

British Columbia (BC) COVID-19 Situation Report

Week 45: November 1 – November 7, 2020

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BELOW ARE IMPORTANT NOTES relevant to the interpretation of data displayed in this bulletin:

- Unlike other summaries based on report date, and unless otherwise specified, this bulletin mainly adopts episode date defined by dates of illness onset, hospital admission, or death. When these dates are unknown, report date is used.
- Data are provided by epidemiological week. Episode-based tallies and incidences for recent weeks, notably the current report week, are expected to increase as case data, in particular onset dates, become more complete.
- Per capita rates/incidences are based on PEOPLE2020 population estimates (n=5,139,568 for BC overall).
- This bulletin refers to [pandemic phases](#) defined by population-level changes as described in the [Table*](#) on the next page.

***Table of [pandemic phases](#) defined by implementation or relaxation of population-level mitigation measures in BC:**

PRE-PHASE 1 Before implementation January 15 (wk 3) to March 13 (wk 11), 2020	PHASE 1 Implementation March 14 (wk 11) to May 18 (wk 21), 2020	PHASE 2 Initial relaxation May 19 (wk 21) to June 23 (wk 26), 2020	PHASE 3a Further relaxation June 24 (wk 26) to Sept 12 (wk 37), 2020	PHASE 3b Start of school year Sept 13 (wk 38) to Current (wk 44), 2020
From earliest onset date	From start of March break Additionally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mass gatherings >50 banned (Mar 16) ○ Traveller self-isolation required (Mar 17) ○ Service restrictions (Mar 18) ○ US/Canada border closure (Mar 20) 	Re-opening of services Additionally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gradual/part-time return to school of K-12 students for 2019-20 school year (Jun 1) 	Broader re-opening Additionally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Re-opening non-essential travel in BC, hotels, TV/film ○ Return to in-class learning for 2020-21 school year, partial week (Thurs, Sept 10) 	From first complete epidemiological week of 2020-21 school year

A. COVID-19 case counts and epidemic curve

Report tallies by week

As shown by the gray line in [Figure 1](#), there have been at least 1,000 new COVID-19 reports per week in BC since week 42, with 3,115 reports in week 45, a 60% increase over the 1,941 reports in week 44. The weekly tally by report date, however, includes cases with illness onset date in preceding weeks. In that regard, analyses based on episode date (i.e. illness onset date and only if that is unavailable, then report date) may better represent the evolution of the epidemic curve. The bars in [Figure 1](#) display the epidemic curve (i.e. tally of COVID-19 cases in BC by epidemiological week) based on episode date, coloured by health authority.

Episode-based cumulative incidence: provincially and by health authority (HA) (not shown)

Provincially, there was a cumulative tally of 18,985 cases between week 3 (mid-January) and week 45 (first week of November), corresponding to a cumulative incidence of 368 per 100,000 (100K) during that period. By HA, this cumulative tally (and incidence) includes: 11,606 cases in Fraser Health Authority (FHA: 599 per 100K); 5,588 cases in Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA: 462 per 100K); 906 cases in Interior Health Authority (IHA: 109 per 100K); 481 cases in Northern Health Authority (NHA: 168 per 100K); and 315 cases in Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA: 36 per 100K).

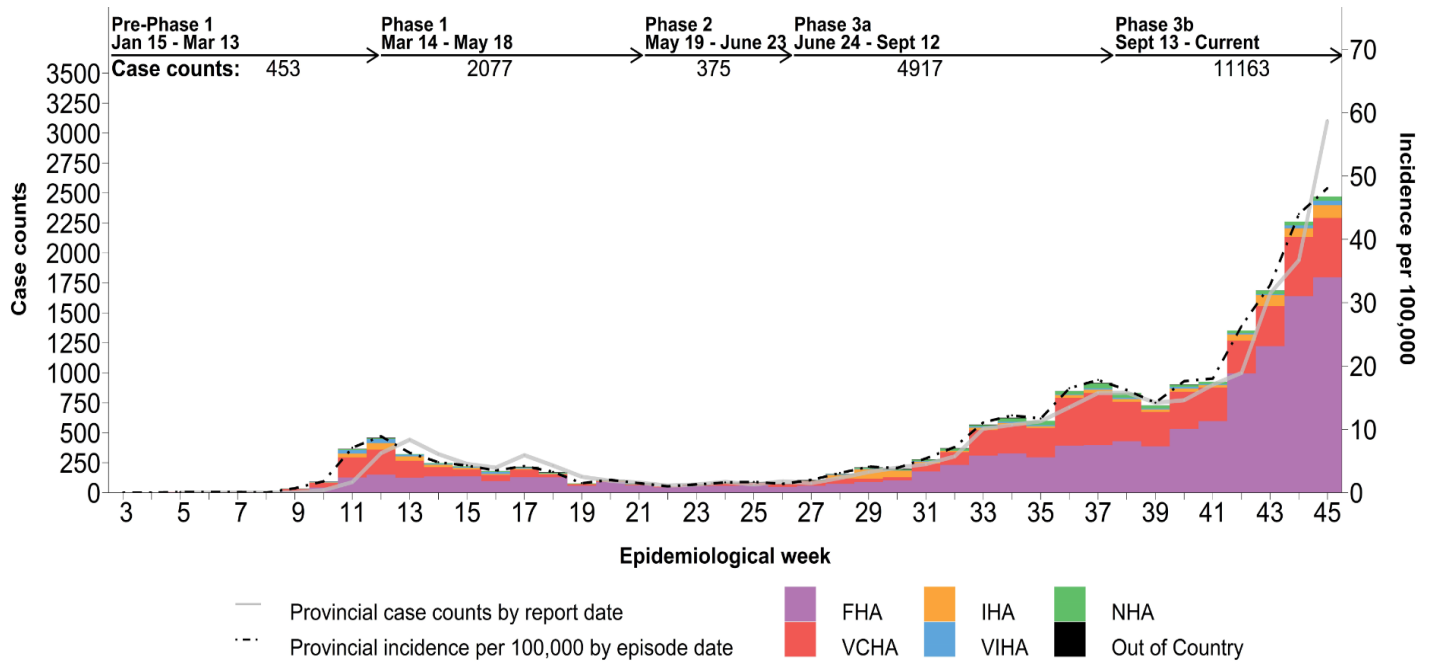
Episode-based weekly incidence: provincially and by HA and health service district area (HSDA)

As shown in [Figure 1](#), the weekly tally of COVID-19 cases by episode date in wave one peaked provincially during week 12 (mid-March), corresponding to a weekly incidence of 9 per 100K. After the Phase 3a re-opening of services in week 26 (June), weekly incidence has consistently surpassed 10 per 100K starting week 33 (mid-August), with gradual increase to 18 per 100K by week 41 but jumping to 26 per 100K in week 42 (mid-October). Incidence increased to 33 per 100K in week 43. As of data extraction for the current bulletin, there were 2,262 cases with episode date in week 44 and 2,470 with episode date in week 45, corresponding to incidences of 44 and 48 per 100K, respectively. Note that the week 45 episode-based incidence is already 2.5 times higher than week 41 and is expected to further increase as data, notably onset dates, become more complete.

