

COVID-19 Update – April 8, 2020

BC Update: Since the last update, 88 new cases were confirmed, for a total of 1,291 cases. There have been 43 COVID-19 related deaths in the province. We now have 805 people who have fully recovered and the number of hospitalized cases are continuing to decrease. The provincial public health officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, is encouraging everyone to stay home over the long weekend and especially avoid travel to smaller communities.

Enhanced Digital Library Services: The provincial government will provide a one-time \$3 million investment in public libraries to support electronic resource licensing and help expand online common collections for all B.C. public libraries. The additional \$1.2 million will be distributed directly to libraries to provide enhanced digital and connectivity services. The Ministry of Education has also released a new strategic plan for provincial public library services in British Columbia that can be found [here](#).

Face Masks: The Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health Communication have issued a statement saying that the use of a non-medical mask or facial covering can be an additional measure you can take to protect others around you. It does not offer protection from the virus and may pose additional hazards through improper use. Medical masks must be preserved for healthcare workers. The full statement can be found [here](#). Hand washing and social distancing remain the proven methods of fighting the spread of the virus.

Spaces Secured for Vulnerable People: The provincial government has secured over 900 spaces at 23 sites across BC for people that need to isolate but are unable to due to those experiencing homelessness, people without safe spaces to isolate and youth.

Special Needs Emergency Fund: The B.C. government has created a new Emergency Relief Support Fund and added service flexibility for parents of children with special needs to help during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a needs-based approach, the fund will provide a direct payment of \$225 per month to eligible families over the next three months (to June 30, 2020). Families are encouraged to reach out to their services worker to see how they can benefit from emergency help.

BC Parks: All BC Parks were closed today. The ban on all camping in provincial and federal parks is also extended until May 31, 2020.

Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB): Information on CERB can be found [here](#).

Income Supports for Workers during the Pandemic: A full review of all income supports workers can access during the pandemic can be found [here](#).

Provincial Support and COVID-19 Information: More information on what provincial supports are available and the current situation in British Columbia can be found [here](#).

In solidarity,

Justin Schmid
CUPE Legislative Coordinator - BC Region