

COVID-19 Facebook live update: October 7, 2020

>> Good morning.

I am Mathew Cameron, moderator for the COVID-19 update for Wednesday, October 7th.

We're joined today by the Yukon premier, honourable Sandy Silver and Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of health, Dr Brendan Hanley.

Our sign language interpretation is being provided by Mary Tiessen, and Andre Bourcier from the French language services directorate will translate any questions from French-speaking journalists on the line.

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

We will call you by name and we will -- you will have one question and one follow-up.

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

If any reporters are having a problem with audio connections, please e-mail alexis.miller@gov.yk.ca.

[Inaudible]

>> We may have a problem with the stream.

Standby for a moment, please.

Okay.

We're having an issue with our livestream.

We are going to reset the system.

Please standby, we will be back in one or two minutes.

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

We will call you by name in you will each have one question in one follow-up.

Before we begin with our speakers, I would like to verify that everyone can hear us and that the livestream is motioning properly.

If any reporters are having a problem, please e-mail alexis.miller@gov.yk.ca.

I will now handed over to Premier Silver.

>> Thank you, Matthew.

Thank you for joining us today.

I'm very pleased to be joining you on the traditional territory of the Taa'an Kwächän Council and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation.

I want to update you on our collaborative efforts with the government of Canada to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I was very pleased to join the Canadian first ministers in announcing the safe restart agreement which set out shared objectives and committed federal resources and areas that are critical the safety of resuming economic activities across the country and reducing the ongoing impacts of COVID-19.

Through the safe restart agreement, Yukon News receiving \$13.5 million in direct federal transfers to support the readiness of our territory's health system in the coming months.

This agreement also included a commitment from the government of Canada to provide additional support, specifically for the territories through a separate agreement to address the shortfalls of the per capita allotments.

Additional northern specific funding supports will go to addressing the higher costs of delivering equitable services in the territories.

I greatly appreciate the recognition both from the federal and provincial leaders of the unique circumstances of the territories and their support to advance considerations that are specific to the North.

Today I am pleased to announce that is part of the Northern support package, Yukon will be receiving an additional \$12.4 million, \$7.7 million for healthcare and 4.7 million to support vulnerable populations.

This brings Yukon's total allotment under the safer start agreement to approximately \$26 million.

The additional funds for healthcare will support our territory's three hospitals and world health services, will help the Chief Medical Officer of health and the Yukon communicable disease control centre to maintain enhanced services related to the pandemic and address emerging and growing needs and mental health and substance abuse treatments including support for frontline service delivery.

Additional funding for vulnerable populations will help address the needs at the Whitehorse emergency shelter and community shelters, and promote infection control in long-term care settings.

Last week, I tabled a supplementary budget in the legislative assembly that outlines additional spending largely focused on responding to COVID-19.

This northern support package provides another \$12.4 million to offset the costs associated with the pandemic in addition to the \$52.1 million in recoveries identified already in that budget build.

Our government remains focused on protecting Yukoners and supporting them through these extremely challenging times.

We will continue to work collaboratively with our partners across the country to respond to this pandemic.

I also know that Dr Hanley and his team are working in collaboration with the medical officers across the country, including officials at health Canada to ensure that we remain well-prepared to manage the public health risks associated with COVID-19.

Working together and taking a coordinated approach to managing COVID-19 is still extremely important.

We're seeing case counts rise in other provinces, and there is no denying that the second wave is happening in Canada.

The best thing we can do to protect against the spread of COVID-19 is to continue taking the precautions that Doctor Hanley has recommended in the last several months.

Practising the Safe Six remains incredibly important.

Washing your hands often, maintaining physical distancing, staying at home if you're feeling sick, travelling responsibly and respectfully, self isolating as required, and also following the gathering guidelines including limiting indoor social gatherings to ten people if not in your bubble.

This is extremely important as we look towards Thanksgiving this weekend.

This time of year is usually an important opportunity for family and friends together and break bread.

I know that everyone is eager to spend time with their families, relatives and friends.

Indoor social gatherings present a higher risk.

That is why it is important to keep your gatherings small, the practice physical distancing, and keep your hands clean and cough and sneeze into your elbow.

We all need to remember that the actions we take are not just to protect ourselves but they are to protect everyone in our community.

We all have a role to play in keeping our communities safe and healthy, and we need to remain vigilant.

Thanksgiving is also a time to express gratitude.

