

## COVID-19 Facebook live update: April 28, 2021

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

We are joined by the Yukon premier and the Yukon Chief Medical Officer of Health Doctor Brendan Hanley.

We have sign language interpretation and French language interpretation.

We will go to the phone lines for questions from reporters and will call you by name and you will each have two questions.

I'd like to verify everyone can hear us creeds if any reporters have been issue please e-mail Louis.

Premier silver?

>> It's great to be back here with Doctor Hanley and Mary on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün and the Taa'an Kwächän Council.

Today is the national day of mourning and it is important to remember and honour those -- honour those who have been contracting an illness.

Yesterday we heard the news that a plaster miner died while working in the Black Hills Creek area.

This is a tragic event.

Our condolences go out to the deceased man's family and friends, most Yukoners note this is a tightknit family and this news is devastating.

My thoughts are with everybody grieving.

We need to hold each other up and support one another.

I want to thank all those who are working in the front lines in our healthcare system and in the territories and the across the country.

Many healthcare workers across the country have contracted COVID-19 and some have died doing their duty.

Was also announced the second Yukoner lost their lives in relation to COVID.

While COVID-19 was not the cause of death it was a contributing factor.

Doctor Hanley will have more to say in relation to that.

On behalf of all Yukoners I send out my sincerest condolences to the friends and family of that individual.

It is a reminder that COVID-19 is a threat to the health and safety of all Yukoners and we need to stay vigilant and take precautions.

We are vulnerable to this disease and we know from events and other jurisdictions how quickly positive situations can change.

Yesterday Nova Scotia announced 96 new cases.

A cow you it is dealing with its first outbreak and has 45 cases.

The Northwest Territories is manually -- handling clusters of cases.

Ontario is continuing to deal with a challenging situation with thousands of new cases each day and healthcare system pushed to their limits.

In light of what has happened across the country I am feeling extremely fortunate and grateful to be here in the Yukon.

We continue to have no active cases of COVID-19.

We the only jurisdiction with no active cases.

This would not be possible without the tremendous efforts of Yukoners to protect not only themselves but their communities.

By taking the COVID vaccine more than 72 percent of eligible Yukoners have now received their first shot and a full 63 percent have received their second shot.

This is fantastic!

But we need to keep going.

You can still get a shot and I strongly encourage anyone who is not received the vaccine to book an appointment.

The clinic in Whitehorse is booking appointments for first and second shots and are accepting drop ins.

You can book appointments online at [Yukon.ca/this-is-our-shot](https://Yukon.ca/this-is-our-shot) and found the phone line which is 1-877-374-0425

If you cannot attend the mobile clinic please attend your mobile healthcare for more information to make an arrangement.

I strongly encourage all eligible Yukoners to book an appointment.

The vaccine is crucial to get us through this pandemic and return to normal.

As we wait for the vaccine rollout and other parts of the country is also essential we continue to practice safe six plus one.

I know it's difficult.

Everyone is restless and tired of restrictions and we all need to reconnect with friends and family and it is important to recognize we need to connect socially but it's also equally important to do so safely so we can minimize the risk of importing the spread of COVID-19 to those who are vulnerable.

We need to maintain the safe six and practice -- we need to wear a mask when we can maintain physical distancing including outside gatherings.

Wearing a mask is a small action that you can take that makes a huge difference when it comes to containing the spread of COVID-19.

Please continue to mask up and thank you for continuing your diligence.

Four charges have been layered under the civil emergencies measures act all four for failing to solve isolates.

The highest risk right now for Yukon is the importation of COVID-19 so I do want to thank our CEMA enforcement officers and our partners with the RCMP.

Recent event show how quickly things can change.

We have no cases today but we could have an outbreak tomorrow especially with the increasing numbers of variants of concern.

No one wants this to happen in the best thing we can do is to practice safe six, to mask up and get your shot.

Please keep it up.

We have come so far and have an amazing community.

We need to dig deep and keep going.

Our government is here to provide those supports which are ongoing for individuals and businesses.

The COVID-19 relief programs that were introduced last year are still available including paid sick leave rebates for employees, employers and for those who are self-employed.

You can find information at [YUKON.ca](http://YUKON.ca).

The opening of territorial campgrounds is a sign of good things and brighter days.

