



**Office of the
Chief Medical
Health Officer**

**NORTH ISLAND
250.331.8591**

Charmaine Enns
MD MHSc FRCPC
355-11th Street
Courtenay, BC V9N 1S4

**CENTRAL ISLAND
250.739.6304**

Sandra Allison
MD MPH CCFP FCFP FRCPC

Mike Benusic
MD MPH FRCPC

3rd Floor, 6475 Metral Drive
Nanaimo, BC V9T 2L9

**COWICHAN AREA
250.737.2020**

Shannon Waters
MD MHSc FRCPC
4th floor
238 Government St
Duncan, BC V9L 1A5

**SOUTH ISLAND
250.519.3406**

Richard Stanwick,
CMHO
MD MSc FRCPC FAAP

Murray Fyfe
MD MSc FRCPC

Dee Hoyano
MD FRCPC CCFP

1837 Fort Street
Victoria, BC V8R 1J6

**After Hours On Call
1.800.204.6166**

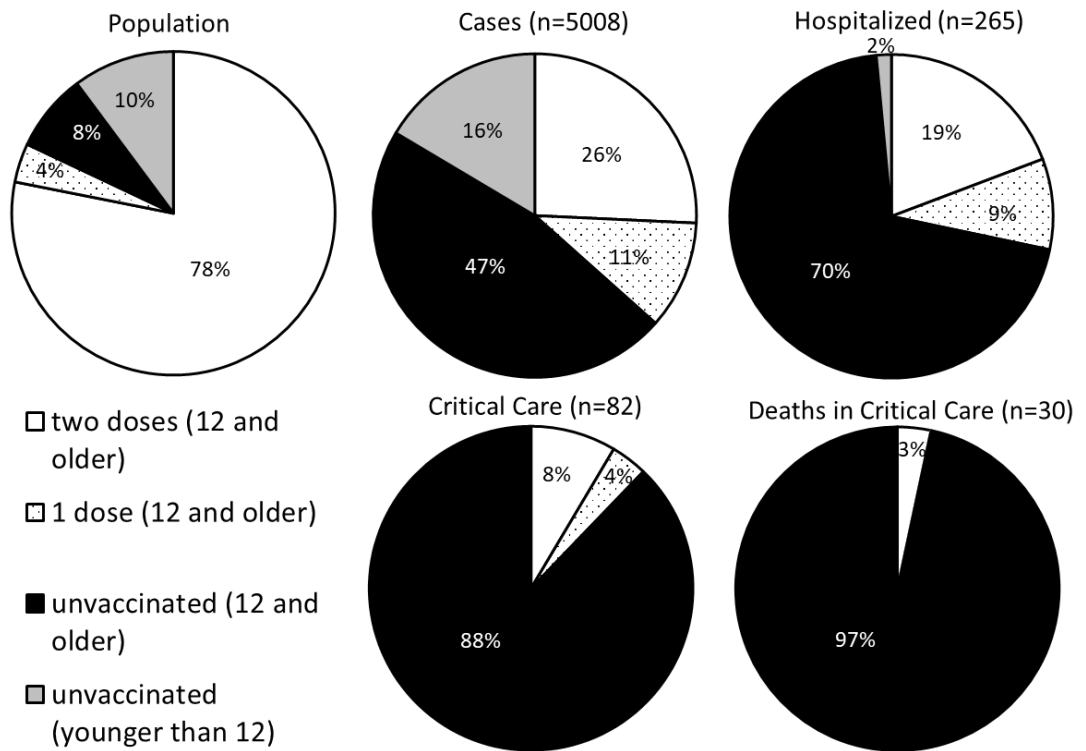
**MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICERS’
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COVID-19 Update #19

- A provincial COVID-19 booster dose roll-out has started, with details at bit.ly/3GSqWeA. While there is evidence for decreased protection from acquiring COVID-19 with time since vaccination, protection against severe disease remains extremely high. Patients should be reassured that they are highly protected against harm from COVID-19 if they have completed a primary series, ensure they are registered in the provincial system (getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca), and wait until they are invited to book for a booster dose. There is no process for expediting booster doses.

- Those who are unvaccinated continue to make up a disproportionately high number of cases, the majority of hospitalizations, and the vast majority of critical care admissions:
Island Health population and COVID-19 cases by vaccine status, 1 August - 23 Oct 2021



- The most important intervention against COVID-19 remains the first dose of vaccine. Please continue to work with your vaccine-hesitant patients with supporting resources:
 - Patient-oriented Q+A: immunizebc.ca/covid-19
 - Healthcare provider communication tool: bit.ly/3j4cOFj
 - BCCDC toolkit for health professionals: bit.ly/382A1BI
- Contraindications to COVID-19 vaccination are extremely rare. Guidance on exemption requests can be found at bit.ly/3Ezpool. Healthcare workers seeking exemptions must submit requests themselves to the Provincial Health Officer as per bit.ly/31vzlza.
- If a client has concerns of an adverse event following immunization and is seeking guidance for subsequent vaccination, please refer to previous newsletter for guidance: bit.ly/3tDIPsd. A 1-page reporting form is available at bit.ly/2Ta8JFe.