

## 3 NATIONS COVID-19 UPDATE – 23 December 2020

*The information contained in this report is based on recent updates and current information available at the time the report was finalized. It is not inclusive of all actions or measures taken to date by health officials federally, provincially, or locally.*

### COVID-19 CASE COUNTS

<b>STATUS OF CASES IN BC<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>As of Dec 22</b>	<b>As of Dec 23</b>	<b>Change</b>
Total confirmed cases in BC	47,510	48,027	<b>*518</b>
Total active cases in BC	9,481	9,137	<b>-344</b>
Currently in intensive care	84	80	<b>-4</b>
Currently hospitalized	357	348	<b>-9</b>
Total hospitalized to date	2,585	2,621	<b>36</b>
Total deaths in BC	777	796	<b>19</b>
Total recovered in BC	36,094	36,952	<b>858</b>
<b>CONFIRMED CASES BY REGION<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>As of Dec 22</b>	<b>As of Dec 23</b>	<b>Change</b>
Total confirmed cases in BC	47,510	48,027	<b>*518</b>
Vancouver Coastal Health	11,331	11,428	<b>97</b>
Fraser Health	30,227	30,559	<b>332</b>
Island Health	838	847	<b>9</b>
Interior Health	3,391	3,440	<b>49</b>
Northern Health	1,620	1,651	<b>31</b>
Out of Canada	103	102	<b>-1</b>
Total individuals tested in BC	1,400,609	1,409,122	<b>8,513</b>
<b>STATUS OF CASES IN YUKON<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>As of Dec 21</b>	<b>As of Dec 22</b>	<b>Change</b>
Total confirmed cases	59	59	<b>0</b>
Total active cases	1	0	<b>-1</b>
Total deaths	1	1	<b>0</b>
Total recovered	57	58	<b>1</b>
Total individuals tested	5,855	5,872	<b>17</b>
Negative results	5,788	5,788	<b>0</b>
Pending results	8	25	<b>17</b>

\*The BCCDC has reported 518 confirmed cases in B.C., which does not align with the difference in case counts (517) between Dec 22 and Dec 23.

<sup>1</sup> <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/a6f23959a8b14bfa989e3cda29297ded>

<sup>2</sup> <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/a6f23959a8b14bfa989e3cda29297ded>

<sup>3</sup> <https://yukon.ca/en/case-counts-covid-19>

## STATUS OF FIRST NATION RESERVE

<b>CASES IN CANADA<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>As of Dec 21</b>	<b>As of Dec 22</b>	<b>Change</b>
Total confirmed cases	7,536	7,615	79
Total active cases	2,977	3,005	28
Currently hospitalized	344	348	4
Total deaths	70	69	-1
Total recovered	4,489	4,541	52
Total confirmed cases in BC	573	573	0

## SIGNIFICANT UPDATES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

- Today, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), First Nations Health Council (FNHC), and the First Nations Health Directors Association (FNHDA) released a joint statement on early access to COVID-19 vaccine for rural and remote First Nations communities, which included the following:<sup>5</sup>
  - The first COVID-19 vaccines for First Nations communities in B.C. will be available starting Dec. 28 – six weeks earlier than originally anticipated.
    - The Moderna vaccine, approved by Health Canada today, will be used for this rollout.
    - The Moderna vaccine is more suitable for use in remote regions than the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine since it does not require ultra-cold storage, has a longer fridge life, and does not need to be diluted for administration.
  - The first vaccines will be administered in 10 rural and remote First Nations communities – mostly in northern B.C.
    - 10 communities were selected because – in addition to being remote – they have 24/7 primary care available throughout the holidays that will allow staff to prepare for the immunization program.
    - They also have nursing staff who are qualified immunizers as well as existing infrastructure to accept and distribute the vaccines and meet the necessary storage requirements.
  - The FNHA has received approval to adopt a “whole community” approach in which everyone age 18 and over will be offered a vaccine.
    - This means everyone 18 years and older who lives in the community will be vaccinated.
    - Priority will generally be given to older adults as they are at the greatest risk if they contract the virus.
    - However, vaccines will be distributed to the entire adult population of small, remote First Nations communities, rather than only to the Elders.
  - “Reduced access to stable housing, income, clean water and/or health and social services place many Indigenous peoples at a higher risk of COVID-19 than the rest of the population. The COVID-19 vaccine is one way that Indigenous peoples can protect themselves from this virus and build community immunity.”

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1598625105013/1598625167707>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/early-access-to-covid-19-vaccine-for-rural-and-remote-first-nations-communities>

- “We recognize that some Indigenous people lack trust in the medical system. However, it is important to note that vaccine trials go through rigorous, well-established ethical processes, including trials involving thousands of volunteers in all adult age groups and of many ethnic backgrounds.
- “Vaccines are safe, effective and they will save lives. The FNHA, FNHC and FNHDA join our organizations' medical leaders in strongly recommending that Indigenous people opt to be vaccinated for COVID-19 as soon as vaccines are offered.”
- “Our organizations are working to make sure the vaccine can be accessed as soon as possible and will provide regular updates on this rapidly changing situation. Meanwhile, please remember that we will need to continue to practice all the recommended public health measures to stay safe, even after receiving the vaccine.”
- Today, Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s provincial health officer and Adrian Dix, the B.C. Minister of Health, provided an update on the ongoing COVID-19 situation in the province.<sup>6</sup>
  - Today, the federal government approved the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines will be administered to priority populations in B.C. The Moderna vaccine will arrive in B.C. starting next week.
  - Regarding a new provincial health order for industrial camps in the Northern Health region, Dr. Henry provided the following statement:
    - “Today, a new PHO order for industrial camps in the Northern Health region has been put in place.”
    - “The nature of an industrial work camp means employees frequently travel to and from these work camps. At the start of the year, these camps typically have an influx of employees returning to the site.”
    - “Combined, these factors mean a higher potential for spread amongst employees and in their home communities. This order will allow for a phased approach to resuming activities at these projects, while protecting health and safety and protecting the health-care system.”
    - “We are already seeing many small, rural and remote communities in the North under strain. This order will help ease the pressure at the start of the year.”
  - Regarding the COVID-19 briefing schedule, briefings will not be given on Friday - Christmas Day, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. The next briefing will be on Tuesday, Dec. 29 at 3:00 PST.
- Today, Dr. Henry also provided an update on the latest epidemiological reports and data on COVID-19 in B.C., which included the following statements and information:<sup>7</sup>
  - Between Dec. 15-21, there were 4,025 new cases, 109 deaths, 241 hospitalization and 4,228 people removed from isolation in B.C.
  - School-aged children represented 12% of cases. There were 4 outbreaks in schools since Sept. Fewer than 7 in 1,000 students have tested positive for COVID-19.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020HLTH0068-002141>

