

## COVID-19 Facebook live update: January 7, 2021

>> Good afternoon.

I'm Pat Living with the department of health and social services and your moderator for the COVID-19 update for Thursday, January 7th.

We are joined today by Yukon premier, the honourable Sandy Silver, the minister of health and social services, Pauline Frost, and the Yukon's medical officer of health, Dr. Brendan Hanley.

Once again, our sign language interpreter are with us today.

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

We will call you by name.

You will each have two questions.

Before we begin with our speakers, I would like to verify that everyone can hear us.

If any of the reporters are having problems, please e-mail [ecoinfo@Gov.YK.ca](mailto:ecoinfo@Gov.YK.ca).

>> I'm very pleased to be here with minister frost and Dr. Hanley on our first update of the new year.

Happy new year to everyone.

After a long and challenging year, I know that Yukoners are filled with hope for 2021 even though the world juniors might not have gone our way.

I will say, though, a silver medal is an absolute great

accomplishment.

I know that the entire territory is incredibly proud of Dylan Cozens for being Canada's top point scorer and making such an impact on the national stage.

Dylan joins the Buffalo sabres training camp and hopes of playing in the NHL this year.

Dylan isn't the only Yukoner that is making his mark or their mark on the international stage.

Yukon's Steve has also been nominated for several Grammy awards for his work with dua lipa.

The awards ceremony has been delayed.

We are hoping the best for Steven when those awards get handed out.

This is not Steven's first time on that stage.

He already won a Grammy back in 2016 for his work with Kendrick Lamar.

I have known Steven for quite a while back in his high school days when he was starting to hone in on his musical skills.

It's great to see him flourish and see a Yukoner on the national stage like that.

The Grammys are among the highest accomplishment anyone in the music business can receive.

I congratulate Steven for once again being nominated.

Both Steven and Dylan are fantastic examples of Yukoners who have pursued their dreams and developed their skills to a world-class level.

We couldn't be prouder of the both of you.

Back onto vaccines, the arrival of the vaccines, a little bit more than a week ago is very good news for our territory. But we cannot forget that we are still in the grips of a pandemic and that there is still a long road ahead of us.

Since January 1st, we announced several new cases of COVID-19, all of which have been related to travel.

Contact tracing is under way. And I know that Dr. Hanley will have more details to share in a moment on that.

The appearance of more cases in our territory is not unexpected. But it is a clear reminder that we need to continue to follow public health guidelines and restrictions.

We all have a role to play in keeping our territory healthy and safe.

And I will repeat myself as I do many times.

The best things that Yukoners can do to prevent the virus from spreading is to practice the safe six.

Wash your hands often, maintain physical distancing, staying at home if you're sick, travelling respectfully and responsibly, self-isolate as required, and following the guidelines, the gathering guidelines, that are in place including limiting indoor gatherings to ten people.

I know that I sound like a

broken record.

But please continue to practice  
the safe six plus one.

Mask up when you're in the  
public.

There's no excuse for not  
following these precautions.

Some of the recent contact  
tracing has shown that people  
are not following the  
guidelines.

We have issued five new charges  
under the civil emergency  
measures act over the last two  
weeks.

Three of these are for failure  
to self-isolate.

One is for failure to abide by  
the individual declaration upon  
entering the territory.

And one is for failure to wear a  
mask.

It is disappointing to see some  
people are not taking this  
situation seriously.

And we will continue to follow  
up on complaints as we receive  
them.

So if you do have concerns,  
please call the enforcement line  
at 1-877-374-0425 or e-mail  
[covid-19enforcement@Gov.yk.ca](mailto:covid-19enforcement@Gov.yk.ca).

Yukoners I must stress once  
again we are not out of the  
woods.

COVID-19 is still a risk.

And each and every one of us  
must do all that we can to  
reduce the spread of this virus.

We need to increase our  
vigilance and make sure that we  
are taking every precaution to  
keep our territory safe.

A lot has happened since our last update two weeks ago. The Moderna vaccine was approved by Health Canada two days before Christmas.

Along with approval Health Canada also provided detailed guidance on how to safely store, handle, transport, and administer this brand of new vaccine.

Health staff, they then started receiving training based upon this information.

We want to ensure that we proceed as safely as possible as we roll out this vaccine.

We received our first shipment of the vaccine last week, 7,200 doses arrived by plane.

I can't tell you how excited minister frost, Minister Streicker and I and the folks from EMS and the RCMP were to see the plane landing with the first shipments of the vaccines. I want to thank the dedicated team of officials who are working behind the scenes, who have been continuing to work behind the scenes throughout the holidays to ensure the delivery was successful.

Finally this week, our long-term care residents and staff began to get immunized within days of the shipment arriving.

I want to thank Agnes mills, Mary merchant and also June carpina for volunteering to go ahead and be first and to share their reasons why they thought getting immunized was so

important.

I think it's really important to hear from people why they're choosing to get the vaccine.

And when it's my turn, and I can't wait for that day, I will get immunized to keep my community safe.

And because the vaccine works best if we all try our best to reach herd immunity.

For me, it's very similar as to why I wear a mask.

I do it to protect those around me.

I think it's only fitting that our elders are first here and showing leadership in the fight against COVID especially as Pauline will tell you, these two individuals have shown their spirit in the past as well, that's for sure.

I also want to thank all of the health officials who have been working tirelessly over the last ten months.

Minister frost will have more to share about our vaccine rollout this week and what to expect for the upcoming weeks.

We expect additional shipments of vaccine doses will arrive in the coming weeks.

