



COVID-19 Facebook live update: June 30, 2021

>> I'm Pat Living with the Department of Health and social services and your moderator for the COVID-19 update.

We are joined by the Minister of Health and Social Services Tracy Ann McPhee and the Chief Medical Officer of Health Doctor Brendan Hanley.

Sign language interpretation is Kevin Klein and translation is by Andre Bourcier.

We will then go to the phone lines for questions and we will call you by name and have taught 12 questions.

>> I'm happy to be here with Doctor Hanley on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün first nation and Ta'an Kwächän Council.

Thank you for tuning in to listen to this update.

Our thoughts and best wishes are with the elders and community of Lower Post as they have ceremony and begin destruction of the residential school there.

A long-awaited task.

As you know, we are in the middle of a COVID-19 outbreak with Doctor Hanley has called the first.

We learned that another Yukoner has lost their life to COVID-19, which is incredibly sad news for all of us and I want to send sincere condolences to the family and friends of this person.

We are sorry for your loss and our thoughts are with you.

We have confirmed ten or more new cases of COVID-19 every day for the last week and some days more than 20.

We are witnessing widespread community transmission which means we are no longer able to confirm the source of the cases.

The majority of these cases are in Whitehorse but there is also cases in nearly all communities.

This is not where any of us wanted to be but you don't get to choose when and where a pandemic strikes.

What we have control over is how we respond as a territory to this wave.

We are all affected by this wave and we need to work together to get through it.

All Yukoners have a role to help stop the spread of this disease.

Doctor Hanley will explain what we know in a moment but the key factors are very clear.

This is spreading rapidly amongst unvaccinated Yukoners.

Unvaccinated individuals need to be extremely careful.

You are at much greater risk of having severe symptoms that could send you to the hospital and could lead to death.

Some fully vaccinated individuals have been infected but the number is low and they have had relatively mild symptoms.

My message to unvaccinated Yukoners is you can protect yourself from getting seriously sick and potentially needing intensive care by taking your shot.

The vaccine provides the best level of protection currently available against COVID-19.

Please make an appointment to get vaccinated.

We have enough vaccines for everyone that wants one.

It's important to emphasize we have enough vaccines for everyone that wants to

get vaccinated including our youth ages 12 to 17 with a full round of mobile vaccine clinics for youth in the community and we are coming back to do more. More than 66% of our youth have received their first shot and 20 percent have received their second.

Our teams will be back beginning next week first in Mayo and Pelly Crossing, Dawson city and old Crow.

Get your first or second shot at these clinics.

The clinic in Whitehorse is open to everyone 12 and up.

Book an appointment and find more information at YUKON.ca/this-is-our-shot.

You can also walk in to the clinic here but appointments are encouraged to not waste doses and make sure individuals can help you.

But if you're only choice is to walk in please do so.

I thank all the staff that have supported our vaccine rollout.

We have organized one of the most aggressive vaccine rollouts and it has been truly inspiring.

More than 83 percent of eligible adults have received their first shot and over 76 percent have received both shots and within two weeks of your last shot you will be considered fully vaccinated.

This current wave is serious but I shudder to think where we would be if most Yukoners were not immunized.

I want to thank community partners and leaders that have helped.

This has been a team Yukon effort.

And it's not an easy logistical situation.

Is more important than ever to continue working together.

This is the biggest challenge we have faced and we need all Yukoners to come together to stop COVID-19 from spreading.

We know the primary way that COVID spreads is through casual social gatherings.

Last week Doctor Hanley strongly recommended you limit social gatherings to six people which is important and we need all leaders to help us reinforce this message.

It is not safe to gather in large groups of people.

Most cases are linked to large unorganized gatherings and they are making it difficult to contain transmission.

Last week Premier Silver talked about the work involved in contact tracing.

Large unorganized or even small unorganized social gatherings make contact tracing almost impossible.

And large gatherings where people don't all know each other often make it impossible to track the chains of transmission which leads to community spread.

Keeping our social gatherings small will make it easier to trace contacts and reduce the spread if you become infected.

This applies to bars and restaurants.

You must wear a mask unless you are seated at your table and don't mingle with other tables or other patrons.

Doctor Hanley is recommending organized social gatherings be limited for the time being.

