

COVID-19 Facebook live update: February 11, 2021

>> Pat: Good Afternoon.

I'm Pat Living with the department of health and social services and your moderator for the COVID-19 update for today.

We're joined by the Yukon's chief medical officer of health, Dr Brendan Hanley.

We are also joined by Premier Sandy Silver.

Once again sign language interpreter Mary Tiessen and Andre Bourcier from French language services directorate are also joining us.

Following our speakers we will go to the phone lines for questions from reporters.

We will call you by name and you will each have two questions.

Before we began I would like to verify that everyone can hear us?

If any reporters are having problems, please e-mail ecoinfo@gov.yk.ca.

Premier Silver?

>> Thank you for joining us on a traditional territory of the Ta'an Kwach'an Council and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation.

For the fourth week and around we have no active cases of COVID-19, this is very good news and would not be possible without the diligence of every single Yukoner doing their part to keep our territory safe.

Thank you very much.

We are fortunate that we are not out of the woods yet and I know I sound like a broken record but it's important we take precautions so we can minimize the risk of COVID-19 and the best thing we can do is to make -- maintain the safe 6.

Wash her hands often and maintain physical distancing and stay at home a few feel sick.

Self isolating as required.

And following gatherings guidelines in place that include limiting and/or gatherings.

Also remember to mask up in public and we received another shipment of vaccines from the federal government, this is good news as we continue to deliver the second shots to those who received their first shots in January.

This week residents of long term care and high-risk health care workers are getting their second dose.

I know the team was in Dawson at the McDonald loss providing second shots the first responders.

I want to reassure all those who have received their first shot your second shot is here and waiting for you.

We have enough vaccines to give second doses to everyone who receives their first dose.

I want to thank every member of our mobile vaccine team for their work on the rollout -- for the first round of shots.

I want to thank everyone in the community who have taken their shot.

Thank you for all that you do.

I had a great opportunity to talk with some members of Togo -- Togo.

We remarked about the professionalism and positivity and the ability to work out details and issues.

I am proud of both of these teams and we love to see them rolling through the community.

And the second shot can create a stronger effect than the first one and I know Doctor Hanley will have more to say about the second shot.

The stronger reaction is to be expected and it is assigned the vaccine is working.

We will continue to rollout the second shot in the same order in which we provided the first.

Those who have received their first shot can visit the booking website to make your appointment soon.

We hope to be in a position to soon announce when we can continue with the first round vaccine shots here in Whitehorse and we are still waiting for the federal government to confirm the details around the supply of vaccines in the coming weeks and we will have more information to share.

I have told my federal counterparts in no uncertain terms they need to stick to their commitment a prioritizing vaccines for the North to protect our rural and indigenous communities.

We continue to receive assurances we will receive our full allotment in the first quarter of 2,021.

As we get into additional information we will keep Yukoners up-to-date.

The vaccine is an important step in the fight against COVID-19.

But across the country.

The vaccines will continue to save lives as more people get immunized and every Yukoner he wants a vaccine will receive immunization.

We need to remember to be patient to continue to protect each other as the sun shows up more and more every day and the weather gets better.

We need people to remain vigilant.

We are fortunate we have no active cases but we know how quickly that can change.

We are hearing news from Newfoundland and Skagway.

Let's keep doing what we do to keep our neighbours and elders and family safe and healthy and practice the safe six and mask up and be excellent to everybody.

I will now pass off to Doctor Hanley.

>> Thank you premier silver.

Good morning.

A month without cases is something to note and to be grateful for.

I'm grateful to all Yukoners for contributing to keeping COVID out of our territory.

Allow like this can also seem like an opportunity to relax and start to ease off measures.

As we witnessed in December or as nonevents and eastern Newfoundland has demonstrated, COVID can return and come back to bite in an instance.

The one thing that has been shown to prevent the spread of disease as the collection of public health measures that have been put in place weather here in the Yukon or every -- anywhere else.

And each person's actions contribute to the whole community being protected.

They collectively make a huge impact.

These small things are what is keeping COVID at bay.

We need to continue to push through the steps of winter and through these next few months.

We may well be feeling confident with the current situation.

I know from experience that -- I think we know from experience it's just a matter of time until we see COVID here again.

We are not completely immune even though we can do much to prevent the spread if imported into the territory.

As we see numbers begin to flatten across the country measures and lockdowns are being lifted in many areas.

With variants also identified more and more we can continue to help the downward trend continues and there won't be need for a rebound.

