

## Joleen Kaminski

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**From:** CLRInfo <clrinfo@clra-bc.com>  
**Sent:** December 23, 2021 9:33 AM  
**To:** Maria Sushkova  
**Subject:** CLR INFO - Dec 23

**Importance:** High

### [CLR Members,](#)

Please find the important updates and reminders on the current situation in the province.

## Provincial Update

### [B.C. Government announces expanded COVID-19 restrictions, access to boosters and rapid testing](#)

As we communicated earlier this week, in an effort to reduce the rate of the Omicron variant transmission and the potential impact on B.C.'s health care system, the B.C. Government has enacted new restrictions on gatherings, events and social activities. The [restrictions](#) announced on Tuesday are in effect from December 22 at midnight, through January 18, 2022 and are in addition to [the restrictions announced last week](#).

The government's age-based roll out of vaccine booster shots will continue but at an accelerated pace with increased capacity coming in the new year as they reactivate some mass vaccination sites in the province. More details can be found in the government briefing [material](#).

The government also continues to roll out vaccinations for children aged 5-11 years old. More details on the B.C. Immunization Plan can be found [here](#).

Additionally, the government expands access to rapid testing coming in January, with 700,000 rapid tests to be delivered into the province by the end of December.

We would like to remind that in partnership with the B.C. Business Council (BCBC), CLR is offering the Safe Screen B.C. program to those of our members who are interested in implementation of this rapid testing on their worksites. The cost of the program, valued at up to \$7,500 per employer depending on the number of employees at each company, will be covered by CLR. Please note, the CLR payment of the Safe Screen BC rapid testing is capped at \$65,000, so we encourage our members who are interested to apply, to contact the BCBC soon.

## Federal Update

### [Federal Government Temporarily Expands Access to Lockdown Program and Worker Lockdown Benefit](#)

Dec 22, Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, announced the federal government's intention to temporarily expand eligibility for key pandemic support programs – **Local Lockdown Program** and **Canada Worker Lockdown Benefit**.

The updated regulations will apply from December 19, 2021, to February 12, 2022, during which time it is expected that public health authorities will continue to implement "circuit-breaker" restrictions that limit the spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 across Canada.

More details on the expansion of these support measures are available in the [backgrounder](#) associated with the announcement.



## Travel Advisory

### [Limited exceptions to border measures in British Columbia](#)

The Canada Border Services Agency would like to remind travellers that border measures remain in place for travellers entering or returning to Canada and that they should get informed and understand their obligations as they make their travel plans.

As of December 21, unless specifically exempted, all travellers must take a pre-entry COVID-19 molecular test before arriving in Canada, regardless of how long they were away.

#### **In British Columbia:**

Given the ongoing situation in British Columbia, certain fully vaccinated B.C. residents will not have to take a pre-entry COVID-19 molecular test before coming back to Canada. This refers to residents:

- who must travel to the U.S. by land to access or purchase goods or services, and
- who are absent from Canada for no more than 24 hours.

The exemption also applies to unvaccinated children under 12 years of age entering with one of their fully vaccinated parents, stepparents, guardians or tutors and a person with a contraindication to vaccination. [Learn more](#)

## Other COVID Related Updates

### [Pfizer's oral COVID-19 pill approved by U.S. FDA for at-home use](#)

Pfizer Inc said on Wednesday the U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized its antiviral COVID-19 pill, making it the first at-home treatment for the coronavirus that is expected to become an important tool in the fight against the fast-spreading Omicron variant.



Data from Pfizer's clinical trial showed its two-drug antiviral regimen was 90% effective in preventing hospitalizations and deaths in patients at high risk of severe illness. Recent lab data suggests the drug retains its effectiveness against Omicron.

[Learn more](#)

### [UBC scientists reveal world's first molecular-level analysis of Omicron variant's spike protein](#)

Canadian researchers have conducted the world's first molecular-level analysis of Omicron's spike protein, revealing key information about why the new variant is so resistant and infectious.

Omicron has a "remarkable" 37 spike protein mutations, said the University of British Columbia's Dr. Sriram Subramaniam — three to five times more than any other variant during the pandemic so far.

The [research](#) was published last week and is waiting for peer review.

## Weather Alert

### [British Columbians urged to prepare for winter conditions](#)

A series of strong storms will clash with cold Arctic air throughout B.C. during the holidays, according to Environment and Climate Change Canada. Periods of heavy and blowing snow, freezing rain and very cold weather are likely in many parts of B.C. between now and New Year's Day.

For the weather forecasts and current road conditions, before leaving, check @DriveBC on Twitter or: <https://drivebc.ca/>

Environment and Climate Change Canada weather notifications for B.C.: [https://weather.gc.ca/warnings/index\\_e.html?prov=bc](https://weather.gc.ca/warnings/index_e.html?prov=bc)

PreparedBC is British Columbia's one-stop shop for disaster readiness information. For tips on seasonal readiness, how to prepare an emergency plan and what to include in an emergency kit, visit

PreparedBC: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management/preparedbc>

## **Response to Floods and Mudslides**

### **Highway 1 fully reopened between Abbotsford, Hope**

The Coquihalla Highway (Highway 5) has reopened between Hope and Merritt to essential commercial vehicles only following a month of extensive repairs.

Although it is not subject to the essential travel order, to support the safe and efficient movement of goods and services, people are asked to avoid unnecessary travel on Highway 1 through the Fraser Valley. Drivers can expect slow traffic with reduced speed limits. For updates, check: [www.DriveBC.ca](http://www.DriveBC.ca).



From all CLR Team, we wish you a happy and safe holiday season!

Ken McCormack | President & CEO



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