And we remain committed to have enough vaccines to vaccinate 75% of adult Yukoners by the end of march.

I want to once again thank all of those involved in the rollout from the logistics to storing to training and planning, communication, all that

information, all that communication to Yukoners and to our partners across the territory.

This is a whole team that is involved, team Yukon.

And we are all working together towards the exact same goal to support and protect Yukoners through these challenging times. We are all in this together.

And together we will get through this.

We all have a role to play in minimizing the spread of COVID-19 in our territory.

We also each have a role to play in minimizing the spread of misinformation.

It's vital to be properly informed of what is happening in our territory and what we can do individually to keep Yukoners safe.

I want again to address rumours in the territory.

Rumours spread quickly, and they can cause unnecessary panic, distrust, and resentment.

This is not what we need.

And it does not help us keep each other safe.

I encourage all Yukoners to stay informed about COVID-19 and to get the most accurate up to date information about Yukon's current situation.

It's available at [Yukon.ca](http://Yukon.ca).

This is where you're going to find out about active cases and risk, if any, to the public.

We will continue to share information as it becomes

available to keep you informed about what is happening in our territory.

If you are unsure, please check Yukon.ca.

With that, stay vigilant

Yukoners, we see the finish line, but we're not there yet.

As always, remember to be kind, patient, respectful, and excellent to each other.

Thank you very much.

>> Thank you, premier silver.

Minister frost.

[ Speaking Indigenous Language ]

To all of you for joining us today.

Earlier this week, the first Yukoners were immunized against COVID-19 in our long-term care facility.

I must say the stories told by these two residents about their past and why they were getting immunized humbled me.

In spite of their age and what they have seen throughout their many years, they were amongst the first to raise their hands when the vaccine was offered.

One is 103.

The other is 84.

One survived the influenza of early 1900s.

And the other survived the TB outbreak at very early ages.

So the stories they tell is -- brings you to your knees and it brings you to a humble place in realizing that they had no hesitation, no fear, just a desire to protect themselves and others around them.



This was a selfless act.  
I was also proud to congratulate June carpina on being amongst the first Yukoners to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Our elders and front-line staff are so brave and continue to lead the way in our fight against COVID-19. We all held out hope for a vaccine. And this week, we have been able to begin less than ten months after the first case arrived here in our territory. Since Monday, we have immunized 310 individuals. And I'm happy to say that there were no adverse reactions. By the end of this week, I understand from the staff, we will see an anticipated 500 individuals reached. Things are going well so far. We expect to immunize a hundred more residents and staff at long-term home care -- long-term care homes today as we continue to roll out the vaccines. I am happy and relieved to be able to share more details around the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine into the waiting arms of Yukoners. We began this week with long-term care residents and staff. And we will continue next week to visit all your homes including McDonald lodge in Dawson City. We have been fortunate here in the Yukon that we have not faced

the tragedies of other jurisdictions where long-term care homes have been ravaged by COVID-19.

We have had no illnesses in our homes, either amongst residents or staff and by beginning with immunizing our most vulnerable seniors and elders we can keep it out.

Beginning the week of January 18th, two mobile teams will begin travelling to rural Yukon communities to immunize all willing adults.

Each team will travel with multiple immunizers so that teams can immunize as many people as possible while they are in each community.

The first week we will see teams travel south to Watson lake where they will also offer the immunization to residents of lower post and up leard.

The second team will travel to beaver creek and old crow. During details of times and locations will be available on the website as soon as locations are confirmed.

Immunizations will be offered primarily through scheduled appointments and there will be options to book online or by the phone.

These details will also be available early next week on Yukon.ca.

At the same time, our mobile teams are travelling.

The Whitehorse team will open a mass clinic at the Whitehorse

convention centre.

The initial priority will be high risk healthcare staff including First Nations healthcare workers and those working at the Whitehorse general hospital.

We need to work quickly to protect our front-line healthcare workers.

At the same time, we will be immunizing our vulnerable and at-risk populations including seniors.

The clinic at the convention centre will open six days a week, twelve hours a day, so that we can immunize as many Yukoners as possible.

The following week, January 25th, we will be in Dawson City.

The first week of February, we will see mobile teams travel to birwash landing, destruction bay and Hayes junction, Carmacks and Mayo.

Our two mobile teams are named after the two lead dogs who in 1925 led their team from Anchorage to Nome Alaska to deliver serum.

Many of us may be familiar with the movie.

But in actual fact, planes were grounded due to bad weather.

Nome had to run out of serum.

And it was up to the sled dogs to deliver 20 packages of medicine, 20 pounds.

Now, we have our own balto and togo.

I want to thank all of the individuals involved.

From the teams working on logistics to the training of our immunizers and transporters to all of our community partners who are helping to spread the message about the safety and importance of this new vaccine, [ Speaking Indigenous Language ] To all of you.

Our priority is to ensure we roll out the vaccine as quickly as we can while ensuring the safety of all Yukoners.

The prioritization of vaccine rollout is based on the guidelines from the national advisory committee on immunization and recommendations from Dr. Hanley.

These guidelines are based on protecting those who are most vulnerable.

I want to be clear that the scheduled rollout could change as we continue this important work.

Rollout of the vaccine will take time.

And there are many logistical details involved to ensure that we can immunize Yukoners as safely as possible.

The rollout also depends on our supply of vaccine doses which is the responsibility of the Federal Government.

We are optimistic.

And as I said, things are going well so far.

In the coming months, all adult Yukoners will have the opportunity to receive immunization and help us and

bring us one step closer to ending the pandemic.