As shown in [Figure 2](#), increase in weekly incidence from week 41 to 45 is evident in all HAs, driven by FHA (a three-fold increase from 31 to 93 per 100K) and VCHA (an 80% increase from 23 to 41 per 100K). In FHA, Fraser South HSDA has been most affected and in VCHA, Vancouver HSDA is driving rates. In IHA, week 41 to 45 rates increased from 3 to 13 per 100K, driven by the Okanagan HSDA. Incidence also increased in NHA from 7 to 13 per 100K between weeks 41 and 45. In VIHA, incidence increased from 1 to 4 per 100K between weeks 41 and 45, notably in North Vancouver Island, while remaining the lowest overall by HA.

It warrants repeating that episode-based tallies for recent weeks will further increase as data become more complete.

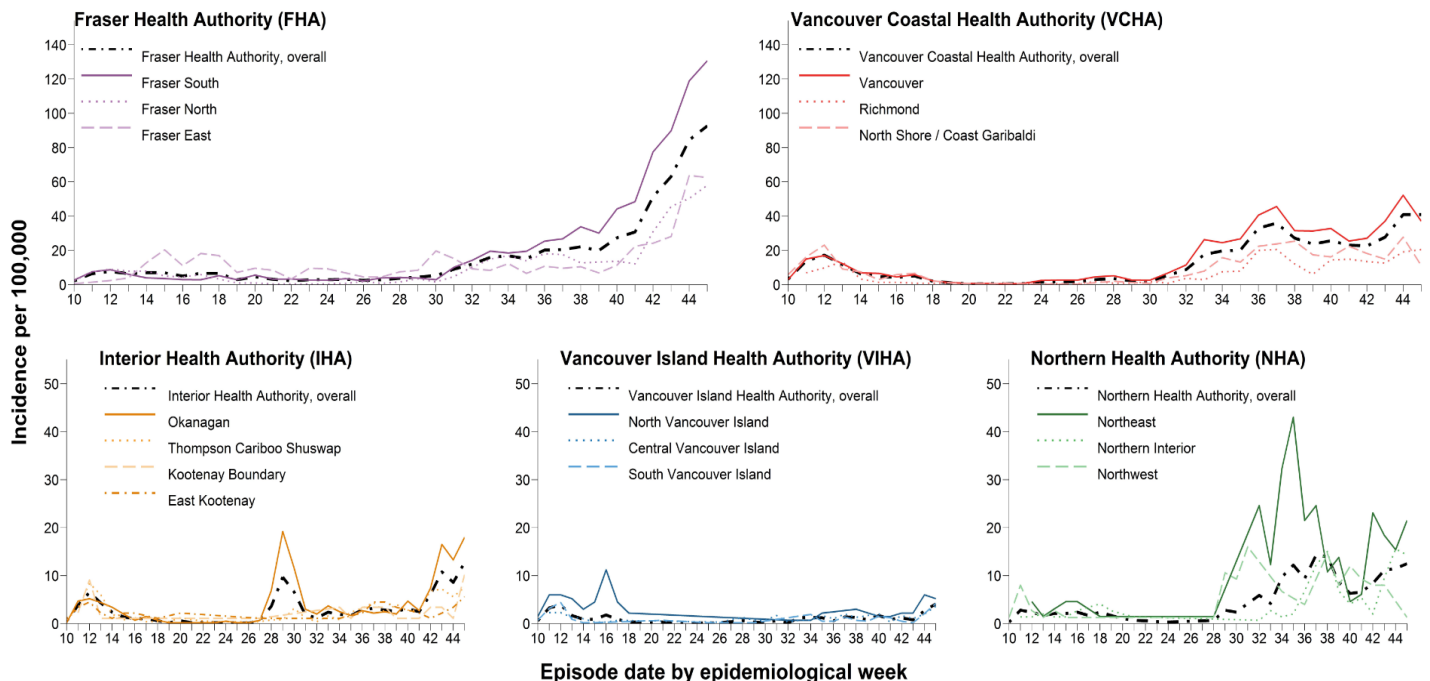
Figure 1. Episode-based epidemic curve (bars)^a, report date (line) and health authority (HA), BC January 15, 2020 (week 3) – November 7, 2020 (week 45) (N= 18,985)



The average weekly rate by phase in Figure 1 is derived as the incidence divided by the number of weeks for Pre-Phase 1 (8 weeks), Phase 1 (9 weeks), Phase 2 (5 weeks), Phase 3a (11.5 weeks), and Phase 3b (8 weeks).

a. First onset date of a case in BC was January 15, 2020. Displayed data extracted after noon on Thursday, November 12, 2020.

Figure 2. Weekly episode-based incidence rates by HA and health service delivery area (HSDA), BC March 1, 2020 (week 10) – November 7, 2020 (week 45)



B. Test rates and percent positive

As shown by the bars in [Figure 3](#), the weekly number of respiratory specimens tested for SARS-CoV-2 in BC was highest at about 70,000 tests per week in weeks 40 and 41, declining slightly in weeks 42 to 44 (~60,000 each week) and increasing to about 64,000 tests in week 45. As shown by the line in [Figure 3](#), the percent that were SARS-CoV-2 positive (i.e. percent positivity) has increased steadily and steeply from 1.4% in week 41 to 5.4% in week 45, now exceeding the peak positivity during wave one in week 14 (4.6%) when testing was targeted to high risk individuals and the number of tests per week (~7,500) was more than eight times lower than in week 45.

As shown in [Figure 4](#), the SARS-CoV-2 testing rate per capita by health authority in BC remains highest in VCHA followed by FHA. Conversely, the highest percent positivity is in FHA, where it has increased substantially across weeks 41 to 45 (nearly quadrupling from 2.0% to 7.8%, respectively). Substantial increase (roughly tripling) in percent positivity between weeks 41 and 45 is also evident in VCHA (from 1.3% to 3.9%), NHA (from 1.0% to 3.6%), and IHA (from 0.4% to 2.9%). Positivity also increased in VIHA (from 0.2% to 0.7%) but remained <1% and the lowest provincially.

