

COVID-19 Facebook live update: June 2, 2021

[Please Stand By]

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

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

Sign language is provided by Mary Tiessen.

We have no French translation this week.

Following speakers we will go to the phone lines and will call you by name.

Premier Silver?

>> Thank you everyone and good morning, thank you for joining us on a traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün and the Taa'an Kwächän Council.

It's great to be here with Mary and Hanley.

I want to start by acknowledging the discovery of the 215 children on the grounds in the formal Kamloops residential school last week.

This is devastating news and I like everyone else are still processing this information.

My heart goes out to those in British Columbia and here in the Yukon who bear the burden of residential school experience.

There have been lots of powerful actions and discussions over the last few days that have been very, very important.

It has been moving to see Yukoners pulled together.

The pain caused by residential schooled is an ever present part of society.

We need to acknowledge the shameful aspect and strengthen our resolve.

We all must address our complicated history and create a brighter future for the next generation.

My government stance with and supports the national call for a full investigation.

We remain committed to working with our First Nations partners to advance reconciliation and will be having conversations this Friday with the Yukon forum.

Turning to the update of COVID and the situation in the Yukon, thanks are going well here.

Over 78% of Yukoners have received their first dose and more than 70% have received their second shot.

The Yukon is leading the country when it comes to vaccinations and that is why we lifted restrictions last week.

As of May 25th people who are fully vaccinated can travel to the Yukon without needing self-isolation.

Fully vaccinated means you've received the recommended number of doses of COVID-19 vaccine authorized for the youth by Health Canada and more than 14 days has passed since you received the last of the recommended number of doses.

When you enter in to the Yukon you must sign a declaration confirming your vaccination status, consent to verification and provide proof of completed immunization schedule when required. If you are vaccinated in Yukon are in British Columbia you are required to sign a declaration and consent form and are not required to provide additional documentation as your vaccine status can be verified through the panorama database by health and social services staff.

As you revaccinated elsewhere, you must provide documentation from that jurisdiction when -- where you revaccinated.

It must clearly identify revaccinated, the dates, evidence you've received all required doses of a Health Canada approved vaccine.

You can scan or photocopier proof of vaccination and submit it on our secure online portal.

The portal is only seen by health and social services staff authorized under the health information and privacy management act.

They will be there to verify your documentation and this is the process and this is the process until a formal consensus, national record is developed.

Last week I met with our fellow premiers and I reiterated my call for a national registry to verify vaccinations.

We are also ensuring Canadians can travel throughout the country as it becomes safe to do so.

We are ahead of the curve and we need to keep that up.

Keep in mind what doctor theresa tam said when she called the Yukon a model that we are looking to for success.

As be get ready on the path of recovery.

Our youth vaccination rollout began in Pharaoh, Watson Lake, Whitehorse and Haines Junction.

Youth can book appointments and car cross and Tagus.

Also when Mayo and Pelly Crossing and Carmacks.

Dawson city, has lent, old Crow, roster.

I want to thank all the youth who have already stepped up to take their shot.

I also want to strongly encourage all of our youth to get immunized as Doctor Hanley can attest, immunizing our youth will lead to a dramatic reduction in the risk of spreading COVID-19.

You have heard me say before the more people that get vaccinated the safer the territory will be.

Please set up and take your shot if you haven't already.

You can also book your appointment online on Yukon.ca/this is our shot.

As our vaccination rates continue to increase and as the case counts slowly but surely the clients, we will soon be in a position to lift more restrictions.

Doctor Hanley has provided our government with new recommendations and the public service is doing the appropriate work and due diligence to operationalize these recommendations.

If things continue to go well Yukoners can expect changes in the coming weeks around mid June.