In the coming weeks, you will be seeing and hearing a lot about the vaccine rollout. This will include details on when and where to get your shots, how to make the appointment, and why it's important for you to get immunized or to take your shot. We know that there are individuals out there who may be reluctant to get immunized. We hope to provide the scientific background and information on an ongoing basis to help alleviate those fears. All vaccines go through a rigorous process as Health Canada that is known worldwide as the golden standard.

In closing, I look back to the words of Agnes Mills, the elder who is the first Yukoner to receive her immunization. She said she felt privileged. We are in a very good place. Much better than other Canadians and others around the world. I want to say to our elder, [ Speaking Indigenous Language ] To Mary, Agnes and June and everyone who chooses to get immunized, by getting immunized, you are choosing to protect yourself and everyone around you.

Our teams will be extremely busy over the coming months. After a very busy year. And I have to say thank you to them as well.

Thank you for doing your part and working above and beyond to keep Yukoners safe.

We are in a very good place today because of the great work of our team at health and social services, Dr. Hanley and his team and, of course, our health supports in our communities.

I envy their stamina and appreciate their ongoing commitment to serving Yukoners.

[ Speaking Indigenous Language ]

>> Thank you, minister frost.

Dr. Hanley.

>> Good afternoon.

[ Speaking French ]

And thank you to both premier silver and minister frost.

[ Speaking Indigenous Language ]

And thanks for that story about balto which reminds me of reading that to my kids over and over as one of their favourite stories.

And what an appropriate name for one of our skilled mobile teams to get out and deliver.

I wanted to give an overview of recent cases.

Today both possible and confirmed and bring you up to date with what we're seeing and what we expect to see in the coming weeks.

Also come back to a little bit about testing and to remind everyone of how important it is in these days to continue to be tested when appropriate.

And then I'll land back to the vaccine story.

I do hope everyone was able to

take some time over the holidays to rest and recharge a little bit.

And I'm sure we're all probably happy to say goodbye to the old year and welcome in the new although there does seem to be lots of drama so far this year.

2020 was a year that's left its mark on all of us, a year of change, a year of sacrifice.

But with that comes resilience and a chance for community togetherness that will ultimately be unbreakable.

So I'm definitely proud to be part of this Yukon community coming into a new year.

When it was necessary, we adapted and we selflessly altered our plans, our travel, our work, to ensure that we protected this community we call home.

And for that, I thank everyone and commend you for your efforts throughout this past year.

COVID-19, however, was not ushered out with the old year, and it continues to be very much a part of our lives.

Since January 1st, we have had nine new cases.

All of these recent cases are in self-isolation doing well.

And all are based in Whitehorse.

These cases were not a surprise to us, and to be honest, I will be surprised if we don't see more.

With individuals coming home for Christmas or other family members visiting, combined with

the continued surge of cases down south, we anticipated that we would see more cases making their way into Yukon.

These recent cases represent two separate clusters.

The one cluster involves six of these cases.

And most of these cases and their contacts have acted responsibly to protect the health of Yukoners including self-isolating and following the safe six plus one.

The other three cases are in a family group.

And both of these -- each of these clusters originated from travel outside of territory.

And I said all are doing well isolating in their homes.

We also have a possible case that has tested positive using rapid testing outside of Yukon.

And in this situation, we act quickly to control potential disease while we await confirmation using one of our gold standard tests.

And our contact tracing experts at YCDC determined that there were a number of potential contacts at indoor and outdoor social gatherings that were held over the holiday period.

So we are in the process of following as contacts those who are identified as having attended these events.

And we have 48 individuals as we reported yesterday currently self-isolating.

Many of them have been tested.



Meanwhile, we are awaiting confirmation imminently using the gold standard test for the individual that had a tentative positive.

Now there has been a lot of social media speculation around these cases around who was partying or not, where these people were, what schools they attended, who brought in the infection in the first place.

I need to remind people to trust the source of truth in this case, us, public health, YCDC, myself and my office, and that we will tell you what you need to know to stay safe while we safeguard the confidentiality of the case and their families.

Because of the nature of these social gatherings and public health measures not always being followed, we did ask a large number of these contacts to self-isolate as I said and others having been asked to get tested.

Now many test results have already come in and are negative and we are awaiting more.

But this is really -- the point of this was to allow us to identify any electrics -- transmission of COVID-19 that may have occurred at these events and then, of course, to prevent onward transmission.

And again, as I did say this yesterday, but I want to stress again about the schools that among these there were a few high school students identified.

But we have no evidence of any exposure to COVID at any of the schools.

And we have no COVID cases linked to schools.

So, again, please continue to attend school as normally for students.

Continue to observe those public health measures that should now be daily routines for schools including screening for illness before attending schools, using that traffic light guidance, following all of the safety precautions while at school including mask use in those common areas and on the bus.

So overall this situation serves as yet another New Year's reminder that Yukoners are not immune to COVID and neither are young people immune to COVID of its effects.

And although largely a benign disease in young people it can unpredictably cause severe disease or prolong symptoms in anyone.

Don't play Russian roulette with COVID-19.

It's not worth it.

And even if you do get over it quickly, your parents or grandparents or friends or colleagues may not fare as well.

I hope these cases are a good reminder for us of how susceptible we still are to COVID, of how we all have a responsibility to behave responsibly.

And that means behaving as if

COVID-19 is in our midst, as it often is.

Everyone must continue, as the premier says, to follow the safe six plus one.

So this is tough news to start the new year with especially as we had finished or almost finished 2020 with no active cases within Yukon.

As cases surge around the country we look out, though, from within.

And it's easy to get lured into complacency.

And I think that may have happened yet again here.

