

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 23, 2021

Health-care workers need your help

The third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic is here and like all of us, our health-care teams are ready to put the pandemic behind them. For more than a year, public health teams, medical staff, staff and care providers across Island Health have focused their energies on preventing and managing the spread of COVID-19 in our communities, and keeping you and your loved ones safe. This unprecedented effort continues, in addition to other important, everyday health-care needs beyond the pandemic. You can help by following public health orders and guidelines.

As the detailed April 16 presentation from the Province showed, COVID-19 cases remain high in our communities and we are seeing an increasing presence of the new Variants of Concern. Our Public Health teams are working long hours in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our communities through testing and collection, case and contact management, and vaccinations.

But our health-care teams are tired. Many are on the verge of exhaustion. We are immensely proud of all the people who work so tirelessly to keep our health system running. In recent days, there also has been discussion about acute care occupancy and available critical care beds. Island Health currently has the necessary infrastructure and capacity with respect to critical care beds and ventilators. But occupancy numbers and ventilator supply doesn't tell the full story. For every person in a critical care bed, whether they are being treated for COVID-19 or another serious medical condition, a team of dedicated professionals is required to deliver care. It is a system that relies on people. Our people are dedicated, diligent and resilient, and their commitment to providing excellent care is unwavering. But they are being stretched to their limit as this pandemic continues.

COVID-19 is swift. Right now, we are a third of the way to achieving community immunity and we need to adhere to public health orders and guidelines to prevent overloading our health-system.

We acknowledge the global pandemic continues to be an extremely challenging experience for so many. We appreciate everything the community has done to support us, and we look forward to the continued roll-out of vaccine. Until we have sufficient community immunity, help reduce the burden on the health-care system by not gathering indoors with people we don't live with, avoiding all non-essential travel by staying local, and staying home when sick. Your efforts to stick to these principles are a show of support for our frontline workers. And they need all that support more than ever right now.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Stanwick, Vice President Population Health and Chief Medical Health Officer, and
Dr. Ben Williams, Vice President, Medicine and Quality and Chief Medical Executive