Figure 3. Number of specimens tested and percent SARS-CoV-2 positive, by collection week, BC March 15, 2020 (week 12) – November 7, 2020 (week 45)^a

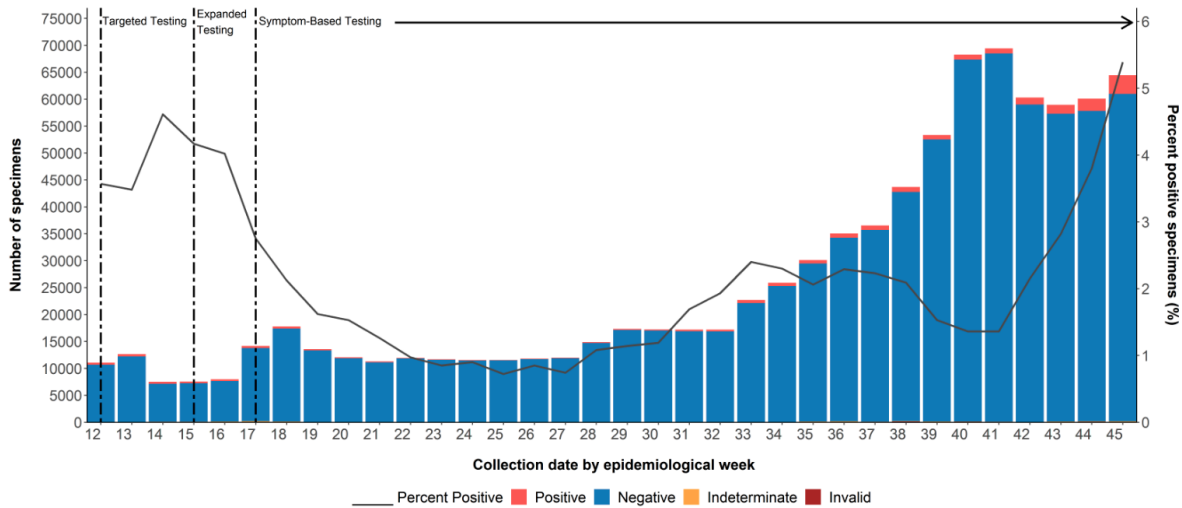
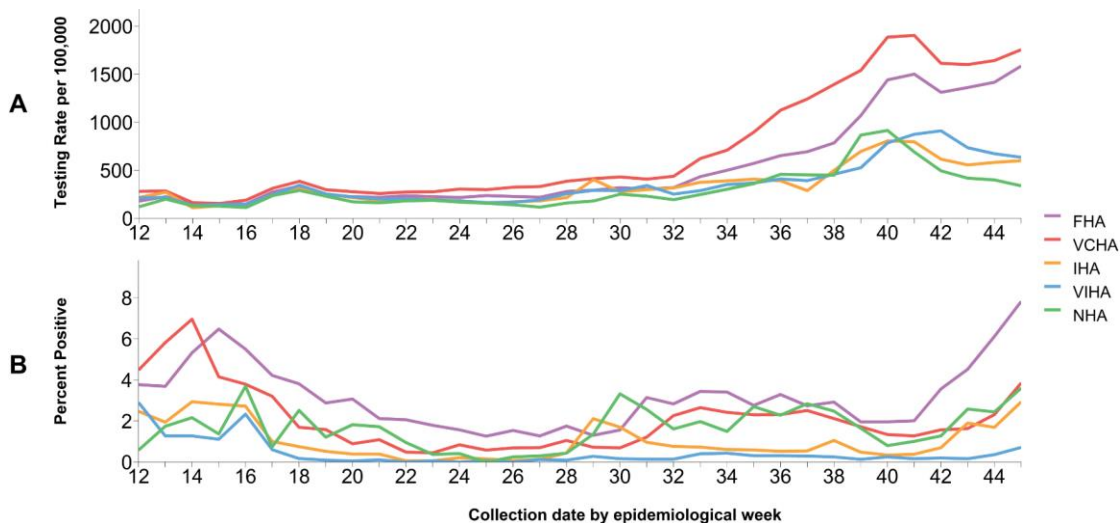


Figure 4. Testing rates and percent SARS-CoV-2 positive by health authority and collection week, BC March 15, 2020 (week 12) – November 7, 2020 (week 45)^a



a. PLOVER extract on November 12, 2020 reflecting all clinical diagnostic laboratories in BC.
 b. FHA=Fraser; IHA=Interior; VIHA=Vancouver Island; NHA=Northern; VCHA=Vancouver Coastal Health Authorities.

C. Age profile – Testing and cases

Testing rates by age group

As shown by the coloured bars in [Figure 5](#), testing surged in Phase 3b compared to Phase 3a, notably among children <15 years old following the start of the 2020-21 school year. Compared to average weekly testing rates across prior weeks 38-44 of Phase 3b, week 45 testing rates decreased among children <15 years old, whereas it increased in all other age groups. The highest testing rates in week 45 were among adults 20-39 years old.

Percent positivity by age group

As shown by the dots in [Figure 5](#), the percent positivity in week 45 increased substantially from prior weeks 38-44 of Phase 3b, exceeding 4% in all age groups. In week 45, positivity was lowest in children <10 years old (4.5%) and 10-14 years (4.3%). Positivity was 5.7% in each of 15-19 and 20-39 year olds, lower among those 40-59 years (4.8%), but highest of all age groups among adults 60-79 years (6.2%) and 80+ years (6.4%).