Sometimes we feel that we're so protected in our bubble that when a new case is confirmed there's this shock that travels throughout the territory.

And I urge you to recall when I said previously that COVID-19 should always be assumed to be active here.

Whether or not we have confirmed active cases, chances are it is lurking somewhere close.

We can do everything in our power to avoid COVID-19.

But we will not eradicate it from Yukon.

So it's crucial that we remain on guard.

If we don't, we do risk seeing an increase in cases as we get further into 2021 and even the risk for community transmission.

That feels like an avoidable tragedy when we are so close to vaccine coverage.

For those who are looking for

guidance on when they should seek testing, when to go to work or when to self-isolate from others based on illness, I would like to remind you to revisit the traffic light checker that we developed on Yukon.ca. And this guidance we developed to assist people who may be exhibiting symptoms and unsure of how to carry on with daily activities or whether to carry on.

If you are experiencing new symptoms that appear without explanation, even if it feels similar to that annual flu or cold, the traffic light guidance informs you when you should seek testing and what activities you should be absenting from until symptoms resolve or until a test result confirms a negative result.

We designed this really to be as practical as possible based on our risk environment but to recognize that testing is important.

It remains important.

And it's particularly important at this time of year.

Really anyone with symptoms needs to stay home and do that self-assessment to determine the need for testing.

While Monday certainly was a red letter day for the territory, as we began the rollout of the largest vaccine strategy to date in Yukon, and as the minister says, as of the end of yesterday, we had vaccinated

more than 300 people in whistle bend place including staff and residents here in Whitehorse.

So we are enjoying this kind of new level of excitement.

But at the same time, it's more important than ever not to jeopardize our community's safety or to begin taking public health measures lightly.

Let's be clear.

Even when you receive your vaccine, public health measures will remain in place.

We have to do the work along with the rest of the world to figure out when and how we can let go.

While the immunization offers great protection against the virus, we don't have as yet a lot of information on how the vaccine prevents or limits transmission.

We also don't know for sure that the vaccine prevents asymptomatic disease.

So when you receive the vaccine, you must remain vigilant and actively follow the safe six plus one.

Even though you may be immunized, if you choose not to follow public health measures, you could still put others not immunized at risk.

I'm so pleased to be here with the minister and the premier as we share the plans for the COVID vaccine in Yukon.

Another historic moment in Yukon is ours to live.

And when it comes to vaccine,

we're not going for the silver medal.  
We're going for gold.  
So remember, monitor your symptoms.  
And if you're sick, seek testing.  
And remember that COVID-19 is just as easy to contract as a common cold.  
We will be releasing more information over the coming weeks about public health measures and how that relates to vaccine.  
But vaccines do not yet alter our current need for public health measures.  
But that is a future we're all looking forward to.  
Always remember, safe six plus one.  
Please use your mask.  
As the best way to protect yourself from COVID-19.  
That's all for my update.  
Thank you.  
[ Speaking Indigenous Language ]  
[ Speaking French ]  
Remember to take care of each other and stay well.  
>> Thank you, Dr. Hanley.  
We'll go now to the phone lines.  
And if I could ask the reporter to identify which speaker you would like to answer your question, that will allow our ASL translator to move back and forth.  
First to Danielle from CBC.  
>> Yeah, hello, can you hear me?  
>> Just barely.  
>> Hello, can you hear me?

>> Yes, we can hear you now.

>> Okay, great.

I guess this one is for the premier, you know, talking about rumour mills starting and whatnot.

We're hearing that some parents with that letter that went out to students, some parents are saying they were aware of the exposure this weekend.

So they're kind of wondering why the information came out on Wednesday.

So I guess I'm just curious when the government found out about the potential of exposure or the potential risk and why the notice was sent out on Wednesday?

>> So, again, we sent a letter out to support the school communities in addressing parents' concerns.

Many parents are contacting schools and others looking for information.

And we want to reassure parents that the process with Yukon communicable disease centre and what parents can do on their part so that conversation is happening.

We also want to reiterate to parents that those who were at risk were contacted and will continue to be contacted if risk changes.

If you were not contacted by YCDC, then it's because your student was not identified as a risk.

So you can imagine as some of

these conversations are happening with certain families, you know, then all of a sudden conversations continue to happen, and rumours continue to happen as well.

I think minister frost was in her opening comments today spoke exactly to that as well making sure that, you know, we are communicating with the parents and the students that we need to but also knowing that, you know, a whole school doesn't necessarily get affected because a student does.

I think the schools have done a fantastic job of working with inside the guidelines to ensure that individual students are staying within a cohort as much as possible when they're in schools as well.

So I can't speak as to how people heard things earlier than our announcements.

But what I can say is by monitoring how we get information out and the traceability through YCDC, they have been doing an impeccable job of working to make sure that Yukoners are being kept safe and that information is being shared at the same time.

Medical information that is personal and confidential not being shared to those who don't need to have that information.

>> Thank you, premier silver.

Dr. Hanley.

>> Thanks.

I just wanted to add a couple of



points.

I think this was, again, a good reminder as the premier said of what processes we do have in place.

And really the letter was about a non-exposure.

So really the letter was to describe that we did not have a school exposure but to really try to reassure parents that, if there is an exposure, we do have mechanisms for making sure that that information is communicated appropriately, that people who need to know are informed, and that we have worked out and practiced and rehearsed all of these protocols so that if there is an exposure we have ways to deal with it and let people know when they need to know.

So really this was just a letter to reassure parents because we had been learning of much speculation and anxiety.

And it really was designed to reassure that we are able to carry on with school as normal.

