



CLIFF 1164899

May 15, 2020

## COVID-19: Important Update from the Provincial Health Officer

Dear Health Professionals:

The last few months have been a challenging time for patients and clients, health professionals and staff as we collectively manage the COVID-19 pandemic in BC. Based on our incidence and prevalence, I can confidently say we are on the downward slope of our epidemiologic curve. While we have not reached a place where there is no transmission, it is at a level that we can manage if we continue to ensure that important safety measures remain in place. This includes maintaining safe physical distances as much as possible, hand and respiratory hygiene and the use of engineering and administrative controls as well as personal protective equipment where appropriate.

As a result, BC is now in a position to ease restrictions on health care services beginning the week of May 19, 2020. This is not only to ensure that we avoid the unintended consequences of prolonged delay in access to health services, but to help bring society into a new normal until such time as an effective vaccine is available.

Your respective regulatory colleges have developed a set of guiding principles to help you resume in-person care in both acute and community settings. Health professionals are best positioned to determine the urgency, need for, and appropriateness of in-person care for their patients and clients.

Health professionals are also accountable to ensure the health and safety of their patients and clients, colleagues, and support staff in every healthcare setting. I encourage you to look to your health authorities, regulatory college, and WorkSafe BC to ensure that you have strong infection prevention and control protocols and occupational health and safety practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. This includes risk-based and symptom assessments prior to entering the workplace and appropriate use of personal protective equipment.

Public health will be focused on expanding laboratory capacity, surveillance, contact tracing, and cluster and outbreak management for COVID-19 as we prepare for influenza and a potential for a second wave of COVID-19 in the fall. Information will continue to be available on the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#), [Office of the Provincial Health Officer](#), and [WorkSafeBC](#) websites.

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Once again, I appreciate your commitment and efforts to work together during this crisis to protect yourself, your colleagues, and especially the people in your care.

We are getting through this.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bonnie Henry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping tail.

Bonnie Henry  
MD, MPH, FRCPC  
Provincial Health Officer