Job-protected leave for workers to get COVID-19 vaccine](#)**

Apr 1, the Province made regulatory improvements under the Employment Standards Act to quickly bring in a job-protected leave. Part-time and full-time workers will be able to take the time needed to travel and receive the vaccine or to take a dependent family member to receive the vaccine.

In addition to these regulatory improvements, the government will explore options to provide workers with paid leave while getting their vaccine. This will include consultations with B.C.’s business community, labour organizations and workers who have been hit hardest by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This regulatory change also includes expanding the job-protected leave for reasons related to COVID-19, brought in last March, to fully align with the federal Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit and the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit. Changes were made by the federal government in the months since B.C. introduced the COVID-19 related leave, so these changes ensure job protection for all eligible federal benefit programs.

A worker can now take job-protected leave if they need to care for other family members because of COVID-19, and not only a child or dependent adult as previously defined. Improvements also allow workers with underlying conditions, who are undergoing treatment or who have contracted another illness that makes them more susceptible to COVID-19, to take the leave.

**Learn More:**

To learn about B.C.’s COVID-19 Immunization Plan and rollout, [visit](#).

For more information on B.C.’s employment standards, [visit](#).

## [The Government of Canada reminds travellers returning to Canada of COVID-19 border measures](#)

Mar 30, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) reminded travellers and returning Canadian residents about what to expect at the border.

Travellers should be aware of the following mandatory requirements:

### 1/ Travellers **must use [ArriveCAN](#) to provide COVID-19-related information:**

- travel and contact information;
- [quarantine plan](#) (unless exempt); and,
- COVID-19 symptom self-assessment.

### 2/ Travellers flying to Canada must also submit their reference code for a [confirmed three-night reservation at a government-authorized hotel](#).

Unless exempt, all travellers five years of age or older entering Canada by air or land need to show proof of a:

- negative COVID-19 molecular test (not an antigen test) result taken within 72 hours before their scheduled flight or arrival at the land border crossing; or
- positive COVID-19 molecular test taken between 14 and 90 days before their scheduled flight or arrival at the land border crossing.

### 3/ Get tested when arriving in Canada.

### 4/ Complete their day 10 test and quarantine.

#### **Associated links**

- [Find out if you can enter Canada](#)
- [Flying to Canada requirements checklist](#)
- [Driving to Canada requirements checklist](#)
- [Temporary import of US-plated vehicles into Canada](#)
- [Border wait times](#)
- [Switch Health account set-up and test kit registration](#)

## [Pfizer agrees to move up delivery of 5 million doses; Johnson & Johnson doses expected to arrive in April](#)

Mar 30, Ottawa announced that millions of additional vaccine doses are expected to arrive from three approved vaccine makers over the spring.

Pfizer-BioNTech agreed to move up delivery of five million vaccine doses to Canada from late summer to June following negotiations with the federal government. The accelerated timeline means Pfizer now plans to ship 17.8 million doses between April and June — more than a million doses each week in April and May and another two million per week in June.

Procurement Minister Anita Anand also said the first doses of Johnson & Johnson's one-shot vaccine will arrive at the end of April. While the exact amounts and dates for the Johnson & Johnson product remain uncertain, it's the first indication of a delivery schedule since that vaccine was approved by Health Canada over three weeks ago.

Canada also will receive an additional 4.4 million doses of the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine by the end of June, Anand said. Those doses will come from the manufacturer itself, the Serum Institute of India and the COVAX global vaccine initiative.

More than 3.2 million doses are expected to arrive this week alone, bringing the total number of doses delivered to Canada since vaccinations began in December to 9.5 million.

Almost half of the doses arriving this week come from a shipment of the AstraZeneca-Oxford COVID-19 vaccine that landed on Mar 30 from the United States — one day after provinces suspended its use in people under the age of 55.

Without counting the Johnson & Johnson doses, Anand said Canada is on track to receive 44 million doses of vaccine by Canada Day.

### [Government of Canada invests in new research to address COVID-19 variants](#)

Mar 26, to further accelerate efforts to understand and respond to the virus variants, Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, announced an investment of \$14.3 million from the Government of Canada, through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), to support new research on the COVID-19 virus variants. This includes \$5.3 million in supplementary funding for 90 ongoing COVID-19 projects and \$9 million for a new national network that will coordinate and align variants research throughout the country.