>> Thank you.

>> Danielle, do you have another question?

>> That was great.

Thank you.

On that note of making sure we don't dispel rumours, another one is that some of the students that could have potentially been exposed or the student being mentioned that had to self-isolate could have been at school for a few days before the letter came out.

That's kind of a fear that we're hearing from parents.

Can you speak to that a bit?

Were these students ever at school after they had potentially been exposed?

>> Yeah.

It's a good thing to speak about it.

And, again, we kind of address one layer at a time.

If we were concerned enough that a child might have been symptomatic or, for instance, at high risk of exposure, then we would take the appropriate precautions and do notifications.

In this case, they were not necessary.

This was a very, very low risk.

The students were included among those 48.

It was three of four students in that group of 48 who happened to be high school students who as a precaution because of a possible infectious source who attended events.

So really, this was almost like our public notifications.

This was a precautionary notice to put people into self-isolation until we could get confirmation as we are currently awaiting of whether this was a true positive or a true case.

And if there were contacts, that we could follow those people.

If any of them developed symptoms, we could then do the appropriate notification,

appropriate testing and notification back to the schools.

So at this stage it would have been inappropriate to provide any further direction towards schools because we have no evidence of any exposure at the schools.

So, yes, the students transitly attended school, but that did not increase any risk of exposure.

If one of those students -- let's say the case turned out to be positive.

One of the students was confirmed as a contact, developed symptoms, then we would go back and then do the appropriate contact tracing.

Keep in mind that there is always a risk of COVID in our communities.

There's always a risk in our schools.

That is why we have the public health and safety measures in the schools.

And that's why we can confidently continue to be able to inform and encourage people to attend schools.

We're always working in a COVID risk environment.

One day we will get out of that environment and be able to return as we used to.

But that, those measures that are in place, are sufficient to allay that minimal risk that could have resulted in some kind of exposure at a school.

>> Thank you.

We'll move now to Luke from CKRW.

>> Hi.

I have a question for minister frost.

Are we going to be seeing updated statistics on vaccinations posted regularly to the website as far as amounts of people who have received their first and second doses and the amount of doses that we have received from Moderna?

>> Thank you.

Thank you for the question.

Certainly.

What we do want to do is keep Yukoners informed.

So the data will be shared quite regularly as we just did now.

We will continue to do that as we bring the vaccines out into the communities as well.

So thank you.

Thank you for the question.

>> Thank you, Luke.

Do you have another question?

>> Yes.

There were -- I know you did mention a lot of the dates as to when the communities were going to be getting these vaccines.

I was just wondering if you could reiterate again when you expect the general public in Whitehorse to start being able to receive their vaccines.

>> Thank you.

Great question.

So we will share the rollout plan with you.

If it hasn't been already, we

will share it with you shortly.  
So the expectation is that we  
will have the general public and  
the clinic opened up in  
Whitehorse on -- beginning the  
week of January 13th is my  
understanding.

If that changes, we will  
certainly post it on Yukon.ca.  
All of the information will be  
posted on the website.  
So encourage everyone to please  
go to the website for the most  
current detailed information.

>> Thank you.

We will move now to Tim from  
"Whitehorse star".

>> Yes, hello.

All right.

My first question is for  
minister frost and probably  
Dr. Hanley.

Do you have any idea of when  
more of the vaccines are going  
to be available?

Because currently you have  
enough to do 3,300 people with  
the two doses that they need.

So are you just going to  
continue going with that amount  
until you run out?

Or do you have an idea when more  
is come?

>> Thank you.

What a great question.

I think as you will see in the  
vaccine plan, we have originally  
I think the indication was we  
were going to hold back and  
inoculate 3,600 people so that  
we get both doses.

But at the moment what's  
happening in other jurisdictions

and what we have determined here in Yukon is we need to maximize and get them -- get the vaccines out as soon as they arrive here. So we are now inoculating 7,200 Yukoners as per what we have right now.

On next, I believe, it's the week of January 18th, 24th, we will receive the next 7,200 vaccines.

And then in February, the anticipation is we will receive two more shipments in Yukon.

>> Thank you.

Premier silver.

>> Yeah.

Just a small bit to add from minister frost.

There's two variables that we're dealing with right now.

One is uptick.

So how many Yukoners that we expect to get vaccinated based upon our scheduling but also the doses from Ottawa.

We do have a commitment from Ottawa that within the first three months that 75% of our adult population will have the vaccines.

The distribution of those is still -- you know, we know a couple of weeks in advance right now.

And we're working on more details as to finalizing the scheduling of the rest of those vaccines.

So after lots of conversations with Dr. Hanley and minister frost, you know, when we put one vaccine into somebody's arm, you

keep another, you know?

That's how we're moving forward right now and making sure that we have that secondary vaccine for that individual.

But again there are variables out there that we still don't know yet as, for example, if we head out to a rural community and we expect X amount of vaccines to be given and then we will see from there how many actually were taken.

But also the finalizing some of the end result vaccines coming from Ottawa.

So it's very difficult to do a plan with those unknowns.

And I have to give -- tip my hat to health and social services and the team for creating a schedule that builds in flexibility.

And that's what we have right there.

So we're having the flu clinic open up for the vaccines.

And we designed a schedule together in a way that can be sped up if needed based upon knowledge from Ottawa when our vaccines are going to be arriving.

>> Thank you.

Do you have another question, Jim?

>> Yes.

I'm going to do a follow-up with the premier on that, please.

You indicated and promised a number of times through the end of November and December that we wouldn't be getting the vaccine

in dribs and drabs.