Case distribution by age group

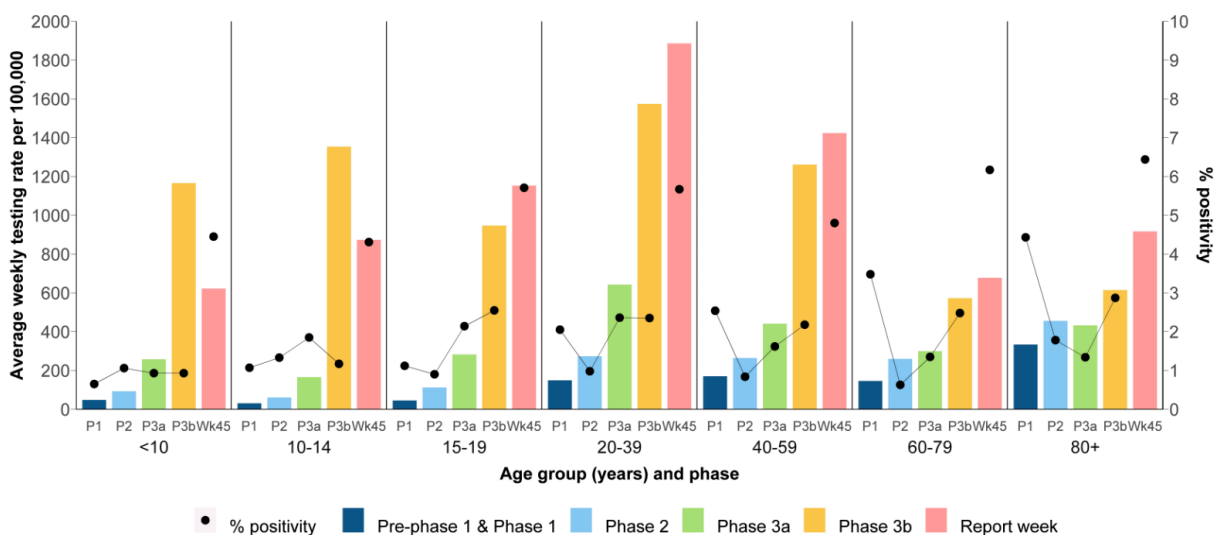
As shown in [Figure 6](#) and [Figure 7](#), the percentage distribution of cases by age group remained fairly stable in week 45 compared to prior weeks 38-44 of Phase 3b, with adults 20-49 years old comprising more than half of all cases. The subset of adults 20-39 years, however, contributed less in week 45 (44%) and weeks 38-44 (43%) than in Phase 3a (53%).

Weekly incidence by age group

As shown in [Figure 8](#), weekly incidence at least doubled in all age groups between weeks 41 and 45, recognizing recent weeks' incidences will increase further as data become more complete. Week 45 incidence exceeded 50 per 100K across displayed age groups 15-49 years being highest in adults 20-29 years (85 per 100K) and adults 30-39 years (60 per 100K). Also exceeding 50 per 100K were incidences in teens 15-19 years (54 per 100K) and adults 40-49 years (55 per 100K). In those <15 years and 50+ years, week 45 incidences were below 50 per 100K, but showed substantial increase from week 41. Increase from week 41 to 45 is particularly noteworthy for elderly adults 70-79 years (8 to 23 per 100K, three-fold increase) and 80+ years (7 to 37 per 100K, five-fold increase), given their higher risk of severe outcomes ([Section E](#)).

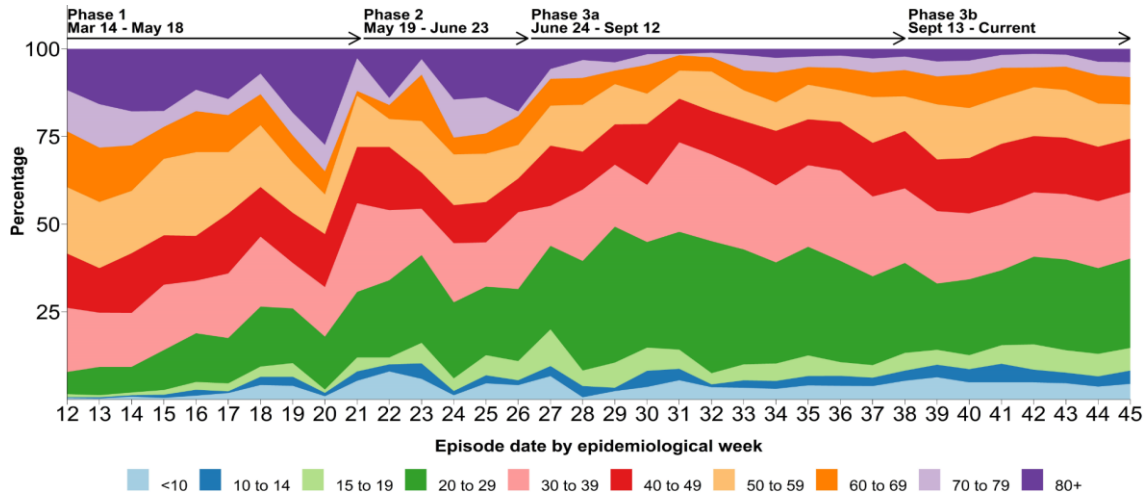
Median age of cases across the pandemic is 37 years: 52 years in Pre-/Phase 1; 40 years in Phase 2; 33 years in Phase 3a; 36 years for Phase 3b (excluding week 45) and 35 years in week 45 (not shown).

Figure 5. Average weekly SARS-CoV-2 testing rates and percent positive by age group and phase^a, BC January 20, 2020 (week 4) – November 7, 2020 (week 45)^b

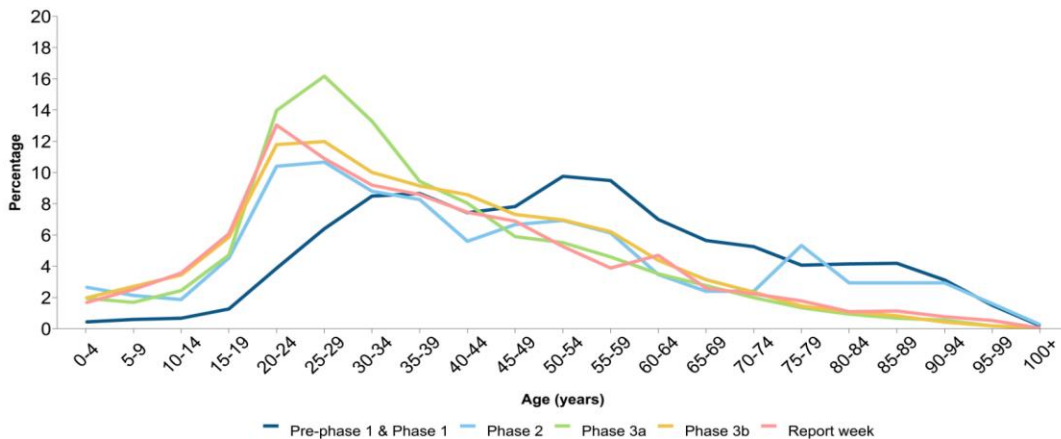


- Phase based on specimen collection date, of which January 20 was the earliest. The average weekly rate by phase is derived as the phase-specific per capita testing rate divided by the number of weeks for Pre-Phase 1 + Phase 1 (P1: 17 weeks), Phase 2 (P2: 5 weeks), Phase 3a (P3a: 11.5 weeks), and Phase 3b, excluding the current report week (P3b: 7 weeks). The current report week, although part of Phase 3b, is excluded from derivations across prior weeks of Phase 3b to enable comparison, as displayed.
- PLOVER extract on November 12, 2020 reflecting all diagnostic laboratories in BC. Laboratory testing criteria: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing/phases-of-covid-19-testing-in-bc>.

