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COVID-19 Update #9

Testing update:

- As call centre capacity has increased, so has the demand. During last week, over 650 calls were answered a day - double that of a month ago. The team continues to increase capacity with many additional staff and more efficient processes.
- Symptomatic direct patient care providers are prioritized by calling 1-833-737-9377.
- Testing sites continually adjust their capacity in response to dynamic demands with a goal of maintaining testing within 48h of calling in.
- Saline gargle tests are available for children at all testing sites. Sensitivity was found to be 98% compared to NP swabs (medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.09.13.20188334v1). When production capacity permits, a larger roll-out will occur.
- K-12 students with certain single symptoms not predictive of COVID-19, or mild symptoms lasting less than 24h hours, are not required to isolate and be tested as per updated BCCDC guidance (bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf).
- Lab turn-around time for swabs remains quick with an average of less than 24h. Island Health labs continue to increase daily capacity.
- Community physicians can collect swabs by following BCCDC guidance (bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/BCCDC_PHL_Updated_nCoV_Lab_Guidance.pdf) and submitting the specimen and completed requisition to an Island Health lab site (islandhealth.ca/our-locations/medical-laboratory-locations) or LifeLabs.

Situational assessment:

- The incidence rate of COVID-19 has remained stable within Island Health, with 1.1 cases per day in September. The current prevalence of active cases within Island Health is 3 cases per million. Comparably, BC's current prevalence is 250 active cases per million – attributable to 94% of cases being concentrated in the Lower Mainland. 5.4% of active cases in BC are hospitalized, and 1.6% in ICU - lower proportions than earlier in the pandemic. This is likely attributable to the shift in case demographics to primarily 20-40 year olds.
- The 7-day average of daily tests is 721, doubled from mid-August. 7-day percent positivity is 0.1%, meaning 99.9% of people tested are negative. Comparably, BC's recent percent positivity is 2.0%.
- COVID-19 cases continue to be contacted **well within 24h** by one of Island Health's 3 Communicable Disease Hubs upon notification of a positive test result, and contacts are typically traced and managed within 24 hours as well. Cases and contacts receive daily follow-up until they have successfully completed required periods of self-isolation or quarantine.
- Nearly all cases in Island Health have an identified source of infection. There is no current concern for sustained community transmission anywhere within Island Health.

Resources:

- One-stop-shop for medical staff at medicalstaff.islandhealth.ca/covid-19
- Surveillance:
 - Island Health: islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/covid-19/outbreaks-and-exposures: updated when a new case is reported, also lists outbreaks and exposures (including schools) of COVID-19 within Island Health (currently none)
 - BCCDC: bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/data: all of BC and by Health Authority, updated every weekday