How do you reconcile that?

>> That was my recommendation from the get-go.

It would be a lot more advantageous to get it in one fell swoop.

That didn't happen.

We're still working with the Federal Government.

I'm in on a call today and I will continue to say we need to get these vaccines as quickly as possible.

And now, we definitely need to get them as quickly as possible because the government, the health and social services department has proven its ability to quickly train and to quickly get our priorities figured out and to have a schedule.

So here we are ready, willing and able, and we need to make sure that we have certainty from Ottawa as to when all of our doses are coming.

>> Minister frost.

>> Thank you so much.

Thank you for the question because I think it's one that we certainly need to reflect on as well.

I mean, what we indicated is that we have a vision.

And the vision is to have 75% of adult Yukoners over the age of 18 vaccinated by the end of march.

That is our target.

And the schedule allows us to do that.



Built into that schedule is the flexibility to make adjustments so that we don't waste any of the vaccines that we use.

Maximize.

And another thing to reflect on, and Yukoners, you know, we're in a really great place in reflecting on elder mills' comments.

We should be grateful.

We should be grateful that we have received the vaccines we asked for within three months.

Other jurisdictions like British Columbia for an example that has the population base that they have, they only received 36,000 vaccines.

What we know is that as the rate is being rolled out in Ontario, the anticipation is 5.5 years, right?

That might not be factual as of the coming days and weeks and months as vaccine becomes available but based on the first rollout.

So just for reflection, I want to just say how privileged we are and how honoured -- how I feel so honoured and humbled that we have an opportunity to protect Yukoners by rolling out the vaccines as we are in such a short time frame.

So thank you for the question.

>> Thank you.

>> We'll move now to John, CKRW.

>> Hi.

So I'm interested in learning more about the infector who went from a holiday gathering to

holiday gathering.

I'm wondering if they were charged with failure to isolate because the understanding is that they knew they had COVID and still chose to go to these holiday events.

>> Dr. Hanley.

>> Yes.

I think that's why we have to be very careful about a few things. One is making conclusions based on lack of information.

So a lot of what you said is actually not true.

This person, for one thing, is not an infector.

This is someone who had, yes, attended several gatherings.

I don't know the details of each gathering, but there may have been some lapses in precautions at some of the gatherings that were attended based on what we have heard.

This was not an individual who was supposed to be in self-isolation.

It's more of an individual that we think may have become infected at one of these gatherings.

Therefore, what we had was a potential exposure at one or more of these gatherings.

And that is why we did the precautionary bubble, you might say, or umbrella of isolation around these 48 individuals until we could confirm or rule out infection in this individual and also look for any other otherwise undetected

transmission by following anyone who developed symptoms and doing the testing.

So that's been our approach.

I think we have to be very careful again about -- this is a combination of circumstances.

Yes, there may have been some transgressions as it were or perhaps the safety measures that we have been recommending with, you know, as much force as we can, sometimes there may have been lapses.

But I don't know that for sure.

I do know that social gatherings are a risk, particularly indoor social gatherings, and thus the precautionary measures that we took until we can confirm or rule out potential for transmission.

>> Premier silver.

>> Yeah, thank you very much.

And not much -- nothing more to add to that other than, you know, we don't attach names to the charges.

We have five new charges under Sema.

Three were for self-isolating, failure to self-isolating.

One was failure to behave in a manner consistent with a declaration.

One was failure to wear a mask.

That brings our total charges up to 37.

The number of people who were charged was 30.

When Dr. Hanley talks about people gathering at parties over the holidays, I just -- again, I

hope you realize the results of your actions.

You know, it's not worth it.

It absolutely isn't worth it.

You know, young people who might feel that it's not going to affect them individually, you might be right.

You might have a case where you get over it very quickly.

But you have the potential of causing serious harm to your community.

So the charges are one thing. The harm to the community is really what people should be thinking about when they're gathering.

>> Thank you.

Do you have a follow-up, john?

>> Yeah.

I'm kind of hinging on something that Dr. Hanley said.

You said that you're not exactly aware of the details regarding the holiday gatherings.

How can the government justify not having the details of these gatherings if there's been contact tracing from the possible exposure of these events?

That's part of contact tracing to understand who was where and how much, how many attendees there were, and so on and so forth.

How is that justifiable to say you don't know when that's the job?

>> I'm going to have to break it to you that I don't know the details of every person that's

contact tracing and where they have been and what they have been up to.

But people do know.

And that's why we have a Yukon communicable disease control.

There are also details we don't divulge for purposes of confidentiality.

When I work with my colleagues in the communicable disease control is the bigger picture where we are identifying collectively based on individual questions and answers where risk may have occurred.

I must say that in this case there was very diligent case finding and contact tracing with fabulous participation from some of the families involved in these events.

So -- but nevertheless, you know, what we talked -- what we see are a number of gatherings. There was no, what, large rave party or, you know, huge gathering.

There was no real alarm bell from any particular event.

It's just that we had an accumulation of gatherings where lapses may have occurred.

And without having kind of a surveillance camera in each of these, I'm not sure we could identify every time that someone may have been not socially distancing or not wearing a mask.

So I want to just take this again a little bit of a higher level to talk about where we see

potential risk for transmission.

That is our focus.

Our focus is on preventing --  
identifying infection,  
identifying risk for  
transmission and preventing the  
potential for onward  
transmission.

That really is the focus.

>> Thank you.

We'll move now to nick, Canadian  
Press.

>> Hi, yeah.

I'm just looking for a little  
bit of clarification on the  
vaccine rollout plan.

And apologies if it has been  
made clear before.

