



COVID-19 Second Wave

July 2020

Background

Over the last four weeks Canadians have been watching the numbers of COVID-19 cases level off as we flattened our collective curves and then start to trend upwards as the provinces began reopening of services. While it was not unexpected that we may see a jump in cases, the numbers have started to become 'of concern' not only to Canada's Medical Health Officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, but to jurisdictional Medical Health Officers as well. On July 27, Dr. Deena Hinshaw Alberta's Medical Officer noted that Alberta's curve is no longer flat and while Dr. Bonnie Henry, BC's Provincial Health Officer, has not said the same she has raised an alarm as BC's daily cases went from a respectable average of about 10-13 per day to roughly 30 per day as of late July 2020. In fact, Dr. Henry warned of the potential for 'explosive growth' if British Columbians failed to comply with physical distancing and other regulations in place. It is important to note that BC's hospitalization and intensive care rates remain low, but we have seen ongoing outbreaks in long-term care (Holy Family Hospital in Vancouver) and an increase in community transmission (on Haida Gwaii at work sites in the Fraser Valley etc.) and of course the number of those who have died of COVID-19 has increased. This is to say nothing of the ongoing and very alarming spike in COVID-19 cases we see in the United States. [Borders remain closed](#), the economy has begun to re-open with restrictions and the healthcare workforce is preparing itself for a "second wave" as we approach the fall when other respiratory viruses, such as influenza, are making their way across the population.

Countries in Asia as well as Australia are reportedly starting to feel the impacts of second wave of COVID-19 and other countries are in the middle of initial outbreaks (India, Brazil, the US). Worldwide cases of COVID-19 are over 16 million and over 660,000 people have died of this illness. What's clear is that we will be living with COVID-19 in our communities for a long time to come.

From a nursing perspective many of the issues faced during the initial COVID-19 outbreak remain the same and are potentially magnified during a second wave as a result of fatigue from the first wave. These issues include adequate access to and a safe supply of [PPE](#), helping the public to understand the benefits of the use of [non-medical masks](#), workload and workplace safety issues, [mental health challenges](#) (e.g. burnout), and issues of [moral distress and ethical decisions making](#). Nurses continue to have the ability to demonstrate unique leadership, commitment to service, and a focus on evidence-informed best practice in an effort to help combat the spread, while also caring for those directly affected by COVID-19 (and other illnesses). BC's nurses will again be called upon to help the public not only navigate a second wave but also understand the importance of ensuring that public health guidelines are followed. Moreover, nurses will be pivotal in ensuring that BC's healthcare system is able to manage and cope with the stresses that COVID-19 in influenza season will bring.

Key Messages

- The increase in COVID-19 cases over the last few weeks nationwide and in BC is alarming.
- These increases provide an opportunity for everyone to recommit to the 'basics' of physical distancing, frequent hand washing, use of non-medical masks, staying home when sick and covering coughs and sneezes.
- NNPBC supports the current public health messaging reminding people to stay vigilant about COVID-19.
- While it is of course unclear when or how a second wave of COVID-19 infections will hit, understanding that a resurgence of COVID-19 in the fall will coincide with influenza season is imperative.
- NNPBC recognizes that issues of PPE, safety, mental health etc. will remain top of mind for BC nurses.



- BC nurses will be pivotal in ensuring that BC's healthcare system is able to manage and cope with a second wave of COVID infections that could potentially occur during peak flu season.
- Nurses have the ability to demonstrate unique leadership, commitment to service, and a focus on evidence-informed best practice in an effort to help combat the spread, while also caring for those directly affected by COVID-19 (and other illnesses).
- BC nurses are well positioned to use their earned public trust to help people understand the importance of adhering to public health guidelines.

Further Reading/Resources

- [NNPBC COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [BCCNP COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [BCCDC](#)
- [Canadian Nurses Association](#)
- [BC Government](#)
- [WHO](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)

Please feel free to direct questions and additional comments to info@nnpbc.com.

¹ It bears noting that many outlets have indicated that the term 'second wave' is inaccurate for a variety of reasons. That said, it is the commonly understood term for a 'second' resurgence of COVID-19.