Ten people indoors with masks on and 20 people outdoor.

This is to help with contact tracing and containment as more cases become

detected.

Our contact tracing teams have done a phenomenal work.

They are driven to their limits by this current wave.

With cases in nearly all communities we are seeing an immense strain on the capacity to provide support to address this wave.

We have deployed teams to support expanded testing along with our vaccine teams and other health and social supports.

This will continue but we can no longer do it ourselves.

The current wave is testing the limits of the public healthcare system and Premier Silver has been in touch with the Prime Minister's Office to request support from the federal government.

My officials at health and social services have been in touch with those and other provinces and territories to request support.

We need people to support testing and contact tracing efforts and to provide social supports.

We are also reaching out to partners who have specialized resources that can help us provide the support needed.

I must thank all of our staff and partners who have been providing services around-the-clock in response to this wave.

Your work is so important.

We are bringing in additional support to help you and to give you a break.

We are at a pivotal point in the pandemic and it's essential we all focus on containing this outbreak.

Earlier this week Doctor Hanley recommended parents keep their children home

from daycare for the next 2 weeks if able and we recognize not all parents are able to do this but we are asking those who can do so.

This will limit children in daycares which ensures childcare is still available for essential and critical workers.

It will also make it easier for staff to take care of children while we deal with this current outbreak.

Our government is working closely to ensure childcare operators have the support and resources.

It's also important people don't go to work if sick.

If you have symptoms get tested.

Don't go to work or socialize and don't go into your community.

Doing so put your colleagues and clients and friends and your community at risk.

Our government has a Paid Sick Leave Rebate program.

Employers and self-employed individuals are compensated for up to ten days which applies if you must stay home because you are sick, self-isolating or caring for other household members.

This was one of the first programs introduced almost 16 months ago and it is still available even if you accessed it last year you can reapply.

We also have relief programs for Yukon businesses.

You can find information about all those programs at Yukon.ca.

Our government is here to support Yukoners and we will provide support as long as needed.

We need to work together to support each other to address this wave.

We all have a role to play.

That means getting vaccinated if you have not already and keeping your social gatherings to six or fewer.

When we all work together we can end this wave but we need everyone to do their part.

Thank you to all of those who are listening and thank you to everyone who is doing their part to help us and this wave.

>> Pat: Doctor Hanley?

>> Good morning and Bonjour.

I want to acknowledge the significance of this day for Lower Post and for Canada.

And I want to add to the minister's condolences for the loss of another Yukoner.

This is a day of note and is also a day of knowledge because this is our hundredth live stream event since these live streams began.

What should have been a celebration of sorts, a time where we may have reflected we now find ourselves in a very different situation where we are focused on the present.

We continue to be challenged in many cases.

We have experience in a short time.

Our proud days enjoying zero, or a few cases seem like a distant pass.

We are challenged enough to strain our public health capacity.

One month was all it took for COVID to circulate and now we can expect several weeks to come of this virus circulating.

We must be concerned about the effects causing more serious illness and death in unvaccinated Yukoners.

Our cases have continued to rise and we can no longer declare this as one outbreak.

The pattern we are seeing is more disconnected cases and clusters. It's one that's more consistent with the COVID wave with community transmission.

COVID-19 has manoeuvred itself into homes and some workplaces.

What happens next, how rapidly we can get this under control depends on an ongoing robust public health response but it also depends on how much we can work to limit spread from one person to another.

There are choices Yukoners can make to hunker down and limit contacts or let it go and bear the burden of widespread COVID activity.

Within this past week we announced a number of outbreaks.

The Whitehorse Emergency Shelter has confirmed several cases involving a group of people who are otherwise mobile and marginalized and we are working to curve further spread within this population.

We have begun offering COVID testing for guests and staff and we continue to work closely with Social Service officials operational staff and their many partners to ensure enhanced COVID safe protocols are in place.

Screening of staff and guests, testing and wraparound supports for those in self-isolation are some of the current measures.

Adding to the stress of this outbreak is a number of daycares that have been identified as places of exposure.

We announced the closure of a daycare centre as 18 positive cases had been linked.

It will remain closed until July 9th after all the necessary contact investigations were completed and once self-isolation has concluded for staff and children.

