

Subject: Vaccine Rollout – More Health Care Assistants (NIC) - Funding for Courtenay-Comox treatment centres – Sid Williams funding – Multiculturalism Awards – Student Park Rangers

Dear Community Member,

### Vaccine Rollout

Last week Dr. Bonnie Henry released B.C.'s [COVID-19 vaccine rollout plan](#). Based on scientific evidence and expert guidance, the plan is designed to save lives and stop the spread of COVID-19. We are putting the health and safety of our most vulnerable at the centre of our plan. The greatest risk factor for severe illness and death from COVID-19 is age. That is why Phase 1 has focused on immunizing long-term care residents and the people who care for them.

Phase 2 will begin in late February, and expands immunization to all seniors 80 and over, as well as health care staff and Indigenous seniors and Elders over 65.

Phase 3 (beginning of April) will expand to include people aged 60-79, as well as other adults who are clinically extremely vulnerable due to health concerns.

And starting in July, Phase 4 will see everyone in B.C. aged 18-59 who wants a vaccine, receiving one. This will happen in five-year increments working backwards, meaning the 55-59-year-old group will be first, then those aged 50-54, and so on, down to the 18-24 age group.

COVID-19 Immunization Plan			
Phase 1 Dec 2020-Feb 2021	Phase 2 Feb-March 2021	Phase 3 April-June 2021	Phase 4 July-Sept 2021
<b>High-risk population</b>		<b>General population</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents, staff, and essential visitors to long-term care and assisted living</li> <li>Individuals assessed for/awaiting long-term care</li> <li>Hospital health care workers who may provide care for COVID-19 patients</li> <li>Remote and isolated Indigenous communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seniors aged 80+ who are not yet immunized</li> <li>Indigenous seniors aged 65+, Elders, and additional communities not yet immunized</li> <li>Hospital staff, community GPs and medical specialists not yet immunized</li> <li>Vulnerable populations in select congregated settings</li> <li>Staff in community home support and nursing services for seniors</li> </ul>	People aged 79 to 60, in five year increments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>79 to 75</li> <li>74 to 70</li> <li>69 to 65</li> <li>64 to 60</li> </ul> People aged 69 to 16 who are clinically extremely vulnerable	People aged 59 to 18, in five year increments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>59 to 55</li> <li>54 to 50</li> <li>49 to 45</li> <li>44 to 40</li> <li>39 to 35</li> <li>34 to 30</li> <li>29 to 25</li> <li>24 to 18</li> </ul>
Once more vaccines are approved/available, people 64 to 18 yrs who are front-line essential workers or work in specific workplaces/industries may be included later in Phase 3.			
The timeline for BC's COVID-19 Immunization Plan may change based on vaccine availability.			<b>COVID-19 IN BC</b>

Right now, the two vaccines that are available in Canada are not recommended for most children. We are reviewing the evidence carefully and will continue to base our decisions on the best available science.

I know everyone is eager to find out when their turn will come. Remember that while it might not be your turn just yet, every single person in B.C. who gets the vaccine helps reduce the spread and makes us all a little bit safer. I would like to acknowledge the disappointment and anxiety that comes from the stalling of the vaccines' arrival to Canada. It is reassuring that people are eager to receive their inoculations, and buoyed to know that our patience and vigilance equals kindness, calmness, and safeness.

More Health Care Assistant training locally and throughout the province

Our government recognizes the need for more health care assistants, and it's so great to see these extra seats coming to North Island College. The New Democrat government is creating 16 new seats in the health care assistant program at North Island College, between the Comox Valley and Campbell River campuses. These are some of the 600 new seats being created at public post-secondary institutions across the province, as part of the Health Career Access Program, with a total investment of \$8.4 million. This is one part of BC's Economic Recovery plan to help

people up or reskill in the post-COVID economy. Click here for more info:

[https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/news\\_releases\\_2020-2024/2021AEST0004-000103.htm](https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/news_releases_2020-2024/2021AEST0004-000103.htm)

Or read it in the Comox Valley Record:

<https://www.comoxvalleyrecord.com/news/sixteen-seats-added-to-nic-health-care-assistant-program/>

### Funding boost for addictions treatment and recovery services

Here in Courtenay-Comox, our government continues to ensure that people struggling with addictions are supported during COVID-19. Financial support is going to the Comox Valley Recovery Centre Society, Comox Valley Transition Society, and Stepping Stones Recovery House for Women Society which is a part of \$2 million being distributed across BC to support people on their road to recovery. Here's a link to more info:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021MMHA0002-000144>

### Sid Williams get provincial funding

There is more good news for our Arts community here in the Comox Valley. We want our arts venues to be ready for when we are able to gather again to appreciate art together. With the limitations that the pandemic has put on public events, the Side Willian Theatre Society has been working hard to bring art and theatre to people in a safe way. I am pleased to announce that \$15,000 in funding from the Province will help support arts and culture in Courtenay-Comox through the Sid to make sure we can have art and theatre in a safe way and adapt to new protocols.

### Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Awards

The British Columbia Multiculturalism and Anti-racism Awards honour exceptional individuals and organizations that promote multiculturalism and address racism. You can nominate a person or organization that's making a difference in your community in one of these three categories: 1) Intercultural Trust Award; 2) Breaking Barriers Award; and 3) Emerging Leader Award. Learn more here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/multiculturalism-anti-racism/multiculturalism/bc-multicultural-awards>

## Student Rangers!

Do you know a student who loves working outdoors and has an interest in our BC parks? BC Parks within the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy has created the **BC Parks Student Ranger Program** to promote outdoor youth employment opportunities across the province. Students studying and/or interested in pursuing future studies or employment in a related field are encouraged to apply. Applications are now being accepted for student ranger positions. Click here for more info: <https://bcparks.ca/employment/student-ranger/>

My constituency office is available by phone or email. The office is open Monday to Thursday 10am-4pm, and Fridays by appointment only. You can reach us at 250.703.2410 or [Ronna-Rae.Leonard.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto: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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Ronna-Rae Leonard MLA for Courtenay-Comox

437 5<sup>th</sup> St, Courtenay BC

Ph: 250-703-2410

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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