I know the recent weather makes you anxious to spend time outside, myself included.

It is good for our mental health to get outside.

In recent days Doctor Hanley and I have been in conversations about the COVID-19 situation around the country and here at home and have had serious conversations about the risk of importation and what an acceptable level of risk might be.

These conversations are all leading to what steps we can take to ease restrictions.

While we are not in a position to announce just what measures will be changing we are looking at how we can ease self-isolation requirements in the near future perhaps similar to what we have seen in the Northwest Territories and as barbecue season and wedding season approaches we are looking at the possibility of increasing gathering sizes.

These changes are only possible because of the response Yukoners have had to getting vaccinated.

As Doctor Hanley and others have said vaccinating is one of our best weapons against COVID-19 and key to lifting restrictions.

Despite increased activity in southern Canada we have seen the impacts begin to be felt.

If you haven't had your shot please book an appointment.

It's important for expediting the lifting of these restrictions.

If you have vaccine questions -- bless you.

Please look up information at [YUKON.ca](http://YUKON.ca) and have a conversation with your doctor or local nurse.

The Moderna vaccine is safe and is saving lives.

Thank you Yukoners for your diligence over the last 15 months.

I will conclude by saying the -- check in with each other and make sure you are kind and patient.

Be excellent to wish other and keep up the good work.

Doctor Hanley.

>> Inc. you premier silver.

On this day of morning I want to offer my condolences to the plaster minor who died on the job.

My sympathies also go to the families of the most recently identified case of COVID-19.

Our most recent case was a Yukon resident who contracted COVID-19 while out of the territory.

We announce this case on Monday.

The individual died from other health conditions although the individual died with COVID-19 the main cause of death was not COVID-19.

My heart goes out to the family and friends of this individual.

For those seeking more information please remember we will not release any further information in regards to the staff to protect the privacy of the family at this difficult time.

While people might want to know they don't need to know.]

Remember how important understanding and compassion is.

I hope everyone has been able to enjoy the beautiful weather we have had.

It's the small simple things we do that help us remember there is a world beyond COVID-19.

I know these weekly updates have focused on variants and their rapid spread.

It's my role to ensure Yukoners be informed and aware of not only what's happening in Yukon but across the country.

Provinces and territories are trying to contain an ongoing COVID-19 search with lockdown and restrictions.

The pandemic continues to rapidly change as we enter into warmer months.

We have witnessed none of it and Nova Scotia being hit hard by COVID-19.

Iqaluit, the only capital city not to have us to go COVID case for the first 13 months has reported 45 cases as of yesterday.

These recent examples show us how quickly our situation can change.

In a matter of days we have seen jurisdictions across the country impose new measures and restrictions to contain rapidly rising case numbers.

Along with a surgeon much of Canada we have seen recent case importation here and are likely to see more so now it is more important for people who come to Yukon to self isolate and pay meticulous attention to detail.

Variants will take any chance to find someone to affect.

If you isolate with others they must self isolate as well.

If we all do what it takes we can continue to avoid transmission.

I'm grateful we have no active cases and each person vaccinated decreases the risk of spread we continue to make progress in our vaccination campaign as variants challenge most of the country with high caseloads, vaccines the best tool to stop possibilities and transmission of variants.



And right now the best way to do this is to get vaccinated and self isolate.

As of end of day yesterday we have administered 257,131<sup>st</sup> doses, 22,002<sup>nd</sup> doses.

Since the wrapup, plans are in place to support ongoing role vaccination by placing Moderna vaccine in the community health centres.

The mass clinic in Whitehorse will begin reduced hours beginning next week.

The clinic will no longer be open on Saturday or Monday and ours will change for Tuesday through Friday.

Appointments will still be available and walk and still welcome but only during certain times.

This information will be available on the website.

It's exciting to see the numbers steadily rise week after week and without Yukon efforts we Nate -- we may not be in our current position of having 63 percent of are eligible adult population fully vaccinated.

This is fantastic next there is one thing I want to point out about vaccine bookings that came to my attention.

People have been poking vaccine appointments and not showing up.

I want to make sure people realize the impact this has on our program.

This isn't quite the same as missing a rendezvous with a friend.

Trend 11 is kept frozen at Minus 22 degrees and when you book an appointment our team thought a set number of idols.