I know there's been much frustration and concern felt by the parents and I've been in some of those conversations and our YCDC staff and crew and communication staff have fielded many calls.

As a parent I can sympathize that any circumstance that affects your child's health and safety can bring sleepless nights but we are working with families and operators to keep everyone safe and notified in situations that evolve rapidly before they resolve.

The extent of these exposures have required high-risk contacts to self-isolate and get tested and with the cases that have been identified I hope parents and caregivers will support keeping their children home from daycare unless they are essential or critical workers, or the children are otherwise at risk.

We need critical and essential workers more than ever and we want them to carry on using the daycares.

We will reduce the numbers of children per daycare section or facility which will allow a provision of more distance between children as well as more flexibility for those who need to stay home.

Today I will use a small presentation to highlight where we currently stand in regards to COVID activity and before I continue, beginning today we will release case numbers by community on Yukon.ca.

Because there are a number of processes that must be in place to verify it will not be updated daily but we will continue to have numbers by community updated and we are aiming for twice a week.

Again that will be posted on the case count website.

Let's move on to an overview of our current situation and this is from June 1st to the present.

Are we okay for visualization?

Okay.

As of the end of yesterday and there will be more numbers rolling in today by the end of today the total number of cases confirmed in this outbreak is 260 with three probables for a total of 263.

What you see here is numbers that are not to be confused with confirmed case numbers but the case numbers on the map is a copy from the other day of the public health agency COVID activity map which shows current active cases by a rate per 100,000.

Our active case rate is 131 including those who live in territory, probable cases and a couple, two or three who were out of territory.

Or who were infected or exposed.

In terms of hospitalized cases I will give you a little bit more detail a little bit later.

We have eight in hospital as of today.

Our recovered numbers are 129 and three people have died all older individuals in this current wave.

In terms of -- I want to go through a few figures that aren't reflected but just so you know.

For current counts in terms of proportions those who were unvaccinated comprise 82% of cases and those who are fully vaccinated are 12 percent and of those 12 percent have very mild to mild disease with one person who has been

hospitalized has been fully vaccinated.

That person is older with some underlying conditions and is doing quite well.

So far we have 51 cases that have screened positive for the Gamma variant which is a wave that is being driven by that variant and all of our hospitalized cases which we have confirmed, the strain has been P1.

The age range is from one to 90 years old and if we want to look at ages, this is a graph of age groups by number of cases and we see that the highest number is in the ten to 19 age group and the second-highest is in the 20 to 29.

You see there is some overlap in youth and young adults associated with many of those initial parties and grad associated events and gatherings all around that 1st week of June and the young individuals, many of them reflect our daycare associated cases so I expect as we move from the daycare we may get proportionately less cases of the very young although we know with the variants that kids are more likely to get infected and especially within the household. Although the outcomes with young kids tend to be very good even with the variant.

You'll see, what's remarkable is the relative number of cases, relatively very few cases so you see only a few cases as we go from 60 plus and that reflects a few phenomena, the most important reflection is that we have high vaccine uptake rates.

If you think back to the theme that the minister was emphasizing about how this outbreak is being accelerated by gatherings we know they gatherings are principally in the younger age groups.

So that a disproportionate hit.

Young adults are less likely to be vaccinated so more unvaccinated even though the majority of young adults are now vaccinated but you still have these existing pools of susceptible on vaccination.

The majority of cases in older people being also unvaccinated but there are some fully vaccinated in these high exposure scenarios and we are seeing some fully vaccinated individuals get infected.

I said I would give a bit more detail on hospitalization.

16 people have been hospitalized and currently we have nine cases in hospital currently which represents three percent of our cases since 1st of June.

Of the 16 total hospitalizations we have sent three south for intensive care and all three of those were unvaccinated.

So we have eight current hospitalizations in Whitehorse General Hospital.

Some of those numbers don't match up and part of that is that we are moving information on whose admitted and who is discharged but the current status as of this morning, we estimate it to be eight but there might be a bit of fluctuation but I think it gives you an idea of the overall picture and we've had the majority unvaccinated and we've had the one I mentioned fully vaccinated.

But very stable.

