

**September 22, 2021 – COVID-19 Cases and Hospitalization Surge in 4<sup>th</sup> Wave**

Sadly one person died from COVID-19 yesterday. There have now been 59 people die of COVID in our health region since the start of the pandemic. We extend our condolences to their loved ones and families – and our deepest gratitude to the health-care teams involved in their care. With COVID-19 positive patients now using approximately one-third of all intensive care unit beds in BC the importance of being fully vaccinated can not be overstated.

Health Minister Adrian Dix noted the Ministry has worked with Island Health, Fraser Health, and Vancouver Coastal Health to create additional critical care capacity to support our provincial COVID response – to help take pressure off critical care in Northern Health. As we take action to ensure we can support critical care needs for Island Health, and the residents of other health authorities, we will continue to take steps as required to create additional critical care bed and staff capacity; including slowing down other services as required. Minister Dix also announced that BC will be adding more contact tracers across the province, including 113 in Island Health, to help support this important part of our pandemic response.

Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry noted yesterday that hospitals are seeing an increase of pregnant women in intensive care units, and urged mothers-to-be to get vaccinated against COVID-19. “All of the vaccines that are approved for use in Canada are not only safe but also recommended for people who are pregnant, people who are thinking of getting pregnant, and people who are breastfeeding,” said Henry. She said there is no increased risk of pregnancy complications when women are vaccinated, but pregnant women who contract COVID-19 face an increased risk of severe illness and higher rates of stillbirths and premature births.

Dr. Henry also outlined today that a new provincial reporting process is coming for school exposures. “Parents need an authoritative source to have an understanding of what is happening at their children’s schools.” She says she asked her team to develop a way that is timely, less intrusive, and more sustainable, and expects to have something in place by the end of the week.



**How to get your digital BC Vaccine Card**

- 1** Visit [gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard](https://gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard)  
Enter your Personal Health Number, date of birth, and date of vaccination
- 2** Get your BC Vaccine Card  
Save it to your mobile device or print it
- 3** Have your BC Vaccine Card ready  
Show it with your ID

**COVID-19 IN BC**

Island Health Region Total Vaccines Administered To Date	% Population Immunized (18+) 1st Dose To Date	% Population Immunized (12+) 1st Dose To Date	% Population Immunized (18+) 2nd Dose To Date
<b>1,312,424</b>	<b>89.7%</b>	<b>89.3%</b>	<b>83.2%</b>

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### [Island Health Medical Health Officers Newsletter No. 335](#)

- We continue to see a stark differential in incidence and severity based on vaccination status; this update provides a breakdown of cases reported from Aug 1<sup>st</sup> to Sept 10<sup>th</sup>.

### [College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC Guidance: Valid contraindications & deferrals to COVID-19 vaccination](#)

- With the BC Vaccine Card becoming operational, you may be getting requests from patients for medical notes to be exempted from receiving a vaccine. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia has issued guidance on how to determine the validity of such requests.

### [BC Ministry of Health Memorandum to Primary Care Partners: Influenza Planning](#)

- As we approach the influenza season, the Ministry of Health, the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, the BC Centre of Disease Control and regional health authorities are engaging with partners on the details of the 2021-22 B.C. Influenza Immunization Plan and regional immunization plans.
- The goal is to increase immunization levels against all vaccine-preventable diseases on the provincial immunization schedule, with emphasis on influenza immunization to high-risk groups like seniors, young children, health-care workers, residents in long-term care settings and individuals with underlying health risk factors.

### [Providing Virtual Care during COVID-19: A Family Practice Story](#)

- Dr El Karsh attended a webinar series about video-based virtual care that was led by his colleague and peer mentor Dr Mark Morris – read about how Dr. El Karsh is now optimizing his practice with video technology. The series is offered in partnership by the [Central Island Division of Family Practice](#) and the GPSC through the DTO and Practice Support Program ([PSP](#)).

### [Find a COVID-19 Immunization Clinic or Vax Van Stop](#)

- Find Island Health region [immunization clinic listings](#) and [Vax Van stops](#).

### [Vaccine Safety – BCCDC & Doctors of BC](#)

- The BC Center for Disease Control updated their [vaccine safety content](#) since our last update and Doctors of BC have a new [helpful infographic for patient conversations](#) about vaccine safety and efficacy.

### [Virtual BCCDC Grand Rounds](#)

- Join virtual BCCDC Grand Rounds on *Tuesday, September 28 from 12:00 to 1:00pm PST* where Dr. Danuta Skowronski will present *Two-dose SARS-CoV-2 vaccine effectiveness in British Columbia (BC), Canada*.

Zoom Meeting Link: <https://ubc.zoom.us/j/>

Meeting ID: 98914300412

Meeting Password: 300412

### **Island Health Email Addresses Changing**

- On September 28th, you'll notice any email coming from your Island Health contacts will change from @viha.ca to @islandhealth.ca. While @viha will continue to work for a couple of years – please update your contacts with the new addresses. If you have an @viha email account – you should update your signature block with your new @islandhealth email to alert your contacts to this change.

### **LINKS, RESOURCES & FAQs**

#### **BCCDC Resources:**

- [New Today](#): This section of the website highlights the latest guidance documents and updates to the website for health professionals.
- [About the vaccines](#)
- [Resources for Health Professionals](#)
- [Reporting adverse events](#)

#### **Doctors of BC:**

- [Info for doctors getting or giving the vaccine](#)
- [Updated toolkit for doctors' offices](#)

#### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

- [ImmunizeBC FAQ](#)