We must temper our help with caution.

It's important we all continue to be cautious to follow public health measure.

The choices we make today and we stay away from others when sake.

Of serving all of safe six plus one.

These choices could well determine how the next few months will be.

Variants continue to be a topic of conversation and week by week we continue to learn more.

Israel's experience but the 867-393-3083 vaccine shows promising results not just on the railed world effectiveness but provide evidence of vaccines seems to be very effective against the B.1.1.7 variant that dominates in Israel.

This is a type of evidence we are waiting for.

These are very encouraging findings that support how effective these vaccines are.

The variants continue to find their niche.

They are now established in new areas and it is inevitable that variants strange rolls spread further at least not yet.

And possibilities cases will evolve.

While there are no active cases of COVID here there are many within range.

We must continue to act as if COVID is here even when it feels like something unlikely are far away.

Let's continue to keep our bubble small and keep our travel local and follow the safe six plus one diligently remember to always take symptom seriously.

If you have a fever cough loss of taste and smell our difficulty breathing or any other symptoms listed in a self-assessment tool stay home and away from others.

We want to find cases to keep everyone informed alert and safe.

As we continue to make strides in the vaccine rollout there are a few recent developments.

I am pleased to say as of the end of yesterday we have offered first doses to 10,604 individuals.

And we have completed all community visits as scheduled.

I want to congratulate team Fox who has been undertaking all the long term care immunization as well as team Balto and Togo.

I must thank all the teams behind the scene weather implanting rather 90 logistics and the reception of these teams in the community has been outstanding and thanks to those who created the teams with warm welcomes.

This experience has shown how Yukoners have been supportive and close especially in this time of crisis.

And it is humbling to be part of this.

As we continue our rollout of first and second doses we are looking forward to the allocation and the dates of the March vaccine shipments and we can proceed with the Whitehorse public clinics.

I appreciate your collective patience as we await for the news and us we have had to adjust schedules and be as flexible as possible.

And the vaccine clinics proceed with second doses and these will go well.

And this been ramblings about side effects.

And I want to provide clarity and prepare people who want to express.

And second doses are a pain in the...

Arm.

The second doses are notice more than the first especially those younger than 65.

This isn't a negative thing.

When these common side effects are felt a mean sea immune system is responding as planned.

Your body has been challenged to prepare to fight off COVID-19.

Experiencing symptoms following a second dose of vaccine is telling you the vaccine is working.

Not everyone will get the symptoms and those who maybe disappointed with how good they feel can feel confident in their body's immune response.

What should you expect second time around.

Many people experience effects like soreness or swelling at the sight of injection.

A slight fever, possibly muscle aches.

Headache.

These symptoms will vary from person to person and some will experience mild symptoms but other will feel like they actually have COVID-19.

Let's briefly look back at how the vaccine works.

The vaccine contains messenger RNA which instructs the body cells to build a copy of the COVID-19 spike protein.

This protein elicits a powerful immune response.

, both antibodies and cellular machinery develop to fight this protein and the COVID-19 virus.

This immune response especially when boosted with the second dose is what causes the collection of symptoms weather the sore arm at the injection site or the more general symptoms such as muscle ache and fatigue.

People may feel under the weather for a day or so are longer but rarely more than two or three days.

Think of it like this.

Your first dose feels look a practice run and you might be slightly tired or have a muscle Lake as if you would after working out but you don't notice a significant difference from how you feel on a usual day.

The second doses a big game and you may feel weak, and your body may feel drained.

This is just the effect of priming the immune system.

It's your body's way of telling you that it's getting ready to protect you from COVID-19.

Most of the time the symptoms resolve quickly.

They are a transient and mild reminder of what COVID can be like.

The price we pay to prevent -- prevent severe or long-lasting disease.

When you have received your second dose stay home a few feel ill enough.

In a few cases this might be necessary.

In the clinical trials mild side effects after the second dose were common but effects such as fatigue fever or headache that were enough to keep someone at home are mostly in the one to five% range.

Usually they pass quickly but that support is in place for employers and employees if you must take a sick day.

A few want to play safe plan the dousing around the time were it might be easier.

At the same time never forget the chance of actual COVID infection.

If symptoms persist more than a day consider whether you might have COVID infection, call 811 or talk to your healthcare provider.

Follow the testing self-assessment tool.

Even though you may feel some adverse effects it is critical you received that second dose to ensure you are protected.

