

January 25, 2021

### **COVID-19 update: marking one-year anniversary, fighting racism as vaccine rollout proceeds**

One year after Canada's first presumptive case of COVID-19 was announced, Premier John Horgan today took time to commemorate the more than 1,000 British Columbians lost to the coronavirus while thanking frontline workers for their efforts in keeping people safe and recommitting the Province to fighting the pandemic.

As well as honouring those who have died, said the premier, today's solemn anniversary is an appropriate time "to acknowledge the countless efforts and sacrifices people have made to help protect and take care of others" since the pandemic was declared.

"Today we recommit ourselves to protecting people's health and livelihoods from the threat of COVID-19, knowing that better days are ahead," Horgan, said in [his statement](#).

On Friday, the government announced a four-phased, age-based [immunization plan](#) which, in the first two phases, prioritizes the protection of those most susceptible to severe illness and death from COVID-19. The plan's final two phases cover the general population.

The vaccine rollout, the largest in B.C.'s history, calls for every eligible British Columbian to receive a vaccine between April and the end of September – a total of 7.4 million doses (allowing for two doses per person). In partnership with communities, businesses and municipalities, the plan calls for clinics to be set up in 172 B.C. communities.

Phase One vaccinations of frontline health care workers began in December for long-term care and assisted living staff, and hospital health care workers who provide care to COVID-19 patients. Phase Two (February-March) vaccinations for health care workers will include hospital staff, community GPs and medical specialists not yet immunized, as well as workers providing community home support and nursing services for seniors.

As additional vaccines become available, frontline essential workers or those who work in specific workplaces who have not yet been immunized may also start receiving vaccines in Phase 3. British Columbians aged 69–16 who are deemed clinically extremely vulnerable will be eligible for early immunization in Phase 3. The timing of each phase may begin sooner than scheduled. Details for how to pre-register for the vaccine using mobile devices, computers or phone will be released by the end of February.

### **Fighting COVID racism**

Also today, the government and the BC Green Party issued a [joint statement](#) condemning acts of racism and discrimination against Indigenous peoples under the guise of COVID-19.

"We stand together with Indigenous peoples across the province to denounce and condemn in the strongest possible terms the racist behaviour and discrimination directed at Indigenous peoples," says the statement, issued by Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Murray Rankin, Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives Rachna Singh, and BC Green Party leader Sonia Furstenuau.

"We are deeply concerned about the recent reports coming from members of Cowichan Tribes and the mounting reports regarding anti-Indigenous racism from many other Indigenous communities throughout the province. Racism toward Indigenous peoples has no place in our society and it must stop. We need to stand up to this kind of reprehensible behaviour."