Now I'm just going to look to see -- yes so here we have the, just a graphic representation of the proportion of transmission on those who are unvaccinated. I'm going to show you a couple modelling graphs because I think it helps to give a picture that we're trying to drive home which I have talked about and this is the association between first of all vaccine status and the relationship between transmission and those getting together.

This is a model of what with the current -- what could have happened because we know that models are projections and they are subject to many things.

This shows us which what might have been happening, if our population was unvaccinated.

We would be talking about thousands of cases at this point and we would be talking about a wave that would likely take us at least three months getting us through two and a half to three months.

If we are stretched right now and if the hospital is reporting that there is difficulty keeping up, that even on the numbers might not seem that big, every person being cared for requires -- a lot of care and safety protocols and a lot more nursing time per patient and the relative burden is higher and it's not that hard to start to push a hospital into surge capacity.

If we are at this point, with 130, you can imagine that if that were multiplied by ten, what the impact would be and we are talking about 30 patients roughly being medevac.

And acknowledging that is a tremendous loss.

We might be talking about ten times that amount.

This great-looking rock like structure I'm going to walk us through, and if we look at what happened when we continue our fairly -- our fairly liberal gathering guidelines, that we have since late May, we would -- and with a population that is 60 percent vaccinated.

If you look at it per total, maybe 63 percent and we would see a wave that gradually would work its way through which would be with contact tracing to isolate contacts and we would see this would pass, in might be around a six

week wave and again thinking that we would be seeing 30 cases a day for a while.

And maybe gradually dwindling and they say there's a lot of uncertainty and if you look at the right of the grey rock that gives the projection where this might be 12 weeks so when we were first to this, there could be lots of cases for months that's what I mean, if we even with 60 percent total population vaccination, and the case numbers, per se, are less important than the outcomes that we start to see with those people that get sick particularly the older unvaccinated individuals.

Let's put in place a six person gathering limit.

You can see that that wave of uncertainty, that grey wave gets a lot narrower and what we could expect is we should get over this and a matter of a few weeks and we should have an impact that would be pretty short.

If we have been doing this which we have been, we should be seeing significant dropping of cases and if people have been doing the right thing and we move past these outbreaks we could see cases drop.

This is the good news part is it shows how much we can control just by our own behaviour.

To a temporary pause in the path forward where we pull in the reins it may be as little as two weeks, we pull in the reins and buckle down and we can make a huge difference.

We will get through this together.

And we are in this together and we will get through this together.

It's important that this is not just a case of some unvaccinated individuals.

It's a large proportion of the population if we consider children and youth.

About 40 percent of the population, families that have both vaccinated and unvaccinated within a family.

We have communities with vaccinated and unvaccinated and we all have the ability and the responsibility to do this right now for the sake of all of us.

Keeping contacts small and proceeding with vaccination as we go will make an impact on this wave.

Those are the pictures and I'm going to move on with a few more comments on our response.

We have reported new cases in Carmacks and Pelly Crossing.

To respond to those cases and the potential for a wider distribution of cases than -- there might be some unknown cases, we have sent rapid response teams to support the community health centres as we had done last weekend and teams are in those communities.

And they were there yesterday and depending on the progress and what we see and how people participate it can be extended as late as this Friday.

Rapid testing will run today from one to five and Pelly from noon to five.

We are working closely with communities addressing individual needs where we are looking at requests and the risks associated and with the risks of COVID and we look at that being a conversation with what we are seeing in terms of cases and we look at vaccination rates and we look at other factors which might include where is the community, the distribution of elders and put that all together into a conversation and this is a real priority for us.

And this will help limit that spread.

And overall we are seeing widespread infection which is triggering serious illness and some of those who are infected and serious illness with COVID-19 is highly related with age.

The older you are the more you are at risk.

Particularly and in fact exclusively when you are unvaccinated.

That's driven not just by viral damage but by causing that reactive storm of inflammation that attacks it and keeping that in mind another likelihood and we often don't pay enough attention to those who get sick and recover and we want to save lives as much as we can but having someone in ICU can result in weeks months or even years, even lifelong of irreparable damage so at the moment if you notice unexplained symptoms you need to take them seriously and remember under close transmission even vaccinated people are getting infected. It's those without full vaccine that I most worried about for the health and well-being of our friends and our colleagues we must self-isolate and get tested as soon as symptoms appear and testing is really a cornerstone of how we stop COVID-19 some more on these temporary public health actions and I can share a little bit of grief that this is not the summer we were planning for and I remember thinking a year ago I couldn't wait for what I thought would be a normal summer to come in 2021.