The dose must be used in that day or it must be thrown out.

Our team is careful to fall the right amount so we don't waste any dose but if a large number of people don't show up many doses may need to be discarded.

If you book, please show up and if you can't make your appointment we understand but please contact the team and cancel your appointment.

And the time when there's widespread need for vaccine and around the world we must be careful which each dose.

I am hearing stories of people who are holding back on seeing a doctor or nurse because they think they need to test first.

Getting a test is very much what you should do if you have any symptoms.

Fever half difficulty breathing and loss of taste and smell are common first symptoms and there are many other possible symptoms.

If you experience new symptoms you should take the online assessment.

If you have a medical problem you want to see a doctor or nurse for you should make the appointment.

You will be asked some screening questions and a test maybe requested a few do have COVID like are flulike symptoms.

Sometimes it'll be by telephone or you will be seen in person but you should always get the care you need.

The Yukon medical Association has a campaign called don't put your health on hold with many Q&A's.

Please check out their website.

Well it only takes a glance at the news to get the picture of where Canada is, with a surge in much of the country and new lockdowns and overwhelmed hospitals a path ahead looks rocky and uncertain.

There have been many bumps in the road and we did not anticipate all of them.

I do get we are tired but let's consider a few things.

The COVID measures in place work well.

We need to keep that in mind and keep going.

Our response to each challenge has also worked and we are continuing to do our part to respond with science evidence and common sense while keeping society open.

Stepwise we have made great progress.

Vaccination will help get us where we need to go and we are not far away.

Two ways vaccine protects us, when people have completed vaccination those individuals are protected from disease.

When a large portion of the population are vaccinated we prevent transmission.

And many have asked me if 75 percent of the population uptake is equal to herd immunity.

75 percent uptake amongst our eligible population was our first goal and we are close but not quite there.

If we look at our numbers by age category we have 86 percent of those aged 70 plus.

76 percent of those 60 to 69 have had to watch while doses.

65% of those 50 to 59, 62 percent 40 to 49, 56 percent of those 30 to 39 and last and not least 44% of those 18 to 29 have received both vaccine doses.

75 percent uptake would be best if it were even across all age groups and including kids when we get there.

There is no one number we know well for herd immunity.

It depends on too many things.

The more people vaccinated the better off we can do the things we want to do.

We will learn about the ideal percentage uptake as we go.

The answer is the more the better.

75 percent across all age groups would be fantastic.

Yukoners if you aren't yet vaccinated please get the shot.

What is ahead of us as we look to spring and summer?

The premier talked about that and I have as well in recent media occasions that summer will bring some easing and we are still on course for some significant changes.

I know as many of you maybe struggling with the amount of time we've been enduring this pandemic and it has lasted longer than many expected but we are looking ahead for what is to come in the next few months.

While watching and evaluating variants and tracking and encouraging vaccine uptake we have been reviewing and planning our path forward.

As we see vaccination rates continue to rise we can feel more and more confident in the ability to reduce the threat.

Our steps will be measured and we will not rush even as we eased restrictions we must be aware of vulnerability Romanians and this virus will look for openings to infect and spread whether gatherings or households or workplaces or other settings where unvaccinated individuals or groups may offer up opportunities.

Stay with us and we will see change shortly.

We do need to ensure our foundation is strengthened to maintain the health of all Yukoners which means ongoing vaccination and careful observance of self-isolation within households and it means continuing to abide with public health measures the premier mentioned.

We all need to stay the course and wash our hands and keep physical distance.

Into use masks with indoor public settings.

Before I passed it back to Pat I want to mention a week that is very special, that is national immunization awareness week.

And Mrs. Held a highlight and recognize the importance of immunization.

And this aims to promote the use of vaccines.

It may hit home for more than the usual number of people.

And people have plans to receive it, national immunization week is an important time to reflect on how far we come.

And the importance of vaccine in our current situation.

In honour of this week let's also recognize the great effort of the healthcare professional there managers and leaders and support staff, logistics and I achieved that are helping schedule and check people in, we are extremely grateful for all of our hard work as you immunize fellow Yukoners.

It is more than just COVID and a big focus for community nursing over the spring and summer weeks are to run the HPV immunization program and attend to catching up kids with pertussis immunization, and look after adult eligible for vaccines such as pneumococcal vaccine and the shingles vaccine.

