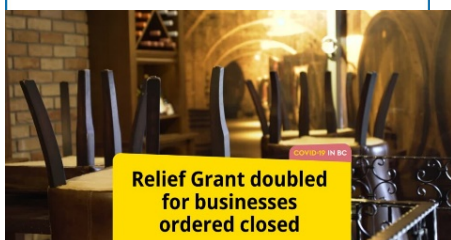


Joleen Kaminski

From: CLRInfo
Sent: January 21, 2022 11:19 AM
To: Ken McCormack
Cc: Maria Sushkova
Subject: CLR INFO - Jan 21

Importance: High

Daily update on COVID-19



[CLR Members,](#)

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

Provincial Update

[COVID-19 pandemic update](#)

As of Thursday, Jan. 20, 2022, 89.4% (4,455,046) of eligible people five and older in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 83.5% (4,161,148) have received their second dose.

There are 34,835 active cases of COVID-19 in the province, and 265,765 people who tested positive have recovered. Of the active cases, 891 COVID-positive individuals are in hospital and 119 are in intensive care. The remaining people are recovering at home in self-isolation.

Learn More:

For the Jan. 14, 2022, modelling presentation, visit: https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/14.01.22_Covid19Modelling.pdf

For weekly update on Variants of Concern (VOC), visit: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/VoC/VoC_Weekly_20220114.pdf

For information on booster doses, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/booster>

[Rapid test kits distributed for symptomatic school staff](#)

This week, 200,000 rapid antigen test kits are being shipped to the kindergarten-to-Grade 12 (K-12) sector for use by staff, teachers and administrators with symptoms of COVID-19.

Rapid antigen tests are an additional tool that can be used to support the continuity of learning in schools with the aim to reduce transmission of COVID-19.

[COVID-19 Closure Relief Grant funds doubled for eligible businesses](#)

The Province is extending the COVID-19 Closure Relief Grant and doubling supports for eligible businesses that have been ordered to remain temporarily closed through public health measures until Feb. 16, 2022.



Businesses that were directed to remain temporarily closed on Jan. 18, 2022, through public health orders are now eligible for up to \$20,000 in total funding, based on staffing levels at the time of closure.

Businesses that have applied for a COVID-19 Closure Relief Grant do not need to reapply. To apply for a grant, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/economic-recovery/closure-relief-grant>. The \$4-million extension of the original \$10-million grant

program complements existing federal government programs, including the

Local Lockdown Program and the Canada Worker Lockdown Benefit.

B.C. to allow gyms to reopen Jan. 20, but extends other restrictions

The B.C. government announced Tuesday a gradual reopening for gyms and fitness centres on Jan. 20. The reopening will be based on strict COVID-19 safety plans, provincial health officer Dr. Bonnie Henry said at a media briefing. These plans include occupancy limits based on 7m² per person, up to a maximum of 25 people per space, Henry added.

The vaccine card will still be required to enter gyms or fitness centres. The province considers those with two COVID-19 shots (or one Johnson & Johnson shot) as fully vaccinated.

The province has extended all other restrictions, including the 50-per-cent capacity limit for all venues, and keeping bars and clubs closed, until they are reviewed Feb. 16.

B.C. hotels, commercial recreation businesses will receive pandemic supports

Eligible accommodation providers and tourism operators holding tenure and BC Parks permits will now have access to grants to alleviate fixed-cost pressures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As much as \$15 million will be provided through the Tourism Accommodation and Commercial Recreation Relief Fund through three streams: one for B.C.-owned large accommodation providers employing more than 150 people; the second for Indigenous-owned large accommodation properties employing more than 100 people and located on reserve; and the third for tenure and BC Parks permit holders that operate as tourism businesses.

Application intake is open from Jan. 14 to Feb. 14, 2022. Eligibility criteria and application information can be found online: www.gov.bc.ca/accommodation-commercial-recreation-fund

Flood Response

Supports expanded for flood-affected residents

Starting Feb. 1, 2022, people affected by the flooding in fall 2021 receiving Emergency Support Services will see this support evolve to personalized wraparound services delivered by the Canadian Red Cross. Through the Red Cross, the provincial and federal governments will provide personalized recovery support, including interim housing and basic needs assistance. These personalized supports will be funded by donations to the 2021 Canadian Red Cross British Columbia Floods and Extreme Weather Appeal.



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This is expanding on the initial support that evacuees have received through Emergency Support Services since Nov. 15, 2021. Personalized recovery support will include assessments to identify needs and will complement local government and provincial efforts to assist people as they navigate the recovery process.