Our territory is filled with dedicated individuals, businesses, and organizations that have risen to the challenge we are facing over the course of this pandemic.

The kindness, the compassion in the care that we have seen across this territory continues to inspire me.

It is a constant reminder of why this is such a great place to live.

I want to say a big thank you out there to all Yukoners for their collaborative and collective efforts to keep our territory safe and strong.

We have been in the grip of the pandemic for over half a year now, and I know that it has affected the mental wellness of Yukoners.

The measures introduced to protect the health and safety of Yukoners have made it hard to connect with our families and friends, and we understand that.

This has been an extremely challenging place and time as we navigate the uncertainties of the pandemic in addition to the normal challenges of life that we always have to grapple with, even if we weren't in a pandemic.

It can be hard to reach out for help, even though we know deep down we needed.

I encourage all Yukoners to be kind and compassionate and to talk with one another.

It is extremely important.

You need to check in on each other and support one another.

This is a national mental illness awareness week.

It is a reminder for all of us to engage in earnest conversation about our emotional well-being, with our family, our friends, and our colleagues.

Having someone to talk to makes all the difference in the world.

It can help improve or maintain our mental health in uncertain times.

I want to remind Yukoners that mental wellness services are available through the Canadian mental health Association Yukon division, also all genders Yukon society, and the mental wellness and substance use hubs in Yukon communities.

There are also workshops and programs available to Yukoners that promote mental wellness and mental health.

You can find all this information and support on mental wellness services on in Yukon.ca, as well as the health and social services Facebook page.

Last but not least, again, we are all in this together, and together we will get through this.

Thank you very much for your attention.

I will pass it off now to Dr Hanley.

>> Thank you, premier.

And I can't agree more with that call to be aware of our mental health, to support each other in our mental health through these difficult times, and to reach out for them any support out there when you needed to.

Apart from the attention around the American president testing positive for COVID-19, there have been from what I have seen what a major COVID related themes over the past week or so.

In North America, the continuing resurgence of COVID-19 activity and many provinces, particularly Ontario and Québec.

And new technologies coming into play to augment our response to the pandemic.

I will review a few of these technologies, and coming additions to our momentary in.

As I go through them, you will note that each of these technologies or devices comes with advantages and limitations.

One of these technologies, which is rapidly being adopted in many places in Canada is the COVID Alert App.

I wanted to take this time to explain a little in depth about the app and what role this act may play in Yukon.

This is one technology that in my mind, a wait and see approach is preferable.

As we learn more about the app, its advantages and its limitations, it is also important we learn about what value it adds to well-established practices in public health with our ongoing local bid activity, we don't need to be in a rush to decide.

So how does the app work and should people download it?

The COVID Alert App is a remarkably clever invention.



Developed by Apple and Google, which takes advantage of loose tooth equipped devices talking to each other when in close range.

Once you download the app, it tracks locations through your phone.

Is your phone has been in the same location as an individual's phone and that individual is later diagnosed with COVID-19, and that individual uploads that information using a code provided by public health so that there is no risk of divulging personal information, if that individual uploads that information then you will be anonymously advised that you may have been exposed.

The app therefore depends on the individual who tests positive to cooperate by uploading the information.

The app of course also depends on the assumption that you're with your phone back a pretty safe assumption for many of us but not necessarily always the case if phones are either shared or left in the car.

One of the limitations about this app is that it does not wait out the high-risk contacts from low-risk contacts.

All contacts are equal, which we know is not the way COVID-19 works.

Let's say you're shopping in the same store as someone who later receives a positive diagnosis, and you were only there a few minutes with transient contact with that individual.

Perhaps brushing past that person in the produce area.



That is not generally the type of contact that we worry about, as compared to say sharing a table at the bar and having a long conversation for an hour.

Traditional contact tracing carried out in Yukon for its out information elicited through careful and often repeated questioning, as well as additional techniques such as interviewing family members, checking receipts or phone calls, determining where the case has been and who that person has been in touch with, and what type of interaction took place.

The phone app has no way of distinguishing the high-risk contacts from the more casual transient ones that we don't really worry about.

So we would be potentially identifying many low-risk contacts per case identified through this method and potentially asking a lot of people to self monitor, test, or self isolate without detailed exposure information.

In addition, we may be adding to the demand on our testing and on our public health workforce.

Everyone in contact will receive a pain, and much time and effort could be used in tracking and testing contacts who are not really contract.

