



# COVID-19

## CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

March 5, 2020

As you are likely aware, Providence Health Care (PHC) continues to work closely with our health care partners including Vancouver Coastal Health Public Health, the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), the provincial health ministries, and the Public Health Agency of Canada to ensure a coordinated and consistent response to the novel coronavirus (named COVID-19), while at the same time providing the highest quality care for our patients and residents.

PHC's COVID-19 response plan is being led by Dr. Janet Kow, PHC Senior Medical Director Acute Care and Amanda Harvey, Corporate Director and St. Paul's Site Co-Lead with representation from key PHC programs and departments, including infection prevention and control, occupational health and safety, supply chain, professional practice, contracted services, medical staff, acute/clinical, ambulatory and long-term care.

There are new developments every day and there's a need for staff, medical staff, patients, residents and the public to have the latest information in a consistent and concise manner, and aligned with all health partners and agencies. PHC will aim to ensure you receive timely updates and answers to questions through our communications vehicles and from key organizational contacts.

### What's new: week of March 2

- As of March 4th, BC has 13 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Twelve of the 13 cases identified in B.C. and the VCH/PHC region to date have been quarantined in their homes and public health officials have actively monitored them and any close contacts to ensure there is no ongoing risk to the public. One patient is being treated in hospital.
- Canada now has active travel advisories for COVID-19 for China, Hong Kong, Iran, Japan, Northern Italy, Singapore and South Korea.
- For the latest Canadian updates, visit the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) website.
- For the latest global case counts, please see the WHO situation reports, [available here](#).

### COVID-19 VCH/PHC Staff Live Streamed Town Hall - March 5<sup>th</sup>

VCH/PHC Chief Medical Health Officer Dr. Patricia Daly will be holding a town hall for Vancouver Coastal Health and Providence Health Care staff to provide a general update on COVID-19 and answer questions. **The town hall will be live streamed for those who cannot attend in person and also archived for viewing later.**

**Date:** Thursday, March 5  
**Time:** 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.  
**Place:** Ralph Fisher Auditorium, Richmond Hospital

**Who:** Dr. Patricia Daly, Chief Medical Health Officer, Titus Wong, Regional Medical Director, Infection Prevention and Control, Vivian Eliopoulos, Chief Operating Officer, VCH Vancouver-Richmond Acute Services

Live stream: [Vancouver Coastal Health Town Hall Webcast, March 5, 2020](#)

*Note: The live stream will be broadcast at St. Paul's Hospital in SPH 1477-Cullen for staff to watch together.*

## **Top Questions from PHC Staff this Week**

**Q – Do staff returning from Hubei province, China or Iran need to self-isolate or can they return to work?**

As of March 2, 2020, the Public Health Agency of Canada's advice to travellers – including VCH and PHC staff – returning from Hubei Province, China and Iran is for them to stay home from school or work. They are asked to closely monitor their symptoms and avoid contact with others for 14 days after leaving those areas. International travellers returning from other countries are not asked to self-isolate or stay home from work, though they should monitor themselves for symptoms. If this advice from the Public Health Agency of Canada changes, we will inform staff. This recommendation was made out of an abundance of caution. Call 8-1-1 if you develop symptoms.

**Q – If I have symptoms, what should I do?**

If you have symptoms, you should follow your usual sick call-in procedure, stay home and limit contact with others. Treat mild symptoms as you normally would with rest, fluids and acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol). Wash your hands often.

If you are feeling really ill or have more questions or concerns, call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1, 24 hours a day / 7 days a week.

**Q – What do I do if I have a patient with symptoms of influenza-like illness who has traveled to Wuhan province, Hubei province or Iran?**

PHC staff are encouraged to follow routine clinical practices around all respiratory infections. COVID-19 infection is spread through respiratory droplets. Droplet and contact precautions should be used to care for patients confirmed with, or at risk of COVID-19. Additional precautions are only required if aerosol generating procedures are being performed. These are the same precautions staff should already be taking when providing care to patients with

influenza-like illness.

---

**Q – What should I do if patients are coughing and sneezing in PHC lab, imaging or ambulatory clinics?**

Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette should be encouraged for patients who have signs and symptoms of influenza-like illness. Etiquette signage should be posted at the point of initial encounter in any healthcare setting (e.g., triage in Emergency Departments, reception areas in ambulatory clinics). If you do not already have signage, we will be distributing it to you this week.

Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette includes wearing a mask (surgical or procedural), and using tissues for coughing, sneezing and controlling nasal secretions, with immediate disposal of tissues into an appropriate receptacle, followed by hand hygiene.

If your clinic or area requires additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies, please follow the usual process of making the request through Stores staff.

---

**Q – Should I test all patients with influenza-like illness symptoms for COVID-19?**

The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends COVID-19 testing for:

- Patients with compatible symptoms (e.g. fever, cough or difficulty breathing) AND
- Travel within 14 days of symptom onset to an affected area including:
  - Mainland China
  - Hong Kong o Iran
  - Italy
  - Japan
  - Singapore
  - South Korea
- OR Close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19
- AND No clear alternative diagnosis

The COVID-19 test is available to all doctors in BC to test any other patients, based on their clinical assessment.

---

**Q – Will staff be informed if their patient tests positive?**

We will inform all staff who have provided care to a positive patient and ensure that the proper precautions and protocols were following.

---

**Q – Do I need a surgical mask or N95 respirator?**

If treating a patient with symptoms, follow established droplet and contact precautions and infection, prevention and control protocols.

For assessment and management of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases, use droplet and contact precautions, which includes surgical masks.

Staff are advised to go on with normal usage and not hoard supplies.

## **If I have any questions or concerns about workplace safety, who can I contact?**

Please start by discussing with your manager. If you have additional questions, please contact Sandy Coughlin, PHC Director of Occupational Health & Safety at [scoughlin@providencehealth.bc.ca](mailto:scoughlin@providencehealth.bc.ca) or 604-806-8635.

### **Information and resource links:**

- A dedicated PHC staff and medical staff website is under development and will be launched early next week. Stay tuned.
- A [dedicated VCH intranet page](#) offers the following information on COVID-19. Updates will be made on an ongoing basis:
  - COVID-19 update
  - Q&A for employees and medical staff
  - Information updates from Dr. Patty Daly, Chief Medical Health Officer, VCH
  - Archived all staff town halls for viewing
- [VCH intranet discussion forum](#) to ask questions and share information.
- The [VCH website](#) also provides up-to-date information, including physician updates.
- For timely updates, visit the [BC Centre for Disease Control and Prevention website](#) or follow them on [Twitter @CDCofBC](#).

Thank you to all staff for following appropriate infection prevention and control precautions.