That's it for today.

Stay well and let us be grateful for all we have.

We are doing well and have reached another Yukon spring.

Notice what is good in your life and take care of each other.

Thank you.

>> Pat: We will now move to questions from reporters and begin with Jackie from CBC.

>> My first question is for Doctor Hanley.

Part of the role of public health is to share timely and accurate information and this is important given how fast misinformation can spread and we did see rumours and speculation spread Monday after the announcement of the second COVID related death.

Did that press release meet your standards?

>> It's an important question.

We have -- I have always committed to getting important information out to the community as soon as we can turn it around.

And that I think has been illustrated by our public notification process and when we identify a public risk, we do everything we can to get that information out.

There is always a compromise between speed and accuracy.

That can be detrimental.

It's recognizing we need to gather the information and contact the -- if there are public venues that they need to know first so we need to do a lot of background before we come up with public information.

There is also a need to communicate with transparency, significant events such as the recent person who passed away with COVID infection which was in as timely as we could manage while

getting the story and determining if there was any public health risk and connecting with the family.

Those things take time.

When we recognize there is public health or exposure risk that certainly lessens the need for speed and increases the need for respect and consultation with family and the need to protect confidentiality.

I do think in that case it met the standard we need.

We needed to half this individual counted as a case and unfortunately as a death but put in the right amount of explanation to explain why this individual did not die of COVID and wanted to us that was important to point out.

We put that all in with a fast turnaround and with as much information as we felt was needed to portray the point.

Thank you.

>> Pat: To have a second question.

>> I do, for the premier although Doctor Hanley is welcome to answer.

One of the Keystone for the liberal reelection platform was increasing rapid testing and CBC yesterday reported Yukon as one of three jurisdictions who have not reported back to the fat guy with how many rapid tests it had used.

When will the Yukon see the promise ramp-up in rapid testing and when we will see numbers and results?



>> I think Doctor Hanley can talk more about how we are using our testing but the CDC has done a remarkable job of tracing those that have vaccine or family members or contact tracing and we've done a great job in containing the virus and so we're looking at other ways of using our rapid tests.

It's only been a few couple months through the efficacy is added rather we are not seeing false negative's and false-positive which will allow us to use these in different ways.

We happen working with mining companies and other individuals to utilize these rapid tests and we now have more opportunities so if you are asking about why there is a lag in getting back to the federal government I don't think there is.

We talk always about the tests and the need and as Yukon sits with no cases and we've used other tools where other jurisdictions with bigger populations would need to do more of that testing but we've done a good shop with the communicable disease folks to maintain low numbers and make sure tracing happens which is the most important piece.

>> I think the premier spoke well to the point that testing is one of the tools and I think it's always important to remember where testing fits into our overall strategy and we are in a containment mode and we have successfully done that.

Even with testing rates relatively low for other jurisdictions we maintain a very good testing capacity with solid partnership with BC, that is the foundation of our testing strategy.

We are increasing incrementally and we are looking for disease and people might be at higher risk and are looking for early.

We are gradually increasing the application of that.

Those test results are not reflected in the numbers on the website which reflects symptomatic testing which is the core strategy of our strategy.

Screening testing applies -- we have a program where we use rapid testing for regularly people going in and out of the territory.

And we have also used it for people going out and we are looking at these other areas for using that screening test, and we do have a lot of IDs in territory and so we will -- we anticipate having those ready for usage if they have search or if there are early identification need.

Keep in mind we already have good capacity to test and we have community transport when we need priority turnaround times for rural Yukon and we have all those pathways mapped out.

Anything we had is in addition to the foundation, the strong testing approach that we already have and we are gradually and with a lot of quality control increasing it.

I have also seen that people with all the best intentions sometimes go outreach we fast with testing technology and the technology cuts ahead of the goal.

There becomes very little added value and we need to make sure what is our goal and how do we use that technology to achieve the goals rather than the technology itself.

>> Do you have a number for how many rapid tests have been used?

Is not tracked separately?

>> I don't have the number in my head but we do keep track.

We can get you some ballpark number.

>> Thank you.

>> Pat: We will move to Luke.