We could continue -- we still have much to be thankful for.

We are not locked down and with this degree of transmission it is things that high vaccination rate we don't need to close retail stores or personal care services.

There is much we can still do to get the most out of the short Yukon summer

including safe and respectful travel and taking advantage of the many tourism opportunities we have within easy reach and despite the current challenges and trauma we will get through.

At the same time many people are getting infected and our capacity to handle this number of cases is sorely stretching our ability to cope.

Some people are getting sick and we have lost some beloved elders and with each of these individuals we have unexpectedly lost people who would otherwise have years of wisdom and to curb the spread each of us has a contribution to make by reigning in our freedom for a short while and we can gain more freedom for the rest of the summer.

We have the chance to buckle down for the next few weeks and get a grip.

As all of our counterparts have experienced at various times in the last year and a half we don't have the capacity to handle much more.

We have a whole team of heroes working in the trenches and I can tell you they are tired.

Between the interviews that are part of contact tracing, through testing hundreds every day for COVID-19 in answering countless e-mails I want to thank the staff, the dedicated staff and the staff at CTAC, the communication staff and IT support, our First Nations partner and health departments in the most dedicated public servants I know, the staff of the COVID response unit, the nerve centre of the COVID response.

On the acute side we have medical providers, support staff and social service workers doing the actual case diagnosis care and support that is core to keeping people safe and well.

These people are doing everything they can to protect the well-being and health of Yukoners but have invested a lot of emotionally mentally and physically.

Long term care and home care staff are keeping people safe and cared for.

Everyone is working full out and the vaccinated keep on vaccinating.

Everyone is tired and we are overtaxed.

Please consider as I reiterate these temporary measures and reinforce the public health response thanks to a call that has gone around the country as well as reduce the transmission burden.

We need to buckle down in till we can take a breath and get reinforcements and start to bend the curve.

For the next few weeks I'm asking you to do everything you can to reduce contacts with other people.

Social gatherings, Yukoners I am asking you to stick to six for any social gatherings.

We have seen spread and multiple social settings, and to minimize the overall risk allowing a maximum of six people for indoor and outdoor gatherings it will limit the contacts between people and keeping it small will help limit the outbreak.

I know that there are events, perhaps a ceremony or a wedding, be aware that COVID is almost everywhere and I would like you to consider postponing any event that can be postponed and if you cannot postpone it please scale it down.

I'm would like you to keep no more than ten people indoors are 20 people outdoors.

And bars and restaurants we have seen cases associated with frequenting

several establishments and through recent inspections we've reached the conclusion later in the evening into the night some establishments and patrons are less likely to adhere to public health measures.

I must commend the majority of bars and restaurants that have been working so hard to abide by measures.

If you were going out to eat and drink you must be aware of the rules and do not visit among tables and don't crowd the bar and after you are finished don't linger outside.

Please go home.

In the workplace don't go to work if you have any symptoms.

Please don't go to work if you are sick.

Remember as Minister McPhee described benefits are available and use all those other measures such as distancing and masks.

And handwashing.

In the daycares as previously requested we have had a daycare outbreak and cases associated with other daycares.

We need time to increase COVID control.

If you are not any essential or critical worker, if you can keep your kids at home please do so which will keep our daycares less populated and reduce the chance of COVID transmission.

In terms of travel around and between, I said we still want to get out to the backcountry.

If those involved go into communities, please check in and see where they are and what they are posting.

And limit social visits between communities.

We are prepared to see numbers bounce around an hour total numbers will climb up.

For some weeks to come.

In this Yukon's first wave we are facing a critical time.

The actions we take today will help us week from now, two weeks from now and well beyond.

By complying with the above recommendations and advice we can do what we need to do to limit further spread and transmission.

Then the next two to four weeks will determine the path for the rest of the summer.

It won't be easy and it's not a lockdown but if we do nothing the current wave could continue as you seen for weeks or months now more than ever it's a time to come to together.

I was thinking of the minister asking us to come together.