One in particular that will be welcome news has to do with children under 12 years old. The plan is that unvaccinated children under the age of 12 who were travelling with fully vaccinated parents and caregivers, and/or caregivers will not need to self isolate. I know many Yukoners are anxious to travel and visit family and have they haven't -- they have not seen for months and maybe introduce new members of the family. It is important to respect the travel requirements that are active in various Canadian jurisdictions but we are on track to make this change soon. I also note Doctor Hanley and his team are looking closely at the guidelines that apply to bars and restaurants. Lastly public health officials met with several folks that offer it bars to discuss the updated guidelines that came into place on May 25th. I know this was a fruitful discussion and we received some helpful feedback that will inform updates to the guidelines in the coming weeks. I want to thank all of our local businesses and business owners for adapting to the COVID-19 situation. Thank you very much. I also want to thank Yukoners for supporting these Yukon businesses. It remains important to support local businesses as we get on the path to recovery. Last week towards him and cultural minister announced some of the details about the great Yukon summer campaign which is all about supporting local companies to kickstart our tourism season. The first package deals will start to appear online so keep an eye out and begin planning to explore. With a little help from the whether it will be a great summer. Please continue to follow safe six plus one, the vaccination outtake has been absolutely phenomenal. But we would not be in this position without all if the efforts they've made to keep each and every one of us safe. I will pass things off to Doctor Hanley. >> I'd like to join the premier and express my sorrow at the recent discovery of the children's remains at the residential school site in Kamloops. I want to acknowledge the anguish that many Yukoners feel as survivors themselves or as family or friends of survivors. This is a further deep scar that challenges us all to understand to answer what we don't know. To continue to heal through truth and reconciliation and never forget. I have recently provided some new recommendations to the government on additional changes and we will be pleased to bring you details soon. We also looked at the self-isolation requirements for children under the age of 12 and have made our new recommendations based on projections and the correspondingly low risk of acquisition by young children in the care of vaccinated caregivers.

With the ongoing good news of vaccinating effectiveness and increasing uptake we can see the light coming back into our world at summer solstice draws near.

As the pandemic approached we prepared on the premise that we were a susceptible population.

This is a virus that no one's immune system was planned for.

Our experience in managing this compliant with the promise of vaccine has changed.

We have demonstrated over and over that we can control and contain this virus and now our susceptibility and we can keep the impact to a minimum while progressively winning back our freedom.

As we move towards new phases and freedoms we will also have lessons learned to bring us into a living with COVID future.

We have learned how effective it can be to stay away from others when ill.

We have learnt our mother's advice to wash our hands is really good advice.

We have learned wearing masks is not as awkward as we first thought and can help protect ourselves and others.

We have learned in healthcare how critical it is to adhere to good consistent infection control.

We know the importance of investing in and maintaining strong communicable diseases including surveillance testing and contact tracing.

I hope these are lessons we can stick to for years.

We continue to see no or new active cases and are pleased to see for the majority of a country, that case -- cases are declining.

The risk of cases is there for lower although some risk is still present.

And some risk will likely stay.

The consequences of any one case our cluster are not the same as they would have been even six months ago.

The risk of seeing a large outbreak occur in the Yukon is relatively low and even if we were to see a large outbreak the consequences would be much less.

Population vaccinated means the chance of people becoming sick enough to go to hospital or suffer serious outcomes is dramatically lower.

We do find ourselves in a different place and we are poised for further relaxation of our restrictions.

On Monday we began the first youth vaccination clinic, I need to give a big shout out to one of the first youth to be vaccinated, Hunter.

This is another remarkable moment and I hope he is incredibly proud to be part of this historic moment.

Hi five.

This week's youth clinic begun in rural Yukon Annable wrap up in Ross River and Botswana grounds for two doses up until mid July.

While a small team goes to the community to administer Pfizer the Whitehorse convention Centre has begun to administer Pfizer to the 12 to 17 age group.

First doses over this week and next and second doses the week of June 23rd.

The first couple days in Whitehorse have gone swimmingly.

We have seen a great uptake and appointments with majority of our appointments booked already.

This is another forward step and once again I must commend the contributions collaboration and enthusiastic response of Yukoners in stepping up.

Protecting not only themselves but others as well.

I want to give a shout out to the organizing teams that have made this operation happen so quickly and smoothly.

We will be able to report uptake among adolescents after the first dose campaign.