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Bonnie Henry via live press conference 3:00 PST 21/23/2020

- “What (the data) tells us is that we had an increasing rate of testing, we had an increasing rate of positivity into November and we’ve now started to see a decrease. And that has been particularly apparent in Fraser Health, in Interior Health and Northern Health where the rates still remain high.”
- “If we look at 20-29 and 30-39 it shows that cases are overly represented in those age groups. We also see that people who are more likely to have severe illness (and) end up in hospital, in ICU or to die from COVID are heavily skewed to the older age groups.”
- “The vast majority of people who have died from COVID were 70 or older. Age remains the single most important risk factor for severe illness or death from COVID-19.”
- “What (the data also) show us is that when we adhere to (PHO) orders the case numbers do come down. And that is incredibly important for us to recognize, but we cannot let off.”
- “With Christmas two days away, we remind everyone to keep your celebrations small and avoid travel to other communities unless it is absolutely necessary. Show you care by staying away.”

## **SIGNIFICANT UPDATES IN YUKON TERRITORY**

- Today, Pauline Frost, Minister of Health and Social Services released the following statement on the approval of the Moderna vaccine:<sup>8</sup>
  - “We are very pleased that Health Canada has granted final regulatory approval to Moderna’s COVID-19 vaccine.”
  - “This is the exciting news Yukoners have been waiting for and our team is ready to begin vaccinating Yukoners as soon as possible. We expect doses to arrive by the end of December and, following the training of staff, vaccinations will begin the first week of January.”
  - “The Territory will have enough doses to vaccinate 75% of eligible adult population in early 2021. The first Yukoners eligible for the vaccine will be long-term care residents and staff.”
  - “I urge all Yukoners to continue practising the Safe 6 and wear a mask. We cannot let our guard down and must continue to be vigilant against possible spread of the virus.”

## **SIGNIFICANT UPDATES FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA**

- Today, Health Canada authorized the second COVID-19 vaccine in Canada, manufactured by Moderna.<sup>9</sup>
  - Health Canada received Moderna’s submission on October 12, 2020, and after a thorough, independent review of the evidence, it has determined that the Moderna vaccine meets the Department’s stringent safety, efficacy and quality requirements.
  - The different storage and handling requirements of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine mean that it can be distributed to isolated and remote communities, including the territories.
  - Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada will closely monitor the safety of the vaccine once it is on the market and will not hesitate to take action if any safety concerns are identified.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://yukon.ca/en/news/december-22-2020-covid-19-update>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2020/12/health-canada-authorizes-moderna-covid-19-vaccine.html>

- Today, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau provided the following statements and information on COVID-19 in Canada:<sup>10</sup>
  - “This morning, we got the news Health Canada has completed the review of the Moderna vaccine and found it to be safe and effective...Now that Health Canada has approved the Moderna vaccine, we have the green light to start rolling it out across the country.”
    - The first of the guaranteed 40-million dose order from Moderna will arrive in the coming days.
    - Canada will receive an additional quarter of a million doses from Pfizer next month, combined for a total of almost 751,000 Pfizer vaccine doses for January 2021.
    - Canada is on track to receive 1.2 million doses from both Pfizer and Moderna delivered by January 31, 2021.
  - “I want to say a few words about traveling and the holidays; let’s be clear, this is not the time for a vacation abroad. Even if you travel every winter, please, re-think your plans. In many parts of the country, hospitals are already struggling to cope with new cases. There are new strains of this disease in places like the United Kingdom, the situation is very serious.”
  - “This is not the time for Christmas or New Years parties, this is a time to continue wearing a mask, to keep your distance, to avoid gatherings.”
    - The Prime Minister announced an extension of the temporary travel suspension to the United Kingdom for two more weeks, until January 6, 2021.
- Today, Bill Blair, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, issued a statement regarding funding to the Red Cross for ongoing COVID-19 response.<sup>11</sup>
  - \$70 million will be provided to the Canadian Red Cross:
    - \$35 million for Red Cross personnel to support Outbreak Crisis Management
    - \$35 million for testing-related activities led by the Red Cross COVID-19 Testing Assistance Response Teams (CTART).
  - “The COVID Testing Assistance Response Teams (CTART) funding will help the Red Cross to create and deploy more teams of clinical and non-clinical staff who will support logistics, distribute information, meet surge testing needs, and fill the gaps for targeted COVID-19 testing.”

This summary was compiled by [CCEM Strategies Ltd.](#) at the request of the 3 Nations Society.

<sup>10</sup> Prime Minister via live media address at 10:00 AM on 12/23/20

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/news/2020/12/government-of-canada-provides-70-million-in-additional-funding-to-the-red-cross-for-ongoing-covid-19-response.html>