At a small price to pay for such good protection.

As we continue our quest towards vaccination I know not everyone is feeling ready.

As long as vaccines have been around so has there been scepticism and resistance.

For those with questions I'm hoping we can continue to answer those questions and point you to reliable sources.

Everyone should check their sources when making vaccination decisions.

This is an age where misinformation is as accessible as the facts and where dissector practices are more artful and creative.

Communications can be altered in a way that mimics a similar communication from a government source.

If you see a poster or receive something in the mail or are scrolling through Facebook always check the facts from credible sources.

I said before that everyone deserves to have their questions answered and everyone should feel as confident as I will at the moment of vaccination.

I will keep trying to ensure Yukoners have the proper resources and information they need to make an informed decision.

As we enter year two of this pandemic we are feeling tired and fed up but once more we are in critical times where our decisions could have a profound effect on our future.

This pandemic will and but once we find ourselves on the other side of COVID-19 we will be able to say we all did our parts to keep COVID-19 out of the territory and country.

Did you do everything you could to protect yourself and those around you?

We want to reinstate the things that allow us to experience the world around us without restriction and we want to see and play and explore with our families and friends and we hope to see our children nieces and snap go in the place without the pandemic looming menace.

We don't want to stay stuck in this restricted environment but we can't do any of that until we can say that the health and well-being of the community is protected.

Let's consider doing our part in taking this opportunity to get immunized.

Vaccine is both our responsibility and reward and with this vaccine we will find our way out.

Remember to take care of each other and stay well.

>> Pat: We will not take questions from reporters and begin with Haley at Yukon news.

>> Reporter: I know it's hard to speculate but with the Whitehorse clinic at a the doses before Q1 is there an extended timeline?

With the clinic take place in March for example?

>> There has been a lot of conversations and we are optimistic.

And this time last week we are going to have a conversation.

You can imagine the pressure the Prime Minister is under with all the premiers expecting and wanting to know more certainty so those conversations continued on and even though there is some speculation of nationally vaccines being sent out further and further than what Ottawa has been confirming, they reconfirmed that they do not believe the temporary slowdowns and Moderna and Pfizer will affect.

Do we have dates for those shipments, not yet and those states are the important piece.

We have enough vaccines here with the confirmed deliveries for site gets doses of everyone we have given an original Joe's for but we are new waiting to know exact amounts and times.

Ottawa is not saying that any speculation is passed that.

And we're putting the pressure on again.

My message to Ottawa, stay with your commitment to northern rural and indigenous communities and with the information we have based upon a successful campaign with our mobile team and team Fox and others, we are saying we can deliver at least 1,000 vaccines a day and we are ready for those deliveries and we expect an update on dates and times very soon.

>> Pat: Next question?

>> Reporter: The ledge is expected to sit in March.

Are you planning on a spring election?

>> Nothing in my notes.

We are concentrating on deliveries and vaccines.

>> Pat: We will now move to Luke.

>> Reporter: I was wondering if you could confirm the most recent shipment of doses we got was 4500.

>> Yes.

>> Reporter: That was my only question, thank you.

>> We also have another confirmed at 4500 as well, that is coming but as far as the dates we are still wandering about the dates by that is the update so far.

>> Pat: Steve from CBC.

>> Reporter: Doctor Hanley.

When can people and Whitehorse and co at there
Shaun Chen will they get prioritized access or wait until
general public asset.

>> I have received a lot of questions along the same
lines either from individuals or groups and this is also
part of the planning and Canada.

For the second and third stages and I want to say the
overriding priority.

That is a 70 plus starts.

By far and away the highest risk of more severe
infection correlates with age.

By addressing these increments of age down to 60 plus
as we've already done in Whitehorse and we've widely
covered community populations so we are covering a
broad swath of people with these underlying conditions.

Our hope is then that once we have the vaccine and we
have our doses.

And really incorporates so many of those other priority
groups and the rest of Canada will need to address and
a much more stage manner so we have the advantage,
we can list caregivers of older people.

And we can think of and we can think of essential
workers and not frontline healthcare workers and we
can think of first responders and people with a variety of
underlying medical conditions.

Many of these categories we can address all at once because we can do so much of the population quickly within a matter of weeks.

That is our approach, we wish to address all of those nonfirst-tier priorities according to the national advisory committee.

In one broad go.

>> Pat: Next question Steve?

>> Reporter: This is for the premier and Doctor Hanley.

This is following up on Haley's question.

