

Dear Community Member,

A very Happy New Year to you and warm wishes those continuing holiday celebrations! I think that every Holiday message you received likely started with “2020 was a difficult year”. But as we attentively start the new year we have a renewed purpose to do the things we know help fight COVID-19, knowing that there is light and safe loved ones at the end of the tunnel.

### **Vaccine progress**

It is great to see that the vaccination efforts have been forging forward even through the holidays season. Over **40,000 people** in the province have already received a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and this is before the vaccination efforts ramp up in the following weeks. Until now, we’ve seen elders in remote First Nation communities, health care workers, and seniors receive the vaccine. In the next weeks, the vaccination program will begin to move quickly, a scenario for which we know it is difficult to remain patient. The vaccine’s dissemination protects the older members in care which have been the most vulnerable to this disease and those in closest contact with this demographic. This will help slow down the spread – working towards keeping all of us, safer and maintaining access to our healthcare system. To learn more about the B.C.’s vaccine plan click [here](#).

### **Surgery Renewal Plan**

Also this week Minister of Health Adrian Dix announced that [90% of people who had their surgery postponed during the first wave of COVID-19 have now had their surgery completed](#). Naturally these collective efforts have been a huge relief for the people who had been waiting for scheduled surgeries. This significant achievement is the result of the hard work of surgeons, nurses and other health care workers, who have adapted to new practices to keep hospitals and patients safe and allow surgeries to resume during COVID-19. Since April 1, hundreds of new health care workers have been hired in the province to support our surgical renewal plan. There are many in our own community who have benefited from these collective efforts.

### **British Columbians receive recovery benefit**

Additionally, as of this week, over one million British Columbians have been approved to receive the BC Recovery Benefit, and staff are working through hundreds of thousands more applications as quickly as possible. The benefit will help make life easier for people and families through the pandemic, with up to \$1,000 available for families and up to \$500 for single people. For more information about applying for the benefit, you can visit the [Province of BC link here](#).

My constituency office is available by phone or email. You can reach us at 250.703.2410 or Ronna-Rae.Leonard.MLA@leg.bc.ca if you have any questions or need assistance with provincial supports.

Sincerely,

Ronna-Rae Leonard

MLA Courtenay-Comox

**COVID Resources:**

- For medical info, visit [bccdc.ca](http://bccdc.ca) or call 811
- For provincial supports and BC's Restart Plan, visit [gov.bc.ca/covid19](http://gov.bc.ca/covid19) or call 1-888-COVID-19 (1-888-268-4319) or text 604-630-0300
- For employer guidelines on returning to work safely, visit [WorkSafeBC](http://WorkSafeBC)
- Take the self-assessment at [covid19.thrive.health](http://covid19.thrive.health)
- For seniors looking for additional support, or for those looking to support seniors, call 2-1-1 or visit [bc211.ca](http://bc211.ca)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RonnaRaeLeonard/>

Instagram: @ronnaraeleonard

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYLQfuaKQV-itCluryo2hQg>

Website: <http://ronnaraeleonard.ca/>

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Community Office Hours: Monday to Thursday, 10 am to 4 pm

**MY OFFICE REMAINS OPEN TO ASSIST BY PHONE OR EMAIL**

[www.ronnaraeleonard.ca](http://www.ronnaraeleonard.ca)



*It is a privilege to live and work on the traditional lands of the K'omoks First Nations.*

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