Yukon communicable disease control and community nursing are experienced in contact tracing, and to date has managed all of the work with their usual aplomb including some very complex tracings.

Are there advantages to this app?

There are likely to be advantages, especially where contact tracing may already be stretched or overwhelmed, or when COVID activity is how you.

The utility of this app is less certain been our smaller jurisdictions with limited activity.

That is why we would like to take time to learn from other places where the app has recently been introduced.

I have downloaded it to help understand it, and I know many people have downloaded it when they have travelled outside of Yukon.

There is nothing to stop you downloading at either.

It is an innovative hat -- app, especially if you're travelling outside Yukon.

It might come in handy.

If a returning Yukon or were to get pinged that they were possibly exposed while out of the territory, we would ask them to contact AC/DC got Yukon communicable disease control, for follow-up.

As we continue to move through the months following COVID's arrival in Canada, they are more and more tools presenting themselves to us and like always, they take a careful and measured look at what is out there before signing on.

One new tool that we hope to begin using in the years to come is the swish and spit or gargle test that was developed in BC.

This is another way to test for COVID-19 that does not require the swab in the nose, designed primarily for use by children.

The gargle test is the same test but a different way of obtaining the sample.

We will shortly begin to pilot this method through YCDC and following that, we hope to introduce it to our other testing sites in Yukon.

I will keep you updated as we go through the initial steps of validating this test for our population.

We are grateful is always to our BC lab partners who have led the way with this new way of collecting samples from children.

BC CDC lab continues to provide the vast majority of our tests in we continue to profit from their expertise, high test quality, and the rapid turnaround time that we need.

Another new tool we plan to add to our toolbox once available is the idea now for portable, rapid, molecular tests that provide test results within 15 minutes.

This test was approved by health Canada only days ago, and we anticipate receiving our allotment of ten machines.

These tests will definitely add to our testing capacity and will again be of use for those times when we really need that rapid results such as when tackling an outbreak.

Since the Abbott ID is now portable, the Abbott ID it now is portable, rapid, and easy to use.

This machine will be a particular asset for rural and remote areas of Yukon as well.

The test is highly accurate, however, less accurate than the PCR molecular test currently that we use based in BC which is why that will remain our standard test for everyday use.

As our partners around the country learn more about this new technology, we will learn more specifics about the test specifications, it's advantages, indications, and limitations.

As we get closer to acquisition of these machines home, likely towards the end of this year or the beginning of next, we will in collaboration with BC labs develop guidance for how these machines will be used and where.

These machines are only licensed for symptomatic testing so cannot be used according to agreements with the federal government for a systematic testing.

In territory, we already have the first molecular test apparatus we have had in Yukon.

The machine is at the Whitehorse General Hospital lab, and must be ground by trained and qualified technicians.

This test is highly accurate and offers a rapid turnaround time as well, however, we do reserve this test for those few cases when we really need to know the results right away as there are globally limited supplies of the testing cartridges required.

We just heard yesterday about the antigen testing technology also an Abbott device that was approved by health Canada, and once again we expect the ability to acquire these machines when available.

Again, these are portable, quick, and simple to use.

They also have limitations with accuracy, as they test for viral antigen and not the virus' genetic material.

They could miss an active infection.

What exact role they may play in testing, when they will be useful, and when not will also be something we will study and learn in the months to come.

As we look forward over the next year, we want to ensure the testing capacity is prepared to meet any demand that could hit us.

Right now, we continue to be confident in our preparations both with testing and with contact tracing.

As a cases surge in other parts of Canada and as we move through base three of our own pandemic, we can continue to modify -- I have lost my page here.

Continued to modify our approach as we learn more about COVID and acquire more capacity to manage.

Initially, a few months ago there was so much we had to shut down or curtail.

Bars and restaurants, gatherings, personal health services, workplaces, health care, and many other settings.

In the first cases were diagnosed in Canada and when our first case was diagnosed in Yukon, we restricted ourselves to protect ourselves and our families.

Although we never had to shut down to the extent that many other state in the country, we were still barely moving from our home environments.

The streets were almost empty.

We did not yet know about what we were dealing with.

As our initial case activity settled in the pandemic continued its march around the world, we learned more and more about the disease and we became much better at taking steps to protect ourselves.

We were therefore able to start opening up our lives again.

We could see people outside our household.

We could return to work and eventually school.

