



CLIFF 1164899

**May 15, 2020**

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

Dear Physician:

The last few months have been a challenging time for patients, physicians 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.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC has developed guidance titled [Providing In-person Community Care During COVID-19: Guidance for Registrants](#) to help you resume in-person care in both acute and community settings. Physicians are best positioned to determine the urgency, need for, and appropriateness of in-person care for their patients.

Physicians are also accountable to ensure the health and safety of their patients, colleagues, and support staff in every health-care setting. I encourage you to look to your health authorities, the College, and WorkSafeBC 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