

COVID-19 Facebook live update: January 20, 2021

>> Pat: Good afternoon.

I'm Pat Living with the department of health and social services and your moderator for the COVID-19 update for January 20th.

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

Our sign language interpreter is Mary Tiessen and our French language translation from French language services directorate is Andre Bourcier.

Following speakers we will look to the phone line for questions from reporters.

We will call you by name and you will each have two questions.

I would like to verify that everyone can hear us?

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

Premier Silver?

>> Thank you, Pat.

Thank you everybody for joining us today.

We are here on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dun first nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council Office.

Today is a historic day, Joe Biden being sworn in as the 46th President of the United States and Kamala Harris being sworn in

as the first female and first black vice president of the United States.

With all of that being said, closer to home we look forward to closer relationships with Alaska.

I want to start today by thanking all Yukoners for your dedication to the Safe Six plus one.

We currently have no active cases of COVID-19 in the territory.

This is extremely welcome news, and it really speaks to the vigilance of everyone in the territory.

So thank you very, very much.

Our collective efforts to keep our territory healthy and safe are clearly working.

It does not mean the work is over, but I want to pause and say thank you for the diligence.

I can't -- we can't let our guard down.

I will be the broken record again today.

The best thing we can do now as vaccines are rolling out to keep Yukoners safe is to keep on practising the Safe Six plus one.

Washing your hands often, maintaining physical distance, staying home with you're sick, travelling responsibly and respectfully, self isolating as required, and also following gathering guidelines that are in place including limiting indoor gatherings to ten people.

The plus one, of course, is making sure that you mask up in public.

You're doing it, as I keep on reiterating, to keep yourself safe and also to keep your family and your friends safe, your colleagues and your neighbours safe, your community safe.

In the last week, we have laid one additional charge under the civil emergency measures act for failure to self isolate.

I have said this before as well.

Self isolating is not a suggestion.

It is not something you can choose to ignore if it is inconvenient.

Self isolating requirements are in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our territory.

When you fail to solve isolate, you put your friends, your neighbours, your colleagues, all Yukoners at risk.

What we need to do now is again continue to do our part to keep follow Yukoners safe, and for those of you who have been diligently following the Safe Six and wearing a mask, thank you very much for your sacrifices for all of the communities.

We are in our third week of vaccine rollout.

We have immunized more than 2600 individuals.

This has been really great to see, people stepping up and getting immunized.

Cool to see people's stories on Facebook as to why they are getting vaccinated.

We are rolling out the vaccination in a way that prioritizes Yukoners that are most at risk.

We started with residents in staff at our long-term care facilities, and I'm very proud to say that 91 percent of our long-term care residents have received their first doses of the vaccine.

This is a fantastic rate of uptake.

And it would not have been possible without the dedicated teams of people that are working in our long-term care homes here in Whitehorse, but also in his McDonald Lodge in Dawson City.

There is also lots of planning that had to occur, and things went incredibly smooth.

So a big thank you to all of those who continue to support our older Yukoners.

Our elders and our seniors are very, very brave, and continue to lead by example in our fight against COVID-19.

This week, our first mobile team travelled to Watson Lake to provide the vaccine to residents aged 18 years and older.

I want to thank chief Stephen Charlie of the Liard First Nation and Mayor Chris Irvin of Watson Lake for getting immunized and speaking out about the importance of doing so.

This kind of leadership is really important right now, and it is wonderful to see.

So thank you very much.

I also want to thank everybody in Watson Lake, lower post, Lee are, Good Hope Lake for helping to make sure that everybody was aware that the mobile teams are coming -- Liard River.

The team immunized more than 360 people over two days in Watson Lake.

There was capacity to do additional vaccines if residents had opted to come.

Thank you to everyone who did choose to get there shocked.

You're helping to keep your community safe.

I want to give a special shout out to the entire team for running an extremely successful first clinic in Watson Lake -- the Ta'an Kwäch'än

I'm not sure if people really appreciate how much work is involved in safely and effectively rolling out this vaccine.

Of course everybody knows the vaccine needs to be kept at certain temperatures when it is being transported and stored.

But once it is thawed for use, it is absolutely go time.

The vials cannot be throat -- frozen again once -- once they are thawed for use.

Each vial contains enough for ten doses, in once the vials are open, they are only good for six hours.

So we need to ensure that we have ten individuals ready to be immunized for each vial that we do open.

This is why we are getting Yukoners to book appointments so that we can maximize the use of each of these vials.