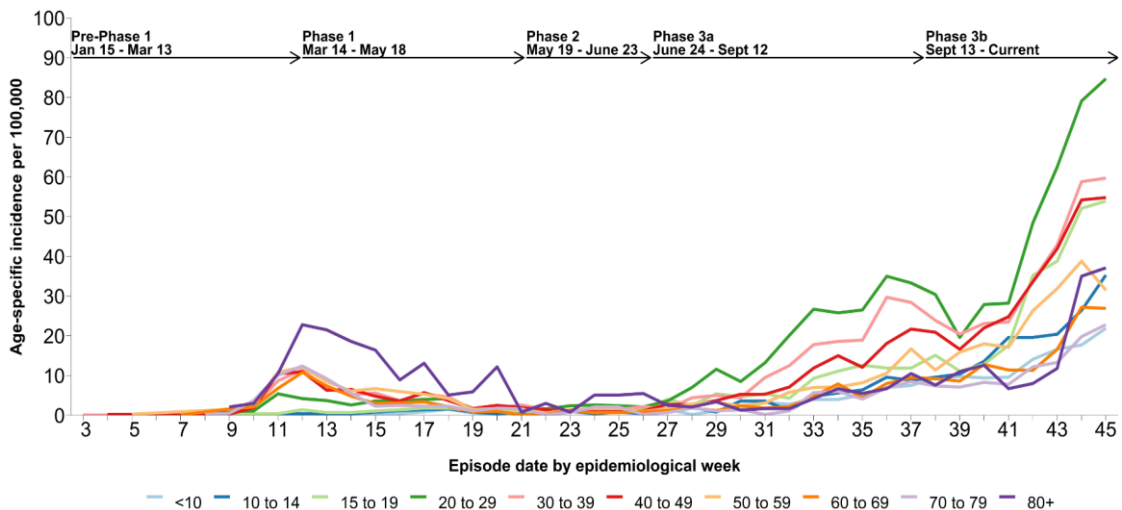
**Figure 6. COVID-19 case distribution by known age group (years) and episode date, BC
 March 15, 2020 (week 12) – November 7, 2020 (week 45) (N= 18,295)**



**Figure 7. COVID-19 case distribution by known age group (years) and pandemic phase, BC
 January 15, 2020 (week 3) – November 7, 2020 (week 45) (N= 18,799)**



**Figure 8. Weekly age-specific incidence per 100K population, BC
 January 15, 2020 (week 3) – November 7, 2020 (week 45) (N= 18,799)**



D. Severe outcome counts and epi-curve

There were 104 hospitalizations with known admission date (of 105 reported) in week 45 (Table 1), a 28% increase from the prior week 44 (81) and almost double the week 41 tally (55). The week 45 tally is expected to increase further but is already comparable to the first wave peak of 107 hospitalizations with known admission date in week 13 (Figure 9). In week 45 there were 13 deaths recorded, an increase over week 44 (8) and double the week 41 tally (7) but half the first wave single week peak of 26 deaths in week 15. Note, that with ongoing increase in cases, the ultimate timing of the second wave peak in severe outcomes has yet to be determined. Of the 13 deaths in week 45, 8 were associated with a care facility outbreak and 11 were 70+ years old. This profile is consistent with observations throughout the pandemic; in particular, of the 279 total deaths in BC, about two-thirds (190) were associated with a care facility outbreak and 85% (237) were 70+ years of age.

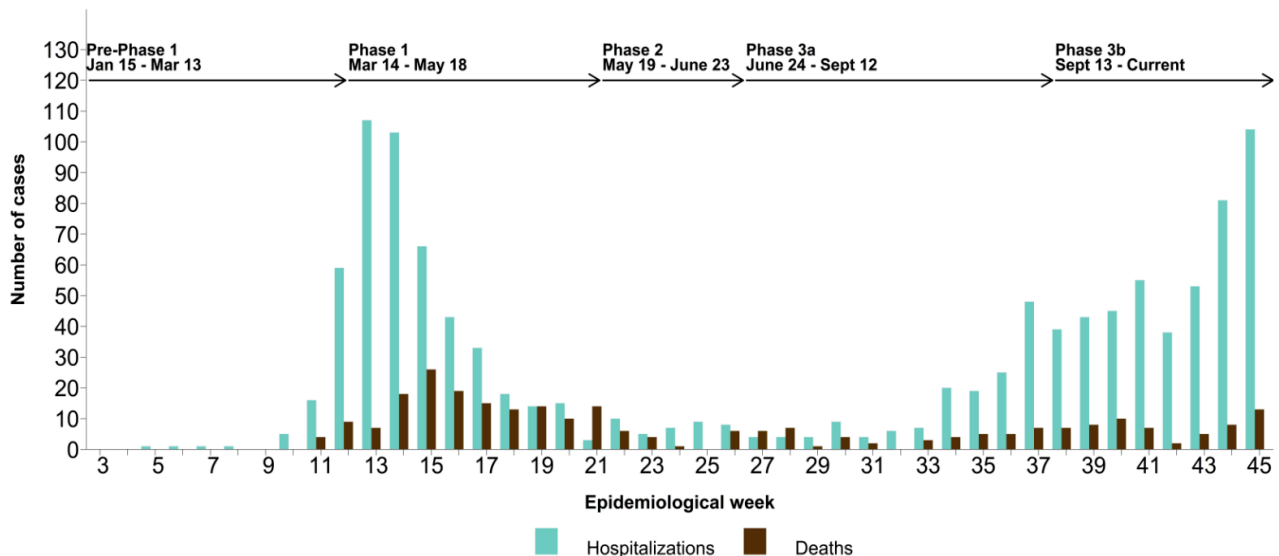
Overall, males comprise 9,549/18,778 (51%) cases, 681/1,138 (60%) hospitalizations, 212/339 (63%) ICU admissions and 161/279 (58%) deaths with known sex to date (not shown).