The Coronavirus Variants Rapid Response Network (CoVaRR-Net ) will be led by Dr. Marc-André Langlois from the University of Ottawa. Dr. Langlois and his team will collaborate with the Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Lab (NML), the Canadian COVID-19 Genomics Network (CanCOGeN), provincial and territorial public health labs, and other national and international bodies. CoVaRR-Net will enable the rapid assessment of both the immune response to the virus variants and whether these variants are resistant to existing vaccines. The findings will provide decision makers with guidance regarding drug therapy, vaccine effectiveness, and other public health strategies.

#### **Quick facts**

- On February 12, 2021, the Government of Canada announced an investment of \$53 million in an integrated Variants of Concern Strategy.
- As part of the Strategy, CIHR is funding \$14.3 million in new research on the COVID-19 variants and supporting Coronavirus Variants Rapid Response Network (CoVaRR-Net), a new national network that will coordinate and align research on variants throughout the country.
- The funding announced on Mar 26 is in addition to the approximately \$250 million that CIHR has invested to date in over 400 other COVID-19 research projects.
- CIHR will support additional research related to variants and other COVID-19 priorities through an [ongoing competition](#) that will invest up to \$119 million more in COVID-19 research.
- These investments are in addition to the \$40 million the Government of Canada contributed to support the creation of CanCOGeN in April 2020 to help understand the genetic variations of the virus as it evolves.

### [Made-in-Canada vaccines: Canada injects millions in future Sanofi plant](#)

The \$415 million in federal funding, announced Wednesday, will go towards helping Sanofi build a new vaccine production facility in Toronto, which would eventually have the tools to produce, fill-and-finish, and inspect vaccines on a large scale.

Sanofi, which already has a manufacturing location in North York, Ont., will also receive \$55 million from the Ontario government. The company itself will provide more than \$455 million to create and maintain 1,225 jobs, and invest at least \$79 million a year to fund Canadian research and development. Influenza vaccines will be the main product produced at the new Toronto facility.

The government says, once completed, the plant will have the capacity to produce enough vaccine doses to “support the entire Canadian population within approximately six months” of a global influenza-strain pandemic being declared.

### [Applications open for hiring tax credit](#)

Applications are now open online for the Increased Employment Incentive (IEI), which was announced as a part of StrongerBC: BC's Economic Recovery Plan.

This credit sets aside up to \$190 million for businesses that were able to hire new workers, hire back people who were let go or increase workers' hours during the last three months of 2020.

With 2020 payrolls finalized, businesses will know if they are eligible for a credit that could equal up to 15% of any increase in total eligible payroll paid in the last quarter of 2020. The tax credit could be as much as \$2,230 per employee.

The credit is available to all employers in B.C., except for public institutions and political parties. For employers required to pay the employer health tax (EHT), the credit will be first applied to any EHT outstanding and will be available as a refund to the extent the credit exceeds the amount of EHT or other debt owed to government.

Businesses that are registered and liable for EHT are encouraged to file their 2020 EHT return before applying for the IEI to ensure no delay in receiving the tax credit.

The IEI is one of several provincial supports to help businesses recover and respond to the unprecedented economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other supports include a provincial sales tax rebate on select machinery and equipment investments to help businesses adapt and grow, the Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant, and grants to help businesses launch or upgrade online stores.

**Learn More:**

To learn more about the IEI, visit: <https://gov.bc.ca/employertaxcredit>

StrongerBC: BC's Economic Recovery Plan: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/supporting-bc-businesses>

**[Province provides \\$5 million to reduce wildfire risks in community forests](#)**

The B.C. government is investing over \$5 million to help Community Forest Agreement holders complete wildfire risk reduction projects as part of the Province's economic recovery plan to create jobs and help communities deal with the impacts of COVID-19.

The BC Community Forest Association will distribute more than \$5 million to 15 holders of community forest agreements around B.C. to fund 44 Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction (CLWRR) projects. The CLWRR funding stream is part of the Community Resiliency Investment program administered by the BC Wildfire Service. It supports wildfire risk reduction treatments on provincial Crown land near communities, around critical infrastructure and in areas facing a higher wildfire risk.

**Learn More:**

StrongerBC: BC's Economic Recovery Plan: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/>

Community Resiliency Investment program: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/prevention/funding-for-wildfire-prevention/crip>

BC Community Forest Association: <https://bccfa.ca/>

**[Provincial stats](#)**

The information below is current as of 12pm on Thursday, April 1, 2021:

- New cases: 1,014
- Total cases: 100,048
- Deaths in last 24 hours: 3
- Total deaths: 1,458
- Total recoveries: 91,066
- Total vaccine doses administered in B.C.: 756,080

Stay safe.

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