We enjoyed the Yukon summer in a wonderful fall.

Thanksgiving us just ahead, followed by Halloween and then winter, and new phases of managing our lives during COVID.

I think we are all now into something of a group in living with COVID.

Even though I still hear from those who still think we need to shut down everything to ensure our production, those voices are quieter and perhaps there is growing realization that being shut down is not the way to keep ourselves healthy in sane.

But we also know that we need to do things differently than we did in the summer.

Those large outdoor gatherings will need more layers of clothing and a larger bonfires, or will need to break them up in order to move indoors.

Indoor gatherings with closed windows and doors are an invitation for COVID to spread.

I heard through the grapevine a good illustration of how COVID can be spread indoors.

Imagine a group of ten people doing crafts at a table.

One uses glitter, and you know how that stuff gets around.

All ten end up going home with glitter on their socks.

That is how disease spreads if we don't take precautions in good care.

I don't want you to give up the glitter, but I do want your -- you to remember a visible example of modern reality is COVID's invisible spread.

The White House cases, especially those associated with the newly nominated Judge's celebration illustrated once more how COVID can spread to many people at once.

People who are gathering close, not observing distance and, not even wearing masks when infringing on each other's bubbles.

COVID is largely pretty boring in how it spreads.

Droplets and close contact, hand to mouth, mouth-to-mouth, spit to spit.

But in the right circumstances, aerosols are also formed that can spread further and in fact many people at once.

COVID is an opportunist, and we have to prevent those opportunities for rapid spread that could overwhelm us or lead to community spread.

That is why, by avoiding large gatherings, by limiting indoor gatherings, by observing the Safe Six measures, we keep those opportunities for spread should go bit appeared to just the boring type.

One person or two, or a small cluster that we can handle.

If there was ever a time I found words from a certain US leader that I agreed with, it was when he said, you don't need to fear this disease.

It -- he is right.

We should not live in fear of COVID.

Fear leads to irrational reactions driven by panic, being too avoidance, withdrawn, or hostile to others.

But equally irrational is ignoring better at that the virus poses.

Let's not kid ourselves as to how devastating a disease it has shown itself to be.

We do need a healthy respect for this virus that has reached many millions and killed over a million in the world.

Not fear, but knowledge and familiarity with what it can do.

Doing the right thing, and listening to our best advice as we learn more about COVID and transmission.

Not fear, but continued action to meet the threat by observing the preventative measures that have been shown to work and that have undoubtedly worked here.

We're learning to live with this disease and eventually, with the help of vaccines and treatments, incorporate this added threat into our everyday lives.

Always in our path forward strategy, I tried to maintain that the aim of living with COVID risk.

Living in the best way we can, with managing the risk of COVID alongside the risk of being too restricted and how we carry out our lives or make a living.

We will continue to strive for that violence and being able to thrive as best we can while keeping COVID's threat to a dull roar.

We have much to be thankful for as we approach Thanksgiving weekend.

We would do well to remember those who were having a hard time at the moment, whether in areas around the world that are hard-hit or here, for those who have lost jobs or businesses, or who face a bleaker winter ahead.

It overall, we are doing okay and we are going to get through this.

Let's celebrate angst giving thoughtfully, cautiously, but with kindness and gratitude for all the freedom we have.

Remember as you gather with families in close friends, be thankful for our beautiful fall weather that continues.

Stay outside for gatherings as much as possible.

You can gather with up to 50 people outside, if you maintain physical distancing.

Avoid hosting or attending any gathering if you're feeling unwell, even if your symptoms are mild.

Though your social bubble can include up to 15 people, indoor gatherings are limited to ten people.

If you're eating together, have a designated carver and server to limit sharing of germs.

Avoid sharing glasses or cutlery, snack bowls or pepper shakers.

Set your table and chairs for physical distancing between people from different bubbles.

And whether this Thanksgiving weekend or after that, always follow the Safe Six.

Be mindful of those 3Cs where COVID can catch us.

Close spaces, crowds, and close contact.

Be kind, show gratitude to each other, and like the premier says, check in with each other.

That is all for today, thank you.

>> Thank you, Premier Silver.

Thank you, Dr Hanley.

We will now go to reporters on the line.

One question and one follow-up doctored -- starting with John, CKRW.

>> Reporter: Hello.

I was wondering if the premier could maybe dive into some of the net until health and substance use supports that he mentioned when announcing the additional funding earlier.