But we need to do this as one territory and we all need to do our part.

Please continue to follow the safe six plus one, stick to six and get tested or book an appointment.

And we will get through this together just as we have with every challenge in the last year and a half.

Be kind stay well.

>> Pat: We will begin with John from CKRW.

>> Reporter: My question goes to Minister McPhee.

The third-party protocol into the Yukon government to extend the amount of

available sick days by ten additional days.

Is the Yukon government going to heed that call?

>> Thanks for your question John.

I'm not aware of what you are asking about in the letter has not come yet if that's where it would go, to my office.

And we are committed to supporting Yukoners that need time off, what you are asking about is from a job with the Yukon territorial government and supporting them in ways they can stay home and work the priority.

If you need to care from someone under the COVID-19 guidance.

I can attribute -- ANSI with respect to that request but are support continues and there's other ways for individuals to use special leave.

Which are managed on a case by case basis and we are supportive of people staying home so we can end the spread in all social circumstances and workplaces are included in that situation.

>> Have a second question?

>> Reporter: I know that there was -- the outbreak at the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter was declared and there were some measures put in place.

Could we get light to what is being done to ensure the spread, I know they lock some of the doors to who can go in a bit more specificity.

>> Those are some of the specifics that have been done at facility level and, you know, if we think of this as support and testing and isolation.

It's making sure that we are finding cases as they may come and so there is a testing regime and testing for staff and those who are staying there overnight and there's testing for guests coming in and out.

Once people are identified as cases it's determining who the contacts are and doing those, the case interviews often many interviews to determine contacts and any other potential settings of risk where people maybe.

And then supporting people to isolate safely.

We know that this can be challenging a people have chaotic lives or addictions, if they have maybe temporary places to stay.

We must make sure this is done safely and a supportive way.

This requires a lot of hours and work by it's a vital part of their response to limiting spread.

And there are other measures that are facilities specifics such as food service with food and a bag instead of served lunch is and there are other sanitary measures about sanitation within the facility but this is a facility response and partially a people response and how do we ensure people are taking care of appropriately and are maintained in isolation so all of those needs are taken care of to support safe isolation.

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

>> Reporter: My first question is for Doctor Hanley.

Watching this develop, what is the big difference between this spring and early summer compared to last year?

We probably had grad parties and unorganized social events last year so what's the key difference?

>> I think there are to watch what.

One is vaccine and one is behaviour.

Even though we talk about this spreading in unvaccinated people the fact that

the majority of the total population, the majority of young people who were vaccine eligible particularly the ones who are over 17 plus are in fact fully vaccinated and that's a huge cushion.

It just limits the number of susceptible contacts by its when you have one infected person connected to another unvaccinated person you were in high transmission and you go person to person to person and therefore it you can still have rapid spread and acceleration of spread but vaccination has limited the spread, and year of pandemic fatigue.

And we have been quite appropriately progressing along the path forward.

We have a lot of pent-up fatigue and a lot of pent-up need people have to gather and celebrate and that's normal after more than a year of deprivation.

As much as we might admonish people not to gather we know there's a natural urge and pressure people to gather and I think that has -- the way that people gathered I think a year ago, people were still in that early phase and naturally you more inclined to abide by the existing measures.

So I think there was a feeling that we haven't seen COVID for a while, time to celebrate with lots of countries talking about the pandemic being close to the finish line so there's that kind of social phenomenon and a need to get together which is very, very different.

I've said, the play of the variant is also, this weight is clearly being driven by a variant and if the circumstances are there, it will spread.

>> Pat: Do you have another question?

>> Reporter: I think most people really appreciate we are not in any kind of a full lockdown but if these numbers amount is there some specific criteria you'd be

looking for.

>> And I think the minister may also want to comment but we must think of next steps if things don't go well and we must be preparing.

It's important we continually tried to look at and connect their response to the risk so right now the focus is on gatherings and I think that the message, I'm hoping the message is clear enough and the evidence is strong enough people will respond recognizing if we do this for a short time and I would remind us, learning from the experience if we do something sooner rather than later and we can get back on the road more quickly so being quick to respond based on what we are seeing is really important.

I think we continue, where do we see issues and do we have signals this is working and also we have said reinforcements around though they, and let's see how this affects the capacity to continue.