That is extremely important, booking your appointments.

In rural Yukon, clinics are open to all persons over the age of 18, but the vaccine is quite fragile and extra precautions need to be taken during transport.

We only transport as much as we need, so we need to know in advance in each of these communities how many vials we are going to need.

Booking appointments also allows us to know how much vaccine to open, and have ready so that we can ensure we make best use of these precious vaccines.

Booking appointments also allows us to manage the flow of people so that we can ensure physical distancing is practised and everything is sanitized properly.

Our goal is to roll out this vaccine as quickly as possible, but our priority is to do it in the safest way possible.

Our clinic in Whitehorse opened yesterday, focused on those who are high risk including anyone over the age of 70 and those living in group settings such as group homes and shelters.

As well as frontline healthcare workers.

Our second mobile team will start immunizing folks in Beaver Creek tomorrow.

If you're living in old Crow or Beaver Creek, sign up for your appointment right now.

Go online to Yukon.ca and follow the links.

Or call one -- call 1-877-374-0425 for health booking a time.

If you're living in Carcross, if you're living in...

Or even Dawson City, beautiful Dawson City, vaccine clinics are coming next week.

So also book your appointments now.

You do not want to miss this opportunity.

You can find the full vaccine rollout schedule online at Yukon.ca and as I said, we are prioritizing those most at risk.

In just three weeks, the clinics will be open to all those aged 18-- sorry, the Whitehorse clinic will be open to those over the age of 18, everybody in Whitehorse.

And I encourage everyone to remain patient and wait your turn.

And again, the necessary need to figure out who is in line there with online bookings.

There is no need to try to sneak in before a mask clinic opens.

Everyone who wants to be immunized will get a chance in the upcoming weeks.

When it is your turn, I strongly urge you and I am encouraging everyone to please get immunized.

The goal is to protect all Yukoners and to stop the spread of COVID-19 which means it is most effective if everyone who is eligible gets vaccinated.

We are working towards getting 75 percent of the adult population vaccinated and we need Yukoners to step up and take their shots.

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

New can be assured that the vaccines themselves are safe.

We have said this before, but going through health Canada's approval process is recognized internationally as the gold standard when it comes to medicine.

You can find accurate and detailed information about vaccines online at Yukon.ca.

The vaccine is absolutely an important step in our fight against COVID-19.

This vaccine will help save lives here in Yukon, across Canada, and across the world.

But we all need to do our part.

I know I sound like a broken record, but get your shot when the clinic is in your community and we can move past immunization and hopefully into a brighter 2021.

As you wait your turn to be immunized, stay vigilant.

We are not out of the woods yet and it is still important to practice the Safe Six.

In the coming days, we will be closing down the drive through testing centre on the Alaska Highway because the additional capacity that it provided is no longer needed.

We have recently seen very few people at the drive-through testing Centre.

Nevertheless, COVID-19 testing and assessment centre is still open now in available to administer tests for everyone who needs it.

You can find out more details about the clinic, the centre, as well as online self-assessment tools that Yukon.ca.

Now, Dr Hanley will speak to this in more detail but I am very happy to share that Yukon now has the swish and spit test as an option for younger people in our territory.

This was great news for Yukon families, and I really want to thank Dr Hanley and his team for their work in making this test available here in Yukon.

Testing in tracing are still essential in our efforts to manage this pandemic.

I believe the team at the chief medical officer of health and the clinics, YCDC, have done an impeccable job of tracing and testing, leading the country.

So again, please don't hesitate to get tested if you have symptoms.

Minimizing the spread of COVID-19 is especially important as we continue to roll out vaccines across the Yukon.

Thank you to all Yukoners for your ongoing efforts.

Remember to be kind, patient, and excellent to each other.

We are all in this together.

Together we will get through this.

Thank you very much.

[Speaking Indigenous Language]

Dr Hanley?

>> Thank you, Mr premier.

And I will reiterate and elaborate on some of the points that the premier made, as he mentioned.

And as the premier reported, no new cases in Yukon and no active cases.

It always feels great to arrive once more at zero.

But every time that we get there, we have to remember-- enjoy the moment but it is not time to relax.

It may be easy to let up our guard, especially as the vaccination campaign has begun.

But it is important to stay alert to the risk of further cases coming in and the risk of spreading if COVID does arrived in territory.

They are is remarkably little viral activity of any kind at the moment, as reflected in our current low testing numbers.

We have no influenza.