The Yukon party says your party is creating uncertainty by not let Yukoners know if a general election will be held.

In theory there is nothing you stopping from announcing a date and I realize you are busy with the pandemic and just in general parties and powers like to wait until poll numbers are high but do you believe it's responsible not to give out a specific date now given all the complexities we've had to adapt to and given we are in a pandemic and for Doctor Hanley I know you weighed in on one timing related matter, that MLA should finish the posit "as soon as possible" and focus on preparing for COVID-19 so when do think the territory general election should be held and how much notice --

[Laughter]

>> Reporter: -- should Yukoners receive?

>> What the opposition has been saying since August is asking about an election.

That's interesting.

It's not like I have a day in my head I'm withholding and it's not that simple.

There is lots of moving pieces and there is reasons for a called election.

We are focusing on the vaccine distribution.

Until three in the morning back-and-forth with Ottawa on conversations and so credit to those in Ottawa who stayed up talking to us.

That's what we are doing.

The opposition can talk and speculate and drum up what ever they want to do in terms of speculation and we will work hard here for Yukoners on the vaccine and got that figured out.

And we have gone through the budgeting all winter along with all departments.

And we focused heavily on relief for Yukoners and COVID and questions about how is recovery and how it starts.

Pushing the federal government to give more information from their budget perspective, are we looking at program relief or recovery.

There so most work being done that we are concentrating on.

And that's what we are focusing on.

I don't pay a lot of attention to opposition speculations but I do know they been asking for one since August.

>> Not that I'm going to fuel any speculation, that is not my job, but I think the call to arms that you mentioned that I made a year or so ago was -- we are entering an emergency and there are things we need to focus on.

And we are in a different time.

And there's many urgent questions to be answered but we are in a stable position.

And I think there are others who have important considerations.

I will latch those considerations play out.

What I will say is that whatever happens, we already and we have already foreseen if there were an election to be called whether that's now are later.

We know that the clock is ticking ultimately.

We will be prepared to be able to support a safe campaign with full participation which can occur right up to election day.

>> Pat: We will now move to tame from the Whitehorse star.

>> Reporter: My first question pertains to the question of easing restrictions.

Four weeks into no active cases and people are getting restless.

A lot of questions I'm hearing, we have a film festival going on with some live events but would not be nice if you could open up the restrictions of how many more people can go to that or the main movie theatres?

What is the point of maintaining restrictions when we've done so well?

>> I'm sure Doctor Hanley will have lots to say.

I have not seen him waver to public events in any of his recommendations.

It's always been based upon the most up to date scientists and also a careful balance between keeping people safe due to and understanding the mental health of being more cooped up than normal.

I am sure that every recommendation I will be getting moving forward will be based upon that science.

I do also -- we do know that the epidemiology in Vancouver, we are looking at rates that a few looked at per capita we're at October, early October levels in BC.

And we have this conversation on a weekly basis about epidemiology.

It's a variant causing concern and really adds credence to what I've been hearing all through this pandemic.

This is not a per capita consideration.

We are all very cautiously optimistic about the planking or reduction off the curb across Canada and we will continue to work for it in a methodical and scientific manner when it comes to opening up some restrictions.

>> The premier has captured the key elements.

I am always aware of the need to strike the best balance we can between the restrictions that we advised that need to be a place.

And the ability to be human and thrive and to be able to gather in whatever ways we can and we need to do that as humans and to carry out a living and to make a living.

So this is very much a balance that we need to be looking at and are looking at.

I talked a bit about the key themes last week which is what we are seeing play out in the months to come which is the game between the variants and the vaccine.

There is loss we still need to learn.

I think we have just seen what's happening in St. John's and that is -- even achieve medical officer Doctor Fitzgerald mentioned complacency as perhaps having contributed.

Then all of a sudden there is an introduction and there is spread and suddenly you have widespread disease and a rebound in restrictions.

I would much rather a play that game where we can be cautious and slow enough so we can avoid those side and turns of events.

And maintain a steady course.

Depending on how the variants play out and how it continues.

We're seeing some encouraging signs.

That will influence what we might look forward to.

So I really encourage people not to focus on the four weeks of nonactivity that is something we're all grateful for.

It is risk of introduction and how do we mitigate the risk of spread when there is an introduction and playing entity that is the variants and we will learn how we can depend on protections.

And that will and that will be playing in influence.

And very much conversations we are having and analysis.

They will be a lot more to come on that in the weeks and months ahead.