>> Thank you.

I will just make a quick comment which I think sums up my message and Doctor Hanley's message.

Behavioural changes by Yukoners can make this stop.

That includes not gathering in large groups, know who your contacts are and get vaccinated.

If I can say that as distinctly as possible.

>> Pat: We will now move to Claudia and.

[Speaking French]

>> Andre: Could you please repeat in French how important it is, the situation where we are in terms of room and hospital and what needs to be done and

what kind of help will be coming to the Yukon?

>> You as well.

>> Possibly but not in French unfortunately.

Two important of a question.

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

>> I will recapture that in English, the question was to explain the gravity of the situation which I have explained in English but the second was to be more specific on the demand we are making or the asked, the federal ask and it is to briefly summarize it's for nurses and social workers and it's for a list of others to help us with calling people, doing contact tracing, assisting with nursing, assisting with the rapid response teams, logistics, with making the calls and interviews and providing no social supports I discussed previously.

[Speaking French]

>> Reporter: Minister McPhee?

If you wish to add I'd be happy to hear.

>> I think part of your question was about the hospital response and certainly what Doctor Hanley has focused on with respect to the public health services responses are incredibly important but the changes that have we made recently are limited and they are put in place for a period of two weeks and we will be reassessing at that time.

Yukoners have been asked to only go to the emergency room if they require

urgent care.

It's available and open to serve Yukoners with some new visitor restrictions with respect to visitors who will be quite restricted and of course there are exceptions for positive care and patients that require family support which will be assessed at the hospital.

Some surgery or your blood test and lab work are not urgent.

In particular surgery that might require people to be in the hospital for a couple days if it is urgent.

And these are changes, and they are -- we will be reassessing that in a couple weeks.

I can add if you have a question regarding the request for external or internal services but I think those have been answered by Doctor Hanley.

I'm happy to move on.

>> Pat: Next question?

[Speaking French]

>> Andre: Can you summarize in one sentence what is your ask for Yukoners to make sure we go over this period?

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

>> Pat: We will now move to Chris from CBC.

>> Reporter: morning.

My first question is for Minister McPhee.

What has been the response from the feds and other jurisdictions for Yukon's request for help and when will people begin arriving to provide that help.

>> Thanks for that question.

Their response has been extremely positive and the federal government has been reaching out to us.

And ministers including Doctor Theresa Tam is though she's commented about how successful the Yukon has been with respect to with vaccination program but is watching what is happening here because as Doctor Hanley has described there is clearly a wave here that is virulent that is moving between unvaccinated individuals and can happen in a highly vaccinated situation is of interest to them and will be interested to our counterparts.

We have seven nurses on the way from Ontario, we have the specific request with conversations with the federal government including as I've noted with the Prime Minister's Office the specific request for primary personnel including as Doctor Hanley has said, public health workers and contact researchers and those who can alleviate the stress currently on our people here.

And it will be positively responded to.

As Doctor Hanley has said his response and recommendations are looking at over the next two weeks being able to alleviate some of the stress to provide extra services for communities as soon as possible.

>> Pat: Next question Chris?

>> Next question is for Doctor Hanley.

I probably don't need to tell you there is a growing body of research about the long term impacts of COVID-19.

I want to ask what you think the long term impact of this wave of cases will be on the healthcare system?

>> It's a really interesting question.

I worry about the long term impacts on individuals affected but particularly those who get sick meaning that those who require high oxygen or a ventilation and as you know many of them to, if they are intensive care often that several weeks so you need to be concerned about the long term effects on those individuals.

And the impact of an acute demand on the healthcare system is recovery after a few weeks but you think about what recovery takes and I think the impacts are multifaceted.

Who haven't we taken care of or who has income to the hospital clear?

Either because people don't come for care and that's been a huge factor and there are these lost opportunities for timely interventions or for screening and you need to catch up but there is that lost time which can have consequences and those are hard to measure.

But I think these are areas where we need to look and study and the other impact is mental health.

And human resources.

If you have taken such a heavy toll what does that mean for careers and their durability.

Are you pushing people towards retirement or cutbacks or accounting back on hours as a consequence as going through an extensive period of demand?