But when the government says  
that they're going to be  
vaccinating people, does that  
mean they're just giving them  
the first dose of the vaccine?

>> Minister frost.

>> Thank you.

That -- that is correct.

So as we roll the plan out and  
we go into the communities, I  
have indicated earlier in terms  
of the scheduling and how the  
schedule was devised and the  
priority population base and how  
we were addressing that,  
particularly here in our large  
urban centre given the  
population base here in the  
city, we -- as we go out, we  
certainly want to make sure that  
we hit every possible person in  
all of our rural Yukon  
communities.

So the criteria is a little  
different in terms of when we

show up in a community, say, like birwash landing for an example.

Small community.

You can inoculate everyone in your first visit.

And then the follow-up for that, so we want to make sure as the plan is rolled out that we are following up with the second dose in a way that is within the time frame allotted for the second dose as defined by the national standards organization.

Thank you.

>> Do you have a second question, nick?

>> No, that's it from me.

Thank you.

>> Thank you very much.

Oh, sorry, Dr. Hanley.

>> Yeah.

I'm just going to follow up the minister's comments agreeing with the minister.

The goal is two doses into every Yukoner that will come forward to accept vaccine.

Our kind of target is 75%.

That is two-dose coverage through this first quarter up until the end of march, beginning of April.

Thank you.

>> We will move now to Chris from CBC.

>> Good afternoon.

Question for Dr. Hanley.

I just want to go back to the school situation a little bit.

You mentioned that the three or four students who were possibly exposed did attend school.

My question is why were they allowed to go to school at all and how can you say allowing them to go to school doesn't increase the risk at school?

>> Yeah, just to be clear again and I think it should be largely reflected in the letter, but the identification and the contact tracing occurred after that fact.

So by the time the self-isolation order had -- was taking place is when the kids -- as soon as self-isolation occurs, you do not go to school anymore.

So, you know, there's always a lag.

The kids don't necessarily know automatically that they may have been exposed to a COVID transmission.

That whole kind of investigation has to take place.

As soon as the notification occurred, then -- and the self-isolation writ dropped as it were, then they're out of school.

>> Do you have a follow-up, Chris?

>> Yeah.

Thank you.

I guess for Dr. Hanley or minister frost, whoever wants to answer that, that is, as minister frost mentioned, we have not had any cases of COVID in our long-term care homes. And I think we're all grateful for that.

But given that and given the



fact that the places where we have had exposures have been airlines, retail settings, was there any consideration given to giving folks who work in those areas, getting them, I guess, on the list as vulnerable populations?

>> Yeah.

Thanks.

You know, I think it's a good question.

And I -- for one thing, I will come back to what the minister referred to as our privilege and that -- and taking a slightly longer view of this that we do have that privilege to be able to attain high uptake, 75%, or potentially even higher by really three months from now into -- by the time we're into April.

We should have that amount of coverage so that everyone has their chance.

And that is so different from anywhere in the world -- anywhere in the country apart from the other territories.

Even if we look around the world, we look at Israel who is widely lauded for their progress in vaccine, their target is the same as ours.

So we have a target as aggressive as anywhere in the world at the moment.

And I'm confident that we're going to get there.

So that, I know that's not directly answering your question.

I think it comes back to that question of where will we have risk and where are we going to see -- where do we see the most risk?

And it really comes down to those priority populations that have been identified at national level but which are also very applicable to us.

So we look at what would be the consequences of an outbreak in long-term care.

And we know that that's where we have seen high infection rates, high mortality rates, and real devastation.

And so where we see, for instance, other priority populations, people who are marginalized, people who are elderly, that's where we see risk of severe outcomes.

And then protecting our healthcare workers as a priority population to be able to do their job, whether that's front line in public health or in healthcare.

So there, I think we are very solid with our priority populations.

Yes, there are these kind of exposure risks.

Very few of them have actually resulted in any infection in these public settings.

But it does come back to all of the other measures we need including maintaining safe workplaces, having these public health measures including distancing and mask use and

sanitation and all of that.

They're all layers.

And now vaccine is our additional layer that we're just bringing on.

>> Thank you.

We'll move now to ClaudyAnne.

Radio-Canada.

[ Speaking in French,

No Interpretation ]

>> So the question is for

Dr. Hanley.

In mid-January, we will start having vaccination.

And one of the priority populations is healthcare workers.

Are the healthcare workers --

[ Speaking in French,

No Interpretation ]

>> Yeah.

Are they going to be obliged to get the vaccine to be able to keep working?

[ Speaking in French,

No Interpretation ]

Do you want me to translate that?

>> Yes, please.

>> The question was about is there any mandatory policy for healthcare workers to receive vaccine.

No, we have not had that for influenza vaccine.

We are not entertaining it for -- at this point for COVID-19 vaccine.

I will say we have so far very good uptake among the personnel so far at long-term care.

And I think what's really helping, what I'm hearing is

tremendous enthusiasm amongst our healthcare workers.

They can't wait, just like the premier.

And me neither.

But it's not my turn yet.

That really a lot of enthusiasm.

But what I think is very cool about this current process is that each staff person that has come forward has had a chance to have a conversation with a vaccinator or with management, with someone who's skilled in being able to answer questions to talk about the vaccine.

And so those individual conversations really helped people to feel comfortable and confident taking a vaccine.

We are seeing very good uptake at the moment.

>> Thank you.

[ Speaking in French,  
No Interpretation ]

>> So given that we have this limited quantity of vaccines available, when is the average Yukoner being able to get vaccinated?

>> So I think minister frost dealt with that very well in talking about when they're coming out.