>> Early days on the funding announcement, obviously, but as we negotiated the safe restart this was a conversation happening right across the nation.

The mental health of every individual across Canada has been drastically affected by COVID, and so it wasn't necessarily specific to Yukon.

This is something that all jurisdictions said was extremely important.

We are extremely lucky to have the mental wellness hubs we have, to have the rural and urban supports that we do have with nongovernment organizations but also with the Department of Health and social services as well.

What's this is going to do is augment, and allow us, as we have been doing all summer long for the last seven months, understanding where we are in time in place and making sure the programs and services that we have support the need today.

It is very hard always to predict what is going to happen a couple of months from now, and so we have to make sure that the programs that we have fill the need for today.

Whether this money goes directly to supporting the amazing people, the 22 people in the rural communities that are on the

front lines and have an extremely important role to provide and making sure that they are mental wellness is kept in check as well, or whether it is to provide other supports or services or help with the NGO community, we will be making those announcements as we go.

I know the Minister responsible for health and social services, Pauline Frost, has been very active in the whole government approach when it comes to mental wellness in all departments.

The good news is, we have been bolstering that mental health support over the last four years.

This money on top is just going to be just the extra support that we need to make sure that all Yukoners are being met where they are, and hopefully helping them to maintain what they need to live a healthy life today and into tomorrow.

>> Thank you, John.

Follow-up?

>> Reporter: Yeah, I was hoping Dr Brendan Hanley could talk a little bit more about the new swish and spit, or gargle test.

Maybe discussed, I guess, what it is looking like right now for that and when people might be able to actually access the test for children?

>> Yeah, it is hard to be very specific on the timelines but I will keep you apprised.

It is really only newly established in BC.

As you know, we work very closely with our colleagues at the BC lab so we are getting the gear and the information that goes along with it.

We just want to make sure that we have the guidance set out appropriately and that our providers get trained on how to administer the tests so in turn, children and their parents can be instructed on how they are supposed to do this.

There are very specific instructions for this in terms of the swishing around the mouth in holding it in your mouth.

Really what you're trying to do is replace a swab in the nose with an adequate sample collection just through switching and gargling.

So you really want to get the secretions out of the throat.

You will see on the BC website that they have kind of a one pager on how to do this test, and we will be adopting those same instructions.

And of course it requires a specific way to collect the spit.

It has to be done in a way that maintains our infection control practices, so it is really kind of getting the protocols in place in then rehearsing them before we bring it out.

It is a matter of weeks, it is not long, but I will definitely keep everyone apprised.

>> Thank you, John.

Moving on to Terry, Canadian press.

[Inaudible]

>> Reporter: Sorry, I was on mute and I'm on speaker so I am doing everything wrong.

You see that BC is increasing its numbers, more than 100 every day.

Québec, Ontario...

I'm wondering if there is any thought-- I mean, Yukon has been largely unscathed except for all the shutdowns.

I'm wondering if there is any thought that you might limit travel from other provinces and territories?

>> So we have been working hand in glove with Doctor Hanley and his team as he works with the national organizations right across Canada for health.

And of course, being plugged in with other jurisdictions as well.

The plans that we have been putting forward have been working so far.

Our path forward house triggers for forward and backwards.

As we monitor the epidemiology another areas, we are very conscientious that any step forward, we don't do unless we know that we have a huge amount of confidence in those steps.

So far so good, as you mentioned.

15 cases so far.

We have not seen community spread, and we have seen a large quantum of people travelling through the Yukon.

We have at over 50,000 people travelling through Yukon.

Of those, the BC residents are just over 11,000 and the balance between mental health, and the drastic effects of coed, we have been striking a great balance between those a two.

I would not say about, but I talked to Dr Hanley on almost a daily basis about the epidemiology, the traceability of British Columbia versus other jurisdictions.

We are still very confident and comfortable with our ability to know the way it is spreading in BC, the province that we are open to right now, and mitigating and calculating the risks associated with that.

That being said though, as well, we are in applause and our final plan, our final phase of the plan before a vaccine.

So, even though we are not moving backwards which is great, we're still not necessarily moving too far forward either at this point.

We are cautiously optimistic with Alberta right now.

We are cautiously optimistic that Canadians will help us right across this nation from coast-to-coast to combat this virus by doing what we need to do.

And we have heard Dr Tam, we have heard Dr Hanley, and everybody say the exact same thing.