British Columbians can access the Disaster Financial Assistance application online: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/disasterfinancialassistance>

[Coquihalla Highway reopened to regular traffic](#)

On Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022, the Coquihalla Highway (Highway 5) reopened to regular vehicle traffic between Hope and Merritt. Temporary repairs to the Coquihalla are in place while the ministry plans permanent repairs to the damaged sections.

For updated highway information, visit: DriveBC.ca

Federal Update

[Remarks from the Chief Public Health Officer on Jan 21, 2022](#)

According to the [statement](#) from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on January 21, [last week's modelling update](#) illustrated how the large surge in Omicron infections was likely to peak in January and then recede into February. In the week since the modelling update, there are early indications that infections may have peaked at the national level, including daily case counts, test positivity, effective reproduction number, and wastewater surveillance trends. However, daily hospital and ICU numbers are still rising steeply, and many hospitals across Canada are under intense strain.

Nationally, the average daily case count has decreased by 28% compared to the previous week. Although there is a degree of underestimation due to current testing policies, the 7-day average of close to 27,000 cases reported daily as of January 19th shows continuing high rates of infection. As well, with over 22% of lab tests positive for the COVID-19 virus, disease activity remains widespread across the country.

Evidence continues to show that being vaccinated with two or more doses of COVID-19 vaccines lowers the risk of hospital admission. As well, having a booster dose, of either PfizerBioNTech or Moderna mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, helps improve protection that may have decreased since the second dose and results in better protection against severe illness from Omicron in particular. [Learn more](#)

[Government of Canada receives first delivery of COVID-19 oral antiviral treatment](#)

Jan 17, Filomena Tassi, Federal Minister of Public Services and Procurement, announced that the Government of Canada has received an initial shipment of 30,400 treatment courses of Pfizer's COVID-19 oral antiviral treatment, PAXLOVIDTM, with 120,000 more expected to be delivered between now and the end of March. The treatment received Health Canada regulatory authorization earlier that day.

The Government of Canada is working closely with the provinces and territories to coordinate distribution of treatment courses across the country. The Public Health Agency of Canada met with provincial and territorial officials to discuss deployment based on a per capita basis with adjustments due to shipping requirements from Pfizer.



[COVID-19 Subsidies – Explanatory Notes Relating to the Income Tax Act and Income Tax Regulations](#)

These explanatory notes describe certain amendments made to the Income Tax Act and the Income Tax Regulations by Bill C-2, tabled in Parliament on November 24, 2021. These explanatory notes do not address changes announced after that date.

[Government of Canada improves digital access to mental health and substance use resources during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

In April 2020, in response to the significant rise in feelings of stress, anxiety and depression seen in the early months of the pandemic, a consortium of leaders in digital mental health and substance use support, including Stepped Care Solutions, Kids Help Phone, and Homewood Health came together to launch Wellness Together Canada (WTC) – an online platform that gives access to a virtual network of mental health and substance use supports.

Jan 14, Carolyn Bennett, Federal Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, announced the launch of PocketWell, a free companion app to the WTC online portal.

As of January 10, 2022, over 2 million people across all provinces and territories have accessed the WTC portal, with 20,000 to 30,000 using the services weekly. With the launch of PocketWell, it is expected that more Canadians will use and benefit from the WTC portal overall.

Associated links:

[Wellness Together Canada](#)

[Taking care of your mental and physical health during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Labour

[Feedback on skilled trades certification consultation now available](#)

Hundreds of tradespeople and employers have shared their insights about how the Province can implement skilled trades certification. This feedback has been compiled into the What We Heard reports, which are available [online](#).

The consultation ran from June to September 2021 and included an online survey, eight roundtables, more than 30 stakeholder meetings with the parliamentary secretary for skills training, and focused discussions with the Industry Training Authority (ITA) and Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training staff. There were also seven Indigenous dialogue sessions to understand the potential impacts on Indigenous Peoples in B.C.

Legislation to update the Industry Training Authority Act will be introduced to the legislative assembly during the spring session. Pending approval, regulations would come into effect in mid-2022. Ten initial trades in electrical, mechanical and automotive will be implemented in two phases between 2022 and 2024. Learn more about skilled trades certification: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/skilledtrades>



Stay safe,

Ken McCormack | President & CEO

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CONSTRUCTION LABOUR RELATIONS ASSOCIATION OF BC

97 Sixth Street,
New Westminster, BC V3L 5H8

O 604-524-4911

F 604-524-3925 **C** 604-968-4911

E kenm@clra-bc.com **W** www.clra-bc.com

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