>> Pat: Your next question Tim?

>> Reporter: I'd like to return to side effects of the second dose.

There was significant numbers of those in health and social services.

It sounds like it'll be a tough sell for those who might be characterized as vaccine hesitant.

>> I will start with it is simply not true that 60 percent of continuing care workers were off the job.

That is air responsible to spread that information and potentially stoke fear about the vaccine rollout.

There were some staff that were impacted by a second shot but we are talking about continuing care staff.

That number is not unusually high and it did not impact the level of service.

And I will say because of vulnerable populations at falcon to care facilities the staff are encouraged to stay at home at any sign of illness.

This is a precautionary step taken to ensure residents are safe and don't come into contact with illness by way of staff.

It also applies to COVID-19.

I think the staff have done an amazing job and a people are experiencing adverse effects I think they did a great job and any of the conditions we saw were within the Ramah of what we knew to be expected from that second vaccination.

>> Pat: Doctor Hanley?

>> This is going back as a premier open, he opened his answer with looking for credible sources of information

because there was -- Iris upset to see the misleading information and the potential for how that might influence confidence in the vaccine.

There are side effects and side effects are going to be worse with the second dose.

But as I say we expect to be significant enough to have a day potentially off work, it is and that five to 10 percent range.

In a setting where we are particularly cautious in -- these are healthcare workers at our screens daily because they are working in a closed setting where we have honourable residents.

I think everyone knows the reasons for being so careful with long term care.

Some of those people with symptoms screened in and they were there for on sick leave for that day and were covered appropriately.

Those symptoms proved to be temporary and there was an assessment where some of those people had symptoms that were concerning enough that testing was advised through why CDC and all those tests were negative.

They are very prudent and careful because sometimes there may have been an exposure to COVID and we need to be careful not to assume it is all due to vaccine especially if those effects are more severe or they are longer-lasting.

It is those kind of red light symptoms that we have previously highlighted.

I think that when we got to the public, we will have a ripple of effects, very few people who might be needing to take some downtime because of side effects.

It will be able to carry on just fine.

Student we will now move the radio Canada.

[Speaking French]

>> Interpreter: Can you repeat in French what are the effects of the second Stubbs and what can people expect out of the second dose and a few can cover the number of people that have been affected by the symptoms.

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

>> Pat: Thank you.

To have another question?

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

>> Interpreter: Given the numbers we have of vaccines that we have received and people that have been vaccinated and what we can foresee in the future coming when can we expect to have achieved herd immunity and when can we expect to have achieved of the 75 percent that was targeted in the beginning of the campaign?

>> I can start anecdotally.

You can imagine the communities that are first to -- if you have a rural community in the Yukon which will be one of the first to have open vaccinations for a whole population, that seemed to be daunting to some to begin with but what we have seen as someone's on his get -- someone's on could vaccinated Oren Alger and Dawson speaks to the reason why they are going forward, we have seen across Yukon amazing community support for herd immunity.

It's why we live here.

We know that Yukoners are the types of people that want to volunteer and want to make sure their communities are safe.

With the ability of the mobile teams to reengage with communities and what we're hearing is people stepping up and we are very happy with the numbers we have seen and we are happy to see the amount of continuing care workers and our elders getting vaccinated and now it's dose we're looking for certainty on vaccine distribution.

The big factor is when are the next doses landing and how many are there in those time frames.

The team at health and social services have done an impeccable job of previous Ottawa Herculean effort of small communities all through to having won here in Whitehorse ready to go.

When we got our vaccines and we will get them into arms as quickly and as safely as possible when we can answer your questions at that time.

>> Pat: Doctor Hanley.

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

>> I will repeat a couple concepts in English.

We still don't actually know what the magic number is for herd immunity based on these vaccines and based on the virus.

We need to determine what is that magic number.

And we are going with the 75 percent goal because that is the allocation.

In the first rounds it is based on the estimated of a 75 percent population uptake so we will continue to work to that goal.

It depends on supply but also on that number of people agreeing to take the vaccine.

That is all the continuing work with communications and engagement.

And making sure we can make that decision.

I am optimistic we can get to 75 percent or higher.

We don't need to stop when we have Morris vaccine supply in to the second quarter.

I would imagine we can continue to make sure everyone who wants a vaccine gets it and if we go beyond 75 percent that is even better.

>> Pat: The next COVID-19 update will take place on Thursday February 18th at 9:30 AM.