The way we can work together to make sure we do move forward with these plans, but is up to Canadians right now.

It is up to everybody to understand their responsibility in this battle but at this point, we think we are in a good place right now with our existing bubble.

Cautiously optimistic that we will even be able to move forward more soon, but at the same time nothing else to report on that right now.

>> Thank you, Terry.

Do you have another question?

>> Reporter: I do.

So I know, I see a large percentage of this money is going towards mental health supports.

Has there been an increase in mental health problems in Yukon?

>> Again, as we negotiated the envelopes as we were calling it through this Dave -- the safe restart, that was developed based upon need to right across Canada.

Whether it is needs for hospitals in rural versus urban settings, that's a conversation right across Nova Scotia right through to Nunavut and up to the Yukon and British Columbia.

Making sure that our communicable disease centres and those types of things are adequately funded, and basically just keeping constant awareness of mental wellness, not just Yukon specifically.

What we happy or now with the northern support package is a consideration of all of these envelopes that were developed during a conversation with the nation, they were per capita funding.

If you're a place like a Québec, but is great because you're going to maximize the dollars enough.

It doesn't help the smaller jurisdictions.

Whether you're premier King in Prince Edward Island or ourselves here in Yukon, or even some of the bigger provinces-- sorry, medium-sized provinces, base plus was part of the dialogue.

And when you look specifically at the northern support package, base plus is what we got.

Envelopes were created based on themes, the unique circumstances of the North predominantly means it is more expensive to deal with these issues that are happening right across the country in the northern context.

I want to give a shout out to the federal government in the provinces.

I have said this before on the stable, who would have thought that Doug Ford would be such a positive supporter to the territories but he really was.

Somebody who is the premier of a larger jurisdiction saying look, we can't forget that the territories are not provinces.

They are very northern, they are different styles of government.

They have different considerations.

And to have that support and communicate through the Council of the Federation into the first ministers meetings conversations is extremely important, and that has resulted in these envelopes that were established.

Having a top up, if you will, that gives us the plus to a base plus consideration from federal supports.

>> Thank you, Terry.

Moving on to Chuck with the Whitehorse Star.

>> Reporter: Yes, good morning.

This is for Dr Hanley.

I figure it was probably already answered by Premier Silver but I'm going to ask it again anyways.

Dr Hanley, Nunavut is recently reporting nine new cases in a remote mine in hope Bay.

Does that gave you any cause for consider -- concern in maybe looking at further restrictions on travel from Nunavut?

>> No, not about.

In fact,, the cases and hope Bay in Nunavut were isolated to that sight.

And associated most likely with importation that, as I understand, has not yet been clearly identified.

But nevertheless, this is in a remote sites and it does not link to any risk for exposure to others in Nunavut.

So really, that changes nothing of our concern about exposure to Nunavut.

I continue to work very closely with my counterparts in-- actually, across the North but particularly the northern territories, and we discussed many of the issues in common including how we put in

protections or support recommendations and advice to reinforce protections for remote worksites such as the mines.

But also, many other issues that we have in common.

Just like the premier said, as territories, we are a little different.

We all have small populations that are widely dispersed and remote, so we really have a lot of issues in common.

But no, this particular case would not change -- no this case would not change my degree of comfort that we have with our bubble, with our northern territories.

Nor with the advice I am providing to the premier.

>> Thank you, Chuck.

Do you have a follow-up?

>> Reporter: No, thank you very much.

That is good for me.

>> Okay.

Haley, Yukon News?

>> Reporter: Thanks.

A question I think would be for the premier.

The 12-point, that million-- sorry, seven points seven for healthcare, some of that being two hospitals, I wonder if you could extend does expand on what kind of upgrades hospitals need, if there is any kind of long-term increase -- increase in ventilator capacity or daily things like PPE?

>> More of those details will come for sure.

As far as ventilators, we are good.

We definitely have the capacity now, but again, to kind of roof a bit on what Dr Hanley said as well, the interesting thing about the northern support package is as much as the territories are very similar in that capacity, we are going to be spending our support package is probably a little different amongst those three territories as well.

We don't have as many remote, nonhighway accessible community so needs in the territory is going to be different.

When we take a look at what we need, I think again it is more money and support for the things we have already identified.

You know, just the capacity to make sure we are ahead of this, capacity to trace, making sure we do have the PPE available.