Table 1. COVID-19 severe outcomes by episode date, health authority of residence, and phase, BC January 15, 2020 (week 3) – November 7, 2020 (week 45)

Health authority of residence:	FHA	IHA	VIHA	NHA	VCHA	Outside Canada	Total n/N (%)
Ever Hospitalized	635	46	26	34	395	6	1,142/18,985 cases (6)^a
Pre-Phase 1 & Phase 1 (17 weeks)	245	29	25	12	177	2	490/1,142 (43)
Phase 2 (5 weeks)	26	1	0	2	6	1	36/1,142 (3)
Phase 3a (11.5 weeks)	98	5	0	10	40	2	155/1,142 (14)
Phase 3b (7 weeks, excluding week 45)	197	10	1	8	139	1	356/1,142 (31)
Week 45	69	1	0	2	33	0	105/1,142 (9)
Ever ICU	163	17	9	17	132	2	340/18,985 cases (2)^a
Pre-Phase 1 & Phase 1 (17 weeks)	76	13	9	7	67	1	173/340 (51)
Phase 2 (5 weeks)	6	0	0	1	2	0	9/340 (3)
Phase 3a (11.5 weeks)	25	1	0	7	15	1	49/340 (14)
Phase 3b (7 weeks, excluding week 45)	40	2	0	1	34	0	77/340 (23)
Week 45	16	1	0	1	14	0	32/340 (9)
Deaths	127	3	6	3	140	0	279/18,985 cases (1)^a
Pre-Phase 1 & Phase 1 (17 weeks)	55	2	5	0	83	0	145/279 (52)
Phase 2 (5 weeks)	22	0	0	0	5	0	27/279 (10)
Phase 3a (11.5 weeks)	20	0	0	1	25	0	46/279 (16)
Phase 3b (7 weeks, excluding week 45)	25	1	1	2	19	0	48/279 (17)
Week 45	5	0	0	0	8	0	13/279 (5)

a. Outcomes with unknown status are included in the denominators (i.e. assumed not to have the specified severe outcome).

Figure 9. COVID-19 hospitalization admissions (n= 1,133) and deaths (n= 270), BC January 15, 2020 (week 3) – November 7, 2020 (week 45)



E. Age profile, severe outcomes

As shown in [Table 2](#) and [Figure 10](#), elderly adults 70+ years comprise 9% of COVID-19 cases, commensurate with their share of the general population of BC (13%), but are greatly over-represented among hospitalizations (41%) and deaths (85%).

Older adults 60-69 years comprise 8% of COVID-19 cases, and a greater proportion of hospitalizations (17%) but a commensurate proportion of deaths (10%) relative to their share of the BC population (13%).

Adults 40-59 years comprise 28% of COVID-19 cases and 27% of hospitalizations, which is commensurate with their share of the BC population (27%), but they are under-represented among COVID-19 deaths (4%).

Adults 20-39 years comprise a greater share of COVID-19 cases (44%) than their share of the BC population (28%), but are under-represented among COVID-19 hospitalizations (13%) and deaths (0%).

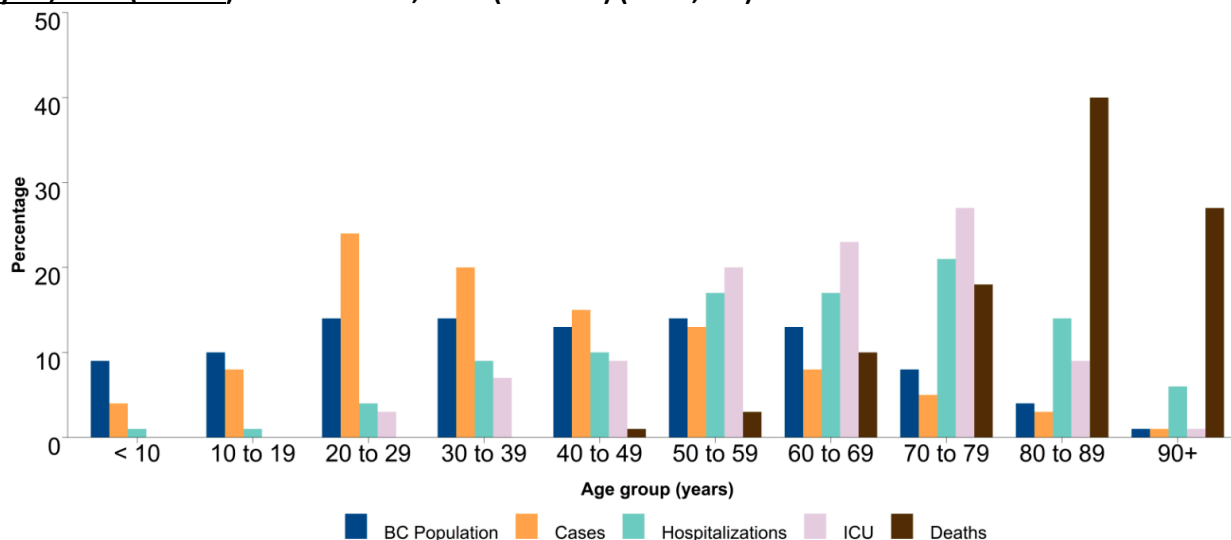
Children <20 years are under-represented overall among COVID-19 cases (12%) as well as severe outcomes (2% or less), relative to their share of the BC general population (19%).

Median age after vs. before Phase 3a is younger for hospitalizations (61 vs. 69 years) but unchanged for deaths (85 vs. 85 years).

Table 2. Age distribution^a: COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, ICU admissions, deaths and BC population January 15, 2020 (week 3) – November 7, 2020 (week 45)

Age group (years)	Cases n (%)	Hospitalizations n (%)	ICU n (%)	Deaths n (%)	General BC population n (%)
<10	732 (4)	11 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	469,351 (9)
10-19	1,471 (8)	9 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	527,805 (10)
20-29	4,479 (24)	47 (4)	9 (3)	0 (0)	697,691 (14)
30-39	3,719 (20)	99 (9)	24 (7)	0 (0)	735,052 (14)
40-49	2,853 (15)	113 (10)	32 (9)	4 (1)	646,035 (13)
50-59	2,404 (13)	193 (17)	69 (20)	9 (3)	718,272 (14)
60-69	1,485 (8)	197 (17)	79 (23)	29 (10)	673,131 (13)
70-79	858 (5)	244 (21)	92 (27)	49 (18)	435,062 (8)
80-89	533 (3)	163 (14)	29 (9)	112 (40)	187,443 (4)
90+	265 (1)	63 (6)	5 (1)	76 (27)	49,726 (1)
Total	18,799	1,139	339	279	5,139,568
Median age	37	64	64	85	41

Figure 10. COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, ICU admissions and deaths by age group, BC January 15, 2020 (week 3) – November 7, 2020 (week 45) (N=18,799)^a



a. Among those with available age information only.

F. Likely sources of infection

As shown in [Table 3](#) and [Figure 11](#), local contact with a known case or cluster has most often been considered the source of infection across all pandemic phases to date.

