

## Province of BC Fall and Winter Preparedness Plan (Protecting the vulnerable - Jobs -Flu shots) – The Economics of a pandemic

Dear Community Member,

This summer was definitely one to remember, not only because we had to find new and different ways to enjoy the season safely, but because of the way our community stepped up to help each other. We found creative ways to visit with friends, and we supported local businesses. Volunteers stepped up to keep food banks and local organizations like LUSH Valley going, and businesses diligently and safely re-opened to serve our community. We celebrated Pride virtually and used social media to speak out about systemic racism. We cared for each other.

### Investment in Health and Safety

As the summer draws to a close, we are making sure that our health care system is ready to take care of British Columbians throughout the fall and winter. This week Premier John Horgan announced an investment of **\$1.6 billion into our [fall and winter preparedness plan](#)**.

### Training and Job Creation

As part of the plan, we are recruiting 7,000 new health care workers for long-term care and assisted-living facilities. That includes helping 3,000 people without previous health-care experience to transition into an in-demand health-care career with paid, on-the-job training. We hope that people who lost their jobs due to COVID-19, especially in the hard-hit hospitality sector, will consider applying. You can learn more about applying [here](#).

### Flu Shots

Just like every other year, fall and winter means the return of influenza season. Getting the flu shot is the best way to reduce your risk of getting the flu, and it also reduces the strain on our health-care system as we deal with COVID-19 this year. The province is making an additional 450,000 vaccine doses available this year, including 45,000 Fluzone High Dose immunizations for all long-term care and assisted living residents. Fluzone High Dose is a vaccine specifically designed to protect people over 65 from influenza.

### In-home Care

Another part of our plan is the new Hospital at Home program, which will allow some patients to get 24/7 care in their home rather than at the hospital. This program has been implemented successfully elsewhere in Canada and will help ease the pressure on B.C. hospitals and reduce the chance of COVID-19 transmission.

### Economics of a pandemic – 1<sup>st</sup> quarter

The pandemic has created deficits in all jurisdictions in Canada. Our deficit in BC is \$12.8 billion, however, our government's on-going, pre-COVID19 direction has set the stage in BC for our provinces recovery. B.C. came into the COVID-19 pandemic from a place of economic strength with a diverse, resilient economy. We started 2020 with zero operating debt, triple-A credit ratings and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. Additionally, there is some positive news – recently there's been stronger than expected consumer spending, housing activity and employment gains.

SD71 Return to school safely plan

Finally, I want to wish students and parents a great school year as they return to classes this week. With diligence in adhering to guidelines both in the community and in the classroom, and with the support from all, we can have a safe return to school. If you haven't already, please check out [your district's plan here](#).

As always, if you have questions or need any assistance with provincial COVID-19 supports, please reach out. My office is currently open via phone and email to support you.

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/>

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

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