But to be able to split that \$12.4 million into extended needs for healthcare because as we have seen based upon the tabling of our budget, we have spent an awful lot of money on keeping people safe.

So you take a look at the almost when hundred million dollars we have spent in this supplementary budget that has been followed by recoveries from the federal government one of over \$50 million and this just adds to that as well, a lot of it has been identified already as a need.

A lot of it is identified as extra spending we have already done when it comes to our medical community.

So it won't be any surprise to anybody what we have already identified as needs and pressures.

We now have extra capacity and extra dollars to deal with that.

That is also to say that as we move forward, who's to say what happens in the next, you know, as we get into the second wave across Canada.

We need to make sure that we are just as diligent.

We need to make sure that we continue to communicate with our partner governments of the municipalities and the First Nations governments, and there will be a need for spending and the capacity building therein as well, within the rural community.

Whether it is substance abuse treatment or frontline service delivery, the need has been clearly identified so far as to what we have to spend the money for.

We are spending into a deficit already has a territorial governments all this money overtop, again a lot of this conversation started for the safe restarts back in the beginning of August, so we have been identifying those needs through the month of August, into September in October, and clearly identified.

But at the same time, very welcome support for the unique circumstances of the North.

>> Thank you, Haley.

Do you have another question?

>> Reporter: Thank you.

>> Okay.

Philippe, CBC Yukon?

>> Reporter: Thank you.

I wonder if the safe restarts program could mean additional funding or changes in long-term care facilities?

They have not been mentioned yet.

>> Well, I will start and I'm sure Dr Hanley has a comment on this as well.

But I will start by saying our long-term care in Yukon is different than what we are seeing right across the nation, especially with some of the very concerning issues happening in Ontario in different places.

Four people per room is still occurring in different jurisdictions, and we don't have that issue here in Yukon.

We don't have hybrids, these are government-run facilities.

So again, the care of our elder support is extremely important.

What is really important as well as making sure that we do all we can to protect the front-line staff and professionals that are there, caring for our elders in these communities.

But so far so good.

When you take a look at the national conversation about concerned about continuing care facilities, we are blessed in the Yukon comparatively to other jurisdictions going through very traumatic times.

That's not to say we don't have an obligation or responsibility to make sure that this vulnerable part of our population is cared for, and I know the departments that are responsible for the care that our elders are doing their utmost to make sure our elders are safe.

Whether with the extended program and what we have done in rural communities to make sure we age in place as much as possible, because elders in our communities are such an essential part of our rural and urban communities as well, but also in the bigger facilities that we do have in Whitehorse.

Making sure they are protected and feel safe which is an extremely important part of eldercare.

>> Yeah, just to add to those comments, I totally agree and I think the premier captured all the key points very well.

Of course, we are all concerned about long-term care and making sure protections for one of the most vulnerable segments of our population-- that all those protections are in place, but I think this is an area where we can all be proud of our facilities as Yukoners.

That they are publicly run, and all under one government administration, under continuing care.

We have single residents per room, we have uniform procedures and administration centralized.

So we do have a tremendous number of advantages compared to some of the larger jurisdictions where you have that whole mix of privately owned facilities and less centralized administration.

So of course, many of those protections have been in place for some months now in terms of strict infection control, the screening, screening of visitors and staff at the door.

Staffing arrangements to ensure that staff are focused in one facility in not crossing from one facility to another.

In terms of the visitation policies, which we have tried to work with continuing care so that they are appropriately revised as they become-- as we know all of the other protections are in place in we know that procedures are working, and the use of PPE where appropriate including the use of masking by staff.

So really, there is a whole package of protections in place in its not to say that we're not continually revising and checking according to emerging evidence and experience, but I do think our long-term care facilities are well protected.

>> Thank you, Philly.

Do you have another question?

>> Reporter: Yes, thank you both for taking the time with your answers.

I wonder if we will see any changes to the shelter under safe restarts?

There's going to be an expectation of morgue use as the temperature gets colder.

Will there be any changes to the shelter in Whitehorse?

>> Absolutely.

Part of this funding is for vulnerable populations, so this is going to help with the Minister and her team as she works collaboratively with not only people in healthcare but also in how -- in housing.

The work that Minister Frost has done with the department of housing, the department of health and social services, for the full gamut of care whether it is affordable care, affordable housing, social housing or infection control in long-term facilities including the Whitehorse emergency shelter, we have done a lot of work in we have a long road to go still.