I think human resource considerations are important and mental health on the service needs we need to anticipate but also the mental health of providers who have faced burnout or near burnout conditions.

And I think it's integrating the other aspect what we've learned about infection

control and how crucial it is to maintain practices of infection control that we are both being reminded of and we need to maintain so that's the resource consideration and practices and the impact on patient care and ultimately for safer patient care is really authoritative consistent and impeccable infection control within the care facilities.

>> Pat: We will move to Jim, from Yukon news.

>> Reporter: I was wondering if you can tell us about how the small community health centre is managing the increased caseload and if they would be made a priority with support from outside the territory has been allocated.

>> I can go.

The community health centres are being supported as Doctor Hanley spoke and today, it was Pelly and Carmacks where testing teams have been there so they are being supported and we are increasing -- I don't want to use the word enforcement but education and individuals with their leadership to indicate to community members about the current recommendations and how they should abide and we expect we should be able to continue with an emergency response team up in Ross River and they were deployed for a period of time and we're trying to stand up more of those types of teams so individual communities have the support they want.

And if we have increased ability as well as to other organizations for that support we can put together multi-team so they can go to communities and there are community health nurses.

If they have a nursing station and that's the central place where testing can happen as well as mental health services and some social work services the goal

is to have those teams available for the communities that need them.

We hope to increase it and enhance it.

>> I will add a couple comments to the minister.

We want to note how strong the community response has been by the municipalities.

I've had many, many conversations with leaders and departments and the mobilization of those communities and the First Nations leadership has been amazing and it's strength in that feeling of working together on a common problem.

Some people may not realize with the role of community nurses in these small communities, which is multiple roll.

These are individuals who do public health, you might say normal public health in terms of a normal vaccination and maternal health and young children's health and a communicable disease control working with YCDC other that's about including infectious diseases but -- and they are also acute health practitioners. So they see people with a sore throat or mental health crisis or a diabetes check and they have an eye on the community and they are doing the vaccinations. They are also testing people for COVID and you can appreciate how they are working full out all this time, that definitely is going to answer the need to provide some relief to the amazing work that's been done in the small communities.

And we know small hospitals and big communities have been such instrumental partners.

As well, I think amazing leadership in community nursing, we have seen to

organize that complex and vital role of nurses in the community.

>> Pat: You have another question?

>> Reporter: Another one to do with the communities.

I see local government has taken out a range of action from recommending residents isolated to try to limit visitors and I was wondering if case totals or other information is reflecting if any of those measures are working.

>> It's hard to tell.

Clearly each community is doing something slightly different based on what they see.

We have been working through not just our shop but the different government department of aboriginal relationships help support what supports community as need and emergency coordinating centres.

And all of that but it's -- what we want to see and that's why I talked about the need to recognize what communities wish based on their risk assessment and how we can support that but also limited that informal social travel between communities I think is important.

So how that translates to numbers is difficult but I think we have the numbers of infections to a few and I think we are seeing early success of communities responding rapidly and I think we will I think be able to maintain it to a few per community.

>> Pat: Lori next.

[Speaking French]

>> SPEAKER-04: --

>> Andre: Those less than 12 years old don't need to self-isolate.

Is it possible that this recommendation might change in the coming weeks?

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

>> I will repeat that in English.

The question around are we contemplating changing the rules around under 12 being able to travel back without having to quarantine or self-isolate if they are in the care of fully vaccinated caregivers.

I see that that is something we said with confidence, and I would say I'm more confident in that that measure in that it's a low risk measure because their risk of importation has dropped even more since we introduced that rule and the tables have turned that we are now in a higher risk scenario here at this time.

>> Pat: Do have another question Lori?

[Speaking French]

>> Andre: There is a number of people who cannot be vaccinated for different reasons.

Do you have any recommendations for these people?

Should they self-isolate or refrain from going in public?

What is your recommendation?

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

>> About those who are more vulnerable for any reason because they haven't been vaccinated or if they can't be vaccinated or perhaps those because of underlying medical conditions that might make them more vulnerable to complications even while being vaccinated.

And it's being very careful of what the risks are associated with any situation and take the appropriate protections that we already have talked about.

>> Pat: I'd like to thank everyone for their time today.

The regular update will take place Wednesday July 7th at 10:30 AM.