>> For premier silver, where is the territory out with vaccine supply and whether the government wants more supplies throughout the spring and summer given the fact students will return and seasonal workers will return.

>> Doctor Hanley might be better suited to answer that question.

We made good with the commitment for the first three months to have 75 percent vaccinated and we are seeing increases and Pfizer and Moderna and now turning to trials when it comes to trials for the younger population, but those would be conversations for the goods doctor.

>> I feel confident in supplies.

We have incoming maternal supplies and we did have a cause and the April allotment and it has not affected our estimates for ongoing rollouts.

Including the extra doses we had requested.

That's going well.

To answer the question of students, we have a special program for incoming students and young seasonal workers to make sure they have vaccine access.

And as we look forward in the months to come to vaccine for children we don't have numbers but we know how many kids we will be immunizing.

That will come with time and I'm completely confident especially as you see the projections.

We will have ongoing access for all the vaccines.

>> I have a question for Doctor Hanley.

What is the risk of transmission between someone who was fully vaccinated and someone who hasn't received a vaccine.

>> That is the question we are all keenly interested in and I think we are seeing more information, particularly for the Pfizer and mRNA vaccines for high protection.

Which means if you can protect against acquiring the infection you protect against transmission from one to another.

Very, very encouraging results.

And these are studies carried out in Israel in combination with Pfizer.

There is the clinical trial data itself.

And the CDC has talked about studies in healthcare workers so there has been a number of the smaller studies.

We are confident of the abilities to prevent asymptomatic infection.

Probably just because of the -- a lot of it because of the information we have from the US and from Israel.

>> Pat: We will now move to Haley from Yukon news.

>> The situation you mentioned where people are poking vaccinations and not showing up, has that resulted and any doses being wasted and I'm wondering if the territory is tracking that number?

>> We are tracking that number but I know there has been several doses wasted on one occasion, I believe most of one vial containing ten doses.

But I don't have the exact numbers.

I know overall we have a low percentage of wastage because of that ongoing attention to how vials are used but it's another number we can obtain.

>> Another question?

>> It involves the second wave currently taking place in the South.

Is the second wave in British Columbia having an impact on the available healthcare for Yukoners.

Our procedures being delayed?

>> I think they call it the third wave recognizing the -- this is an entirely new wave that has hit BC and the rest of the country.

It's a good question about how this may affect access to healthcare.

It is something we have been reengaging with to ensure but so far so good and I have not heard of any issues with delayed or cancelled appointments.

We still have regular medical transfers when required so I think that capacity is still there.

And we still have assurance about that availability.

It is something that we continue to check in with and check in on.

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

>> My first question is for the premier most likely.

With some growing agitation in the Mackenzie Delta region in the Northwest Territories to strike up a travel bubble is not something the Yukon is interested in?

I know from having lived up there they really think of themselves more as Yukoners than members of the Northwest Territories and have more than affinity for here.

>> I know the two medical officers here and Northwest Territories have been working on conditions and a situation where we would see some increased mobility.

I am confident we will have an announcement within the near future on what we can do.

There's a lot of family connections and you can imagine my community of Dawson city, old Crow, there's family throughout there and people are getting restless and want to see nieces and nephews on the other side of the border that a lot of Indigenous people don't get to see and so we are working with the Northwest Territories to work safely to make sure we can allow families to gather and that's something we have been talking about since I got back into this chair we will have more information in due time.

>> Pat: Do you have a second question ten.

>> This is more for Doctor Hanley.

You mentioned earlier in this briefing about how you would like to see 75 percent vaccination rate across age ranges, what do you say to people who complain you move the goalpost?

>> I'm trying to think of what goalpost I've moved.

We have talked about 75 percent as a goal from the beginning.

And that was based on the allegations we had when they had the allegation to cut 75 percent of the population.

We've recognized that roughly equates to which was called herd immunity.

And it has become much more difficult and the reality is its difficult to know what that number is in the face of variants.

If you think of some of the variables, like children and if you think of more people that come in who may not have vaccines that more that adds to an unvaccinated population as well as the mix of variants we still need the kind of work with the, those uncertain variables but having uniform uptake has been a goal, the more that we can get that 75 percent across-the-board that obviously will ProTect us.

If we think of a lower -- that 50 percent, 58 percent first dose.