Young people continue to come and get vaccinated wherever you are.

You will be helping all of Yukon finally move past all the restrictions to stay in control of us pandemic.

If they use join us in naming for 75 percent plus second dose uptake we can be confident we can move and gather with much more freedom.

Modelling by the public health agencies suggests adding 12 to 17 -year-olds could save Canada from an additional wave of infection protectively all of us particularly older and immune compromised individuals as well as those unable to get vaccinated.

On the subject of vaccinations I'd like to highlight some recent statements from the incredibly busy experts known as the National advisory committee on immunization.

One statement will bring some real world experiences to strengthen the recommendations of immunizing people in special categories.

The experience is encouraging with no safety signals we are encouraging people if you have not already, come get vaccinated.

We have information on the mRNA vaccine posted on our own website and if you still have doubts or questions please make sure you arrange with your healthcare provider.

Recommendations have been strengthened on the mixing and matching.

Just as I said last week we are able to offer Moderna as a second dose to someone who received Pfizer out of territory.

Two different vaccines either Moderna or Pfizer are equivalent in protection to receiving the same production twice.

If as an adult you did receive the Pfizer vaccine as first dose you can expect to receive the modernity vaccine.

It's comforting to know the announcement of reduced self-isolation last week brought smiles to households across Yukon along with the other measures that violence a place these file the first full steps on our way out.

Without said I'd like to remind you there are some other changes to self-isolation measures that affect those who are not fully vaccinated.

We need to continue to strengthen our foundation so we can continue to safely move in the direction of opening up.

If you are not fully vaccinated and plan on travelling into over turn into Yukon you must self isolate for the required 14 days.

You have two options for self-isolation.

Self isolate by yourself or with your travel companions.

Choose a location where you don't have any overlap with individuals who have not travelled, or South -- self isolate in a shared household with a cyber it bedroom and bathroom and Annie Faust -- fellow household members must self isolate with you.

If other household members are fully vaccinated they can share household with the travellers and continue to go to work or shopping as long as physical distancing and other safety measures are followed in the household.

This is rather complex but this is also explain on our website.

Our highest risk of COVID spread is through importation otherwise known as travel.

Our protection increases with every percent increase in vaccine uptake.

Please keep this in mind.

You need to have a self-isolation plan if you are not fully vaccinated.

That's it for today, please take care of each other.

Remember to be grateful for what we have.

For those of you who are suffering sad are still reeling from the recent revelation of the children's from a inside earth in Kamloops I cannot say it better than Marie Sinclair when he said I pray for you all and hope you can find a way she continue on in the good and healthy way.

Thank you.

>> Pat: We will now move to the phone line and begin with Luke.

>> I was wondering if you could tell us if there are any differences the youth might be experiencing as far as side effects go.

>> From our own experience it's a little too early to say.

I don't have any flags for anything unusual I expect especially with second doses I'm sure the young people will be having frequent onset of feeling fatigued and muscle aches.

>> No follow-up for me.

[Silence]

>> Pat: Philippe?

>> Pat: We will contact to Philippe and we will move to Marron.

>> Reporter: Sore!

I was on me but I'm here!

Can ask again?

[Laughter]

>> Pat: Go ahead Philippe.

>> Reporter: The Northwest Territories is going to offer exemptions for travellers from Yukon, this is a new measure and will we reciprocate and allow travel from this area?

>> Drumming answer?

>> Doesn't matter.

>> We have been working with our counterparts and we are already reciprocating because we have foregone special exemption processes and we are grateful for that.

From -- and I know there are many grateful people who are happy to hear this news.

We are essentially reciprocating because all we need is not documentation and it was one the premier walk-through earlier.

And that documentation of full vaccination and then you are in.

>> To have another question?

>> Reporter: Question for the premier.

Can't tell us about the conversations in terms of vaccine passports?

What has not been light?

>> What we're seeing is they are ahead of conversation and what we are also seeing is cautious optimism in their areas but they are following the lead and asking us lots of questions. And that type of -- those types of questions.

