

Dear Constituent,

As we have stepped into 2022, Omicron has changed our pandemic. In December and through the holidays, hospitalization stats were taken and presented by Dr. Henry this week. It helps us determine our risk at this point in the pandemic, based on age, underlying health issue and vaccination status. Vaccination status and age are the biggest determinants in BC, whether you will require hospital care for COVID 19. These are local stats, from our health regions and province – they are the most local information you should know about our pandemic. Now is the time to be vaccinated. I've included the chart for you to be able to see yourself in the risk categories.

https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/1.21.22_COVID_Hospitalizations.pdf

Another great resource for knowing how to deal with Omicron is to use the updated symptom checker: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en> It's an excellent way to determine severity and whether you should get a COVID test.

Old growth deferral

Last week we witnessed the success that can be achieved when all voices are included to move towards a more sustainable future for everyone. I want to recognize the member nations of the N̓n̓w̓ak̓olas Council, including the K'omoks First Nation, and Western Forest Products who came together in good faith to work on an agreement to defer the harvest of more than 2,500 hectares of at-risk old growth with no jobs lost. This deferral includes all the rare and ancient old growth, as well as other old growth trees in forests north of the Comox Valley. Indigenous and industry partnerships like this are not only advancing both sustainable management of our forests and reconciliation with rights and title holders, but they also demonstrate how future deferrals can include and work for everyone. Here is the full press release: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022FLNRO0003-000078>

Overdose prevention and awareness

Substance use is present in every corner of society and drug toxicity and overdose is occurring here in the Comox Valley. There are a number of free services, harm-reduction and emergency preparedness resources that may save someone's life. But we need you to know about them and to help get the word out about FREE services available. Please use my ad that was in The Record last week as a reference and make sure that your loved one know how to get help – because we don't always know who needs it most.

Overdose Prevention & Education

Many provincially-funded local services are available for users & their loved ones



Some Good First Steps:

- Call 1-800-663-1441 for Alcohol & Drug Information & Referral Services
- Call Health Connections at Comox Valley Nursing Centre for primary healthcare, including safe supply, for those without a doctor 250-331-8502
- Walk in or call Island Health's mental health and substance use assessment & service, including OPS (Overdose Prevention Site) at 941C England Avenue in Courtenay 250-331-8524
- Naloxone training and kits can be accessed at AVI for harm reduction-based education, prevention, and support services 250-338-7400

Online Services:

- Using alone? Download the Lifeguard App: lifeguarddh.com
- Vancouver Island Construction Workplace Harm Reduction and Substance Use Resources at: www.thetailgatetoolkit.ca
- BCCDC Harm Reduction services at: towardtheheart.com
- How to be there for your loved ones: www.stopoverdose.gov.bc.ca



Ronna-Rae Leonard MLA Courtenay-Comox Constituency

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Seeking nominations for Multi-culturalism and Anti-racism award

Do you know someone in our community who should be recognized for their work combating racism and strengthening multiculturalism? Nominate them for the provincial Multiculturalism and Anti-racism award. Find the full details here: [B.C. Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Awards - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-services/multiculturalism-and-anti-racism-awards)

Free parking at the hospital remains!

You may have caught that free hospital parking at BC hospitals introduced during the pandemic is coming to an end – for everywhere except Courtenay and Campbell River! VIHA has verified that parking at the North Island Comox Valley Hospital will remain FREE. <https://www.timescolonist.com/local-news/hospital-parking-fees-return-in-march-after-two-year-suspension-4978762>

Derelict Boat removal

If you didn't catch it on Facebook, I had the chance to visit Joe Roe with The Dead Boats Disposal Society at Goose Spit. Working in conjunction with the Songhees Development Corporation and Salish Sea Industrial Services Ltd, they are getting rid of derelict and abandoned boats to clean up our shoreline. Find this post and follow all my Facebook posts here: <https://www.facebook.com/RonnaRaeLeonard>

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about any provincial issue, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are here to help you. My office can be reached at 250.703.2410 or Ronna-Rae.Leonard.MLA@leg.bc.ca . Office hours are Monday-Thursday 10am-4pm. Please call for an appointment.

Sincerely,

Ronna-Rae Leonard

Ronna-Rae Leonard MLA for Courtenay-Comox
437 5th 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



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

Helpful Resources:

- For medical info on COVID-19, visit [covid-19.bccdc.ca](https://www.bccdc.ca/covid-19) or call 811
- For vaccination info and the BC vaccine card, [visit this page.](#)
- For financial supports for people and businesses, [visit this page.](#)
- For PHO orders and guidance, [visit this page.](#)
- For mental health and substance-use supports, visit [wellbeing.gov.bc.ca](https://www.wellbeing.gov.bc.ca)