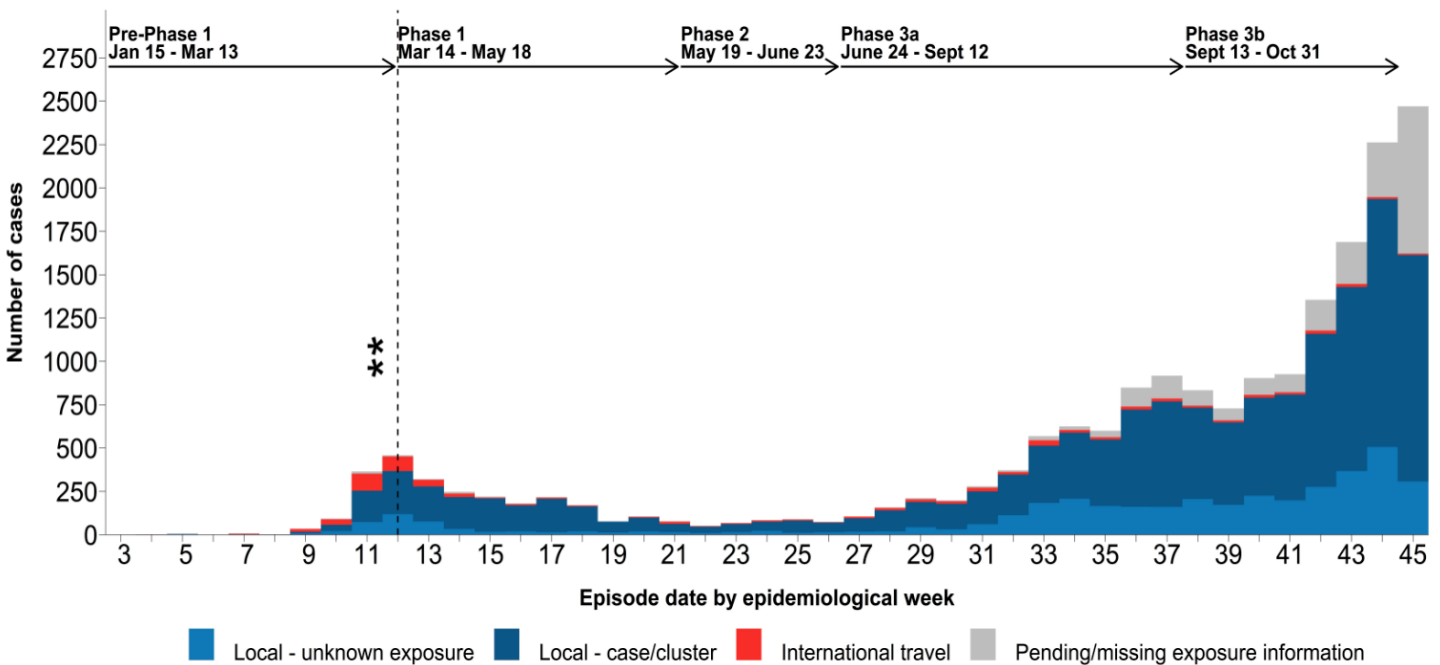
Prior to Phase 1, international travel was also a frequently cited source of SARS-CoV-2 infection in part reflecting high risk testing that targeted returning travelers. However, travel-related restrictions introduced in Phase 1 limited that contribution thereafter with clusters, such as in care facility settings, becoming a more prominent source.

Since around mid-Phase 3a more cases have cited unknown local exposure or that information remained pending or missing. International travel has been cited less often since Phase 3b and these patterns have been generally maintained through week 45.

**Table 3. Likely source of COVID-19 infection by pandemic phase of episode date, British Columbia
January 15, 2020 (week 3) – November 7, 2020 (week 45)**

Phase n (row %)	International travel	Local – case/cluster	Local - unknown	Pending/missing
Pre-Phase 1	135 (30)	208 (46)	96 (21)	14 (3)
Phase 1	188 (9)	1,497 (72)	350 (17)	42 (2)
Phase 2	30 (8)	261 (70)	82 (22)	2 (1)
Phase 3a	181 (4)	3,206 (65)	1,174 (24)	356 (7)
Phase 3b (excluding week 45)	96 (1)	5,550 (64)	1,955 (22)	1,092 (13)
Week 45	8 (<1)	1,305 (53)	308 (12)	849 (34)
Total	638 (3)	12,027 (63)	3,965 (21)	2,355 (12)

**Figure 11. Likely source of COVID-19 infection by episode date, British Columbia
January 15, 2020 (week 3) – November 7, 2020 (week 45)**



** March 16: Travel related restrictions introduced.

G. Care facility outbreaks

As shown in [Table 4](#) and [Figure 12](#) 140 care facility outbreaks were reported in total in BC to the end of week 45. There were 17 new care facility outbreaks reported in week 45 (13 of which were reported by Fraser Health Authority, 2 by VCHA, 1 by IHA, and 1 by NHA), with 9 of these outbreaks having earliest onset date in preceding weeks. Facility outbreak tallies by earliest onset date are highest thus far in week 43 (14 outbreaks).

Eight of the 13 deaths in total reported in week 45 in BC involved adults in a care facility setting in Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (7 deaths) or Fraser Health Authority (1 death). Seven of these 8 deaths were elderly adults 70+ years.

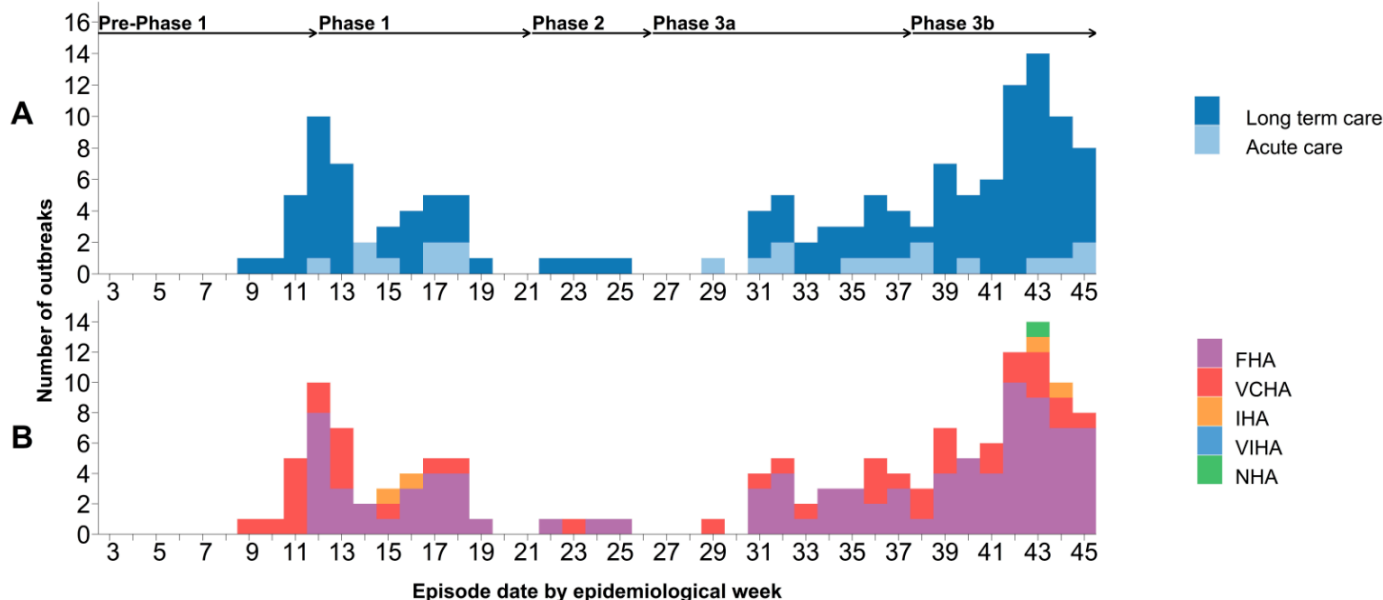
Of 11,163 cases overall in BC with episode date in Phase 3b (i.e. weeks 38-45), 461 (4%) were associated with a care facility outbreak, a proportion similar to Phase 3a overall (184/4,917; 4%), but lower than before Phase 3a (613/2,905; 21%).