We are watching the federal government as they develop their red light Green light AB and a lot has changed from the country so it is all very live of the conversation.

The ultimate goal is for all of us to get to a place where Canada has herd immunity and we can see the stripping down of guidelines but as Yukon is ahead of the curve and talking about our vaccination rate, and how when you get close to the 70 percent in this news comes out and you see more people lining up to get there vaccine.

I have had direct conversations after the national call with individual premiers as well talking about the state of affairs.

A lot of people agree with Theresa Tam.

In general we have and as we get from relief to recovery we want to see a coordinated effort we have witnessed the chief medical officers of health being in lockstep with their recommendations and with their following of science and ammo is urging premiers that the more we can be in lockstep in our messaging, the easier it is for Canadians to understand where we are and where we need to be.

As far as lifting restrictions.

A lot of the questions people have are making sure we iterate to Yukoners that they adhere to the travel restrictions and requirements.

>> Pat: We will now move to Marian.

[Speaking French]

>> Pat: Moving on to Tim at the Whitehorse star I'm wondering what the rationale an scientific basis of that is.

Amateur people will be wondering.

>> Happy to talk with that.

For one thing, there is a difference even in variants, that we're seeing dominate so the younger children have a lesser risk of transmission compared to older risk.

And that's why the emphasis and a modelling that was done by the federal government is so important showing how critical it is immunizing 12 to 17 -year-olds as key potential

transmitters of COVID and contributing to overall COVID activity it will make a powerful difference in Canada and I'm glad we can contribute.

Protection by our adolescents or stepping up.

One rationale is reduced transmission with younger kids.

The second is older kids 12 enough to have an opportunity to be vaccinated.

To be able to offer this to kids who otherwise do not yet have that opportunity, and knowing that adults do have that opportunity, it's a pragmatic decision to allow safe travel to occur with young children particularly as travel restrictions around the country as they starts to ease.

The other part of this rationale is the modelling that we do when we look at it and it's of course participating with federal counterparts and putting components of the model together.

What is the actual risk in the circumstances of fully vaccinated parents for a child?

Cuckoo and in that vaccinated family, to pick up infection and bring it back?

And we start to generate some order of magnitude.

That risk starts to be in the one in 10,001 and 20,000 risk and knowing that when we combine that with a highly vaccinated and increasingly vaccinated population it takes on a tiny little piece of risk for a huge advantage.

>> Pat: Do you have a second question Tim?

>> Yes, did the government receive a lot of blowback from families protesting this?

Because you had fully vaccinated parents having to stay home for two weeks?

Was there pressure put on you?

>> I would say there was no pressure, what was pointed out is we knew this from the beginning that this was something we wanted to explore at the time and I believe we even said we brought the initial announcements.

>> Pat: Brennan from Canadian press.

>> I don't have a question.

>> Pat: Quality and from radio Canada.

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

>> Pat: Do have another question?

>> Reporter: I do.

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

>> Pat: Will move to Haley from Yukon news.

>> Reporter: I have a question for Doctor Hanley.

There's been conversations in the South around ease to access due youth neither parent's permission?

>> It's a good question.

And what we reliant is what we've always relied on for youth and immunization and for that matter other healthcare decisions and that consensus is based on capacity.

Adolescents are right in that age they are trying to determine their own Otani and there is actually a one pager, a bilingual one pager on how that whole process works.

That's not to say a parent is not wanted, that the conversation between the parent and the youth and those conversations should take place in terms of questions about the vaccine.

And they are asking the first questions and reach an agreement about who's going to provide the consent.

, maybe it's a 12-year-old and it's having that conversation and deciding who is going to be and it'll bring that permission to the table and always at the table there's that chance for the questions but definitely is an important part of this.

But a minor who is capable of understanding and of expressing is able to give their own consent.

>> Pat: Do have a second question.

>> Reporter: I do not.

>> Pat: And like to thank everyone for their time today.

The next update will take place at 10:00 AM on June 9th.

We will start 30 minutes earlier than usual at 10:00 AM.