So yes, we will apply some of this money obviously to the vulnerable populations in of course, that is going to be concentrated in the Whitehorse emergency shelter but also in the community shelters as well.

We cannot just look to that shelter is the only shelter.

There are unique circumstances in the rural communities as well, but what we have seen over the last three and a half, four years under Minister Frost's leadership is a complete change in that shelter to begin with so it is an ongoing process.

With the rooms that are available upstairs and taking a lens for the first time as a government to how that looks in the greater concept of housing, I think that has been a really profound shift that the Department of Housing really needs to be honoured for.

I think they did a great job, not only just in providing a home, a physical building but the sense of home.

It really helps somebody as they are struggling to try to live a better life and have a better life for themselves and have the supports for that leg up.

It is an extremely important part of this government's efforts to move more away from an acute care model to a collaborative care

model and these fundings will only help us enhance those directions.

>> Thank you.

Claudiane, Radio-Canada?

>> Reporter: Yes.

Just wondering about the northern specific funding.

Is this sort of in anticipation of the coming months?

Is there a timeline, is this just for the current fiscal year?

If there was a sudden need for more funding is there room for more negotiation?

Just wondering sort of about the other factors, or aspects to this financing announcement.

>> Thank you, Claudiane.

Absolutely, it is short-term for sure.

Again, with all the packages and all the conversations we have had with the federal government, it is so hard to predict where we are going to be three months from now.

So the funding that we get is about where are we here in now and what support do we need?

Taking a look at programs we already offer in then taking a look at if the nation is willing to accept provinces and territories' collaborative approach towards those funding envelopes and

opportunities or whether the federal government is working on their mandate, lots of questions about where we are going to find supports.

Things like sick leave is a great example.

We came out early with our sick leave program and that conversation is continuing right across the nation where we see federal government developing a program based upon what we started here.

But again, as we look at these remedies and these financial stimuli, it is so hard to predict what is going to happen in three months.

So we have kept our window to a immediate needs and again, as I said in answering another question to a journalist, the restart conversations started in August and really, when we are looking from a Yukon perspective, it was where are we now, in the best of times part of our year?

Usually after the end of discovery days, we will have a real change.

People change their mindset to preparing for the winter.

Populations change.

How do we apply that very specific regional consideration to the federal conversation of funding supplies and right-of-way for made, it was looking at the businesses, the seasonal businesses coming to an end and making sure we speak with them to see how they are limited season was this summer and how we can provide supports for them.

But also as we get into the darker months, how are we doing as a society and what supports do we need.

This conversations were made in earnest to develop the envelopes from the safe restart, from August.

But a very short-term window.

We will continue to work with the federal government and other jurisdictions to identify as we get into October how are we doing, what is falling through the cracks into November, how are we doing now?

And we will continue to press the federal government to make sure that they are relief is flexible, unique not only to us.

We have seen some supports come out that have been more successful than others in the theme has always been, how flexible is that funding to the specific regions?

I know that we are constantly in the conversation right now about rent supports.

The federal program is pretty complicated when it comes to Ana Bogdan from the landlords as well.

So we have to keep our -- keep pressing the federal government to make sure the supports fit the need from specific communities and we will continue to do that as this money gets allocated in we start looking towards the darker, colder months.

>> Messy.

[Speaking French]

>> Reporter:

[Speaking French]

>> Interpreter: The question is for Dr Hanley.

We hear in your voice a bit of anxiety about the coming weekend and celebrations.

Are you anxious about how Yukoners will celebrate during next weekend?

[Speaking French]

>> Do you want to repeat that in English?

>> Sure.

The question really was, was I worried or anxious?

And no, I'm not anxious but I know it is difficult sometimes to maintain our guard, and just I really wanted this thanks giving weekend I really hope everyone has a great time, but with a degree of caution that we all require.

It is hard sometimes to remember the advice that we give as well as the orders that we give -- that are in place.

And it is just a reminder that indoor gatherings are probably the single greatest point of risk for the spread of COVID.

And we can't remind ourselves enough times that that is where we could get caught by that single interaction of a case into the right circumstances where we have people gathered indoors, especially with colder weather.

The doors are closed at the windows are closed.

Ventilation may not be adequate.

Those spacings between people can easily be breached, and those are the circumstances of risk that we will just have to remember.

>> I would like to thank everyone for their time today.

Our next COVID-19 update will take place Wednesday, October 14th, at 11:00 AM.