For the young people where is -- where we seeing transmission.

Amongst want age group.

, precisely amongst the younger adults.

And it only makes sense.

We are trying to better define the goalpost.

One thing is clear, the higher the better and the more we have our population vaccinated the more confident we can be with our opening up measures in the last part I will say is it's great to see 90 percent and it comes back to the individual reason for vaccinating people to have individuals vaccinated from disease and particularly for severe disease.

The hi hi uptake we are seeing.

That does not let the younger people off the hook.

What we don't want to see is the older people taking that kind of 75 percent away because we will see transmission amongst younger populations.

>> I agree with everything Doctor Hanley said.

But that number was always when we negotiated what we believed as a nation would be the amount of offtake we would get from a population we OA's believe three out of the four Yukoners, they would be readily willing and able.

As far as getting into those numbers and as I see these amazing results, it's good to quantify and if we see certain parts of the population then the reason why we are here today is to make mention of the fact there are other areas and other populations do have the vaccination.

With supply, if we do have one portion of the population over the 75 percent the good news is vaccines will be available as we get the rest of the age demographic to a 75 percent goal line.



I do see the filling in of information as we get better of tackling.

>> Pat: We will now move to Paul from the CBC.

>> Can you hear me okay?

Hello?

My question is for Doctor Hanley.

Six days ago you announced two new cases in Whitehorse instead of the time of the source of infection, and I'm wondering why we haven't heard anything more and how confident we should be that these cases are not an indication of possible community spread.

>> Those cases are recovered and contact tracing was carried out and those cases related to a previous case.

It took time to tease that out.

And I admitted to cover that part and our notes but that case was clearly linked to a previous case and there was no other cases identified and there was of course the usual process of contact tracing.

We did have some testing occurring as a result of that but no further cases.

And I was confident there was no further spread associated.

>> Do you have another question Paul?

>> This would be Doctor Hanley.

Which was announced this week.

>> We are seeing the server -- a third wave.

>> Thanks.

That's a good question, there are always those considerations of risks associated with care.

I think all we can say is its important to pull out that this person has an illness and it ultimately resulted in the death and the COVID infection may at best.

But that is a risk.

We know in medical settings, COVID transmission has at times been documented.

And in particular, it's been long term care outbreaks and there have been hospital outbreaks and it is a risk and and thieves outbreaks have been really very uncommon and overall the -- the adherence to protocols has worked very well to prevent transmission of COVID within a medical setting.

There are always risks to care and in specialized centres in hospital.

As a risk of adverse outcomes and so I think that there are with associated with transport.

It should be a risk-based conversation.

There is always a need for specialized care and tertiary care and most of the outcomes are very good.

We need to have excellent partnership with some of the best medical care in the country.

And I will continue to be very confident in those processes.

This was an unfortunate events.

It should not prevent anyone from accessing the medical care needed when the referrals are made for tertiary care with our partners down south.

>> Your cabinet hasn't been sworn and yet so I'm curious, various pressure to go back in the budget has not passed so how can the government manage a pandemic right now?

>> The same we have for the last 14 months all the way through the election period.

There was always the ability to move on the recommendations with a lot of synergies.

And it is business as usual.

We still have the ability for cabinet and those are happening so we've been having conversations with the opposition very soon and the one before that took 48 days.

And the election was a little bit over two weeks ago and will be quicker than that.

>> Pat: Do you have a second question?

>> I need my translation so I will go to Doctor Hanley.

[ Speaking French ]

>> As you repeat in French what are the consequences and the problem of people missing their appointment for a vaccination and can you also provide the number of doses that might have been spoiled by this practice.

[ Speaking French ]

[ Speaking French ]

[ Speaking French ]

>> Pat: We will now move to Lori.

[ Speaking French ]

>> The questions for the premier.

The Northwest Territories have decided to shorten their quarantine period for those who have received two doses and I'm wondering if the Yukon is entertaining the same idea.

>> We are entertaining a lot of different changes to our current procedures.

Doctor Hanley has been working with all the chief medical officers across Canada.

And being an unfortunate situation with zero cases active and excellent numbers of vaccination.

But nothing new to announce.

>> Pat: Do have another question.

>> No thank you.

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

Next update is Wednesday May 5 at 10:30 AM.