You know, again, if you don't already have the information as far as the scheduling that we have, that will be provided today.

And, again, we spoke about the flexibility of the plan.

You know, if we get more information from the Feds on the

full distribution cycle, that will affect our vaccinations. Right now, we are making sure that we're rolling out the 7,200 that we do knowing very well that we're expecting another round of 72 two weeks -- in two-week increments from the first shipment.

But there is still more details from Ottawa.

And so uptick on each week and how many Yukoners get vaccinated but also finalization of the commitment from Ottawa to make sure that within the first quarter of 2021 we will have enough vaccines to immunize 75% of our adult population.

The details as to when the -- all the full shipment of all of those first and second doses, we don't have that information from Ottawa yet.

Right after this meeting, that's exactly what I will be talking to the prime minister about.

>> We will move to marine, Aurora boreal.

[ Speaking in French,  
No Interpretation ]

>> So the objective is to immunize 75% of the population.

Given that the vaccine is not mandatory, what is your plans if we have less than 75% of people wanting to be immunized?

[ Speaking in French,  
No Interpretation ]

>> I will just translate that one too.

What if we don't get there is the question.

What if we don't get to 75%?

I have said a few things.

One is we're going to learn a lot more about this vaccine as we go in terms of what does it mean to be covered as 75%?

What does it mean to be at 50%?

How much do you actually need to prevent circulation of COVID or to minimize the impact of COVID in the community?

And therefore, how can adjust your public health measures and gradually lift?

We also -- it's not that there's a hard stop he end of march.

Maybe there will be certain other products, a vaccine available, that will be suitable for people who couldn't get the Moderna.

Maybe there will be people that for whatever reason need more time and need another chance. And we will continue to offer to encourage to educate and adjust our goals as we get more information.

Maybe we need a higher goal.

Maybe it will be a lower goal.

Really, it's a whole kind of program and progress based on evidence that evolves as we go.

Such is the life of a pandemic.

What for now, though, what we're putting all our energy into getting to that goal and our goal is 75% aiming for the end of march.

>> Thank you.

Premier silver.

>> Just add a little clarity to where did the number 75% come

from to begin with?

That came from Federal Government making their best estimates on willingness in populations.

We were told from the beginning, if we thought 100% of the population was going to get the vaccine, then we would give you that 100%.

But the best science and the best data and statistics at the time from polling was that a good estimate is that 75% of the population will be ready, willing and able to get the vaccine.

But again as Dr. Hanley says we are going to be making adjustments as we go and our goal is as many as possible.

>> Thank you.

>> And...

>> And now it's coming out.

And I will just add, that 75% happens to correspond with an initial estimate of herd immunity coverage.

But it is a very rough estimate.

And it could be 60%.

It could be 90%.

But it does give us not only the estimated update but a reasonable goal to begin with.

>> Thank you.

[ Speaking in French,  
No Interpretation ]

>> It shouldn't have an impact on when the borders can be opened with other provinces or with internationally?

>> Yeah, sure.

Dr. Hanley said it eloquently

earlier.

This is another tool in our toolbox.

We will see how this planks the curve.

And previous to the vaccine, we saw what measures in the summer allowed us to move forward through our plan, which is available on Yukon.ca that triggers us forward or backwards through that plan.

We're now in that final stage where we have a vaccine.

And we're starting that process.

But, again, whether it's maintaining the safe six, you know, washing your hands, being vaccinated, all of these are tools in our toolbox.

And we're cautiously optimistic on the next few weeks and months of us being able to get more to a sense of normal.

But again, it's too early for us to say that at a certain time we're going to be able to start lifting restrictions.

But, you know, this is definitely a good sign.

As minister frost said as well, we are in a very enviable position right now from other jurisdictions.

There's some more information to come as far as when the complete rollout of all of our vaccines, when the distribution starts or continues.

But with that being said, cautiously optimistic and I know talking to the premiers right across Canada, we know that this



will cause a reduction in the cases.

And we're very, we can't wait to start seeing the trends in epidemiology going into a direction that allows us to open up more to other jurisdictions.

[ Speaking in French,  
No Interpretation ]

>> I won't translate all that.  
I will just add to that.

Before I answer, it reminds me of a very sweet e-mail I had just a few days ago and the e-mail was from British Columbia.

And British Columbia was saying how good she had been and could she come back into our bubble? And I think we have to say not yet.

[ Speaking in French,  
No Interpretation ]

>> Thank you.

We will move now to Haley, Yukon news.

>> Thanks.

My first question, I think, was a clarification.

I'm not sure if it was answered. But any of the new charges laid under Sema since the new year, are any of those related to the new outbreaks and the potential third one.

>> We don't necessarily connect those two dots necessarily, just to report that there are five new charges.

>> Okay.

Thank you.

>> My second question probably for minister frost was about

outreach as far as the vaccine schedule.

I have gotten some calls from people who are concerned that they live very remotely.

They don't have great internet access.

Are there any outreach efforts that aren't going to be just posting information online or a number you can call?

>> Thank you.

Really great question.

We have, of course, our demographic makeup and our location requires us to take many approaches in how we communicate.

So we won't use the radio.

We won't use social media, newspapers, whatever means is necessary.

We're working very, very closely with our mayors and councils as well and, of course, our First Nations to find out who is off grade and how do we get to the individuals that are offgrid so that they can essentially get vaccinated.

So we are taking every possible measure.

So thank you for the question.

>> Thank you.

I would like to thank everyone for their time today.

Our next COVID-19 update will be Wednesday January 13th at 1:30 p.m.