More than two-thirds of all COVID-19 deaths in BC have been associated with care facility outbreaks (190/279; 68%) and of those, more than two-thirds occurred before Phase 3a (120/172; 70%).

Table 4. COVID-19 care facility outbreaks^a and associated cases and deaths by phase of episode date, BC January 15, 2020 (week 3) – November 7, 2020 (week 45) (N=140)

	Outbreaks	Cases				Deaths		
		Residents	Staff/visitors	Unknown	Total	Residents	Staff/visitors	Total
Total	140	720	533	5	1,258	190	0	190
Pre-/Phase One (17 weeks)	44	331	213	0	544	96	0	96
Phase 2 (5 weeks)	4	51	18	0	69	24	0	24
Phase 3a (11.5 weeks)	27	91	93	0	184	39	0	39
Phase 3b (7 weeks, excluding week 45)	57	164	157	4	325	24	0	24
Week 45	8	83	52	1	136	7	0	7
Active outbreaks ^b	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Outbreaks declared over ^b	103	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 12. COVID-19 care facility outbreaks^a by earliest case onset^c, facility type (A) and health authority^d (B), BC January 15, 2020 (week 3) – November 7, 2020 (week 45) (N=140)



- a. Long term care facilities include: group homes (community living), independent living, assisted living, and other residential facilities. Care facility (acute/long-term care/independent living) outbreaks have at least one lab-confirmed COVID-19 staff or resident.
- b. As of November 7, 2020
- c. Earliest dates of onset of outbreak cases are subject to change as investigations and data are updated.
- d. FHA=Fraser; VCHA=Vancouver Coastal; IHA=Interior; VIHA=Vancouver Island; NHA=Northern Health Authorities

H. Clinical indicators

HealthLink calls ([Figure 13](#)) related to COVID-19 have shown an overall increasing trend from about week 28 stabilizing from week 39 to 41 at >13,000 calls per week but decreasing in weeks 42 and 43 to just over 10,000 calls. In weeks 44 and 45, call volume increased to just over 11,000 and 12,000 calls, respectively.

BC Medical Services Plan (MSP) general practitioner claims ([Figure 14](#)) related to COVID-19 (including telehealth) showed slight increase from week 37 reaching >5,000 visits in week 40 but decreasing thereafter to stabilize at around 3,500 visits in weeks 44 and 45.

Figure 13. HealthLink BC calls related to COVID-19, BC
March 1, 2020 (week 10) – November 7, 2020 (week 45)

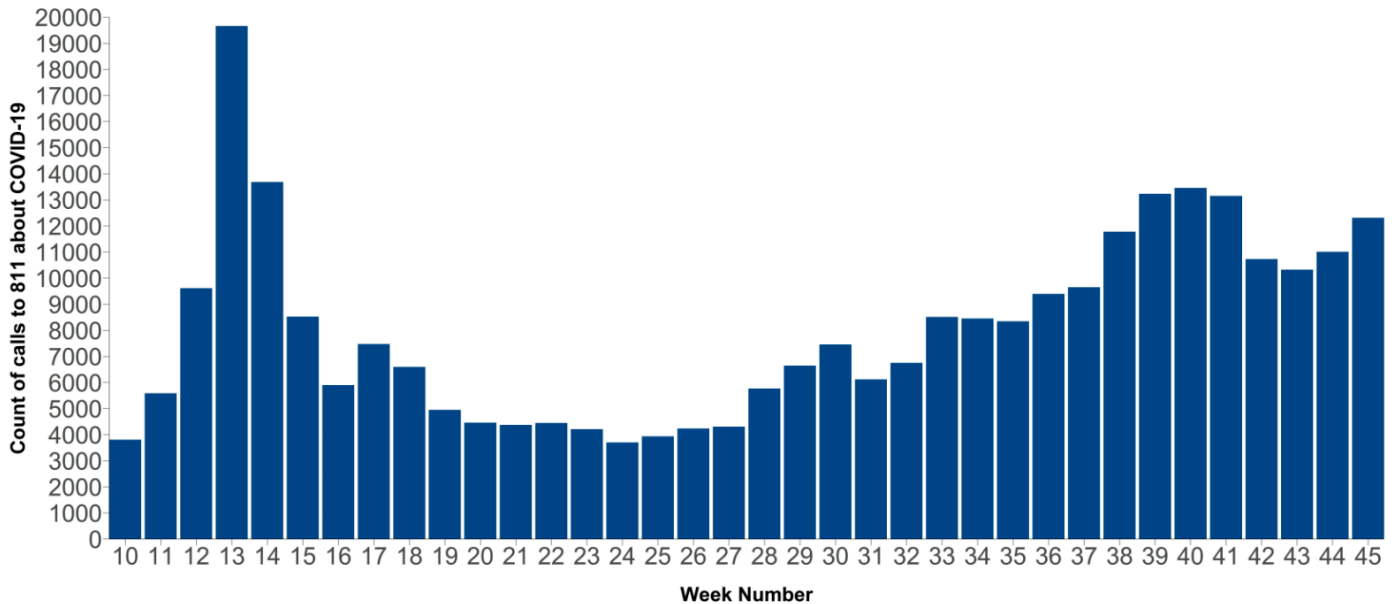


Figure 14. Medical Service Plan (MSP) claims (including telehealth) for COVID-19, BC
March 1, 2020 (week 10) – November 7, 2020 (week 45)