We're hearing little about even colds and other respiratory illnesses circulating.

Emergency visits for flulike illnesses remain low.

We are likely seeing the effect that our public health measures have on reducing transmission of any kind of viral infection, as well as less importations of virus into the territory.

On the flipside, that means that any respiratory symptoms should

be considered as potentially COVID.

Ensure that you follow the traffic light guidance.

Any red symptoms, cough, fever, or difficulty breathing, and any combination of two or more yellow symptoms persisting more than a day, you need to self isolate and arrange for testing.

See the traffic light posters online for more details, and look for the section that says guidelines for living and working during COVID-19.

They have the three categories.

Can your child go to school, to daycare, can you go to work?

So as we enter our third week of administering vaccines, we have now vaccinated a total of 2590 people by the end of yesterday.

A number that corresponds to about 8 percent of the Yukon adult population.

The pace is starting to pick up.

As the premier said, team Balto returned from Watson Lake last night.

Our first vaccine clinic in rural Yukon.

The clinics went very well and we heard very positive feedback from the community.

Residents of Watson Lake were joined by residents of lower post in getting their immunizations against COVID-19.

And Esau 634 individuals receive the vaccine.

The oldest individual to get vaccinated, as far as I know in Watson Lake, was an elder of 96 years.

You will see on Facebook, the pictures of her getting her shocked.

Her family was hesitant because of the comments -- some comments and doubts they had seen and read on social media and television.

But when we got some good information from supportive health staff, the family called and the healthcare worker involved in her care was able to assist this 96-year-old elder to receive her shocked at the clinic.

Her only complaint was that she should have gotten the shot in her other arm, as her could arm is sore.

Her story has been shared by the First Nation, the Layard First Nation, and demonstrates that with good information, people can have confidence to do the right thing.

Project our elders was the theme that I saw posted on Facebook.

That is so much our focus in these first few weeks of vaccination.

We had quite the team in Watson Lake.

16 members travelled by coach and by air to support this endeavour, and some of them have had their own important reasons for wanting to be part of this massive effort to vaccinate and protect Yukon residents from the virus.

One individual told the team that her parents named her after an aunt who succumbed to Spanish flu as a young child.

She stated she was extremely proud to be part of the fight against COVID-19 in Yukon.

Another had a close friend with COVID-19 who had been on a ventilator for six weeks, fighting for his life.

Just this past Sunday was that patient's birthday and you is starting to turn the corner.

Several team members have lost family and friends in the South to COVID-19.

While others said that though they are parents were gone before this pandemic happened, they would not have wanted to see their lives ending this way.

These stories are really touching, and offer a humble reminder of how lucky we have been in Yukon so far throughout this pandemic.

When team member said she could hardly contain her excitement about being part of this and being able to show a familiar face to communities to support them in getting vaccinated.

I'm sure there are many more stories that team members are sharing with each other and there will be more stories to tell, as they continued to visit communities in the coming weeks to administer the COVID-19 vaccine.

This shared experience among the team will create an unbreakable bond as they continue to visit communities across the territory.

It is these stories we need to remember to remind us that this vaccine is not only helping fight off the virus but is helping us

prevent the destruction this pandemic has brought in other parts of the world.

Tomorrow the teams will be in Beaver Creek and then on Friday, Old Crow.

This week people in...

Star since -- Dawson City, car crash and Tagus will be able to register for their appointments.

If you're eligible for the vaccine, please visit Yukon.ca to book your appointment.

H. week appointments will be open for the following week.

I am certainly proud of our initial efforts in administering vaccines.

A great deal of thought has gone into the role that which is based on the guidelines by the national advisory committee of immunization.

As we progress in these initial weeks, I must also ask you to be patient for your turn.

It is coming soon.

As we work through the older ages and the front-line healthcare workers, and we take care of some of our most vulnerable Yukoners, immunization opens for the public a mere three weeks from today.

Far beyond any other risk category is age which is why in these initial weeks, we are taking care of our elders.

I care deeply that we get to those with chronic diseases, and to all of our essential workers and so many different sectors.

We are so lucky we can address all of these important categories of people when we open the clinic to all.

Again fortunate to be seen all within the first quarter, as long as our vaccine supplies continue to roll in.

People need to know and to remember that we will be one of the first jurisdictions in Canada to be able to vaccinate the majority of our adult population.

And our population can be immunized well before our friends, family, and neighbours to the south.

So I know, and I have heard from many, who can't wait to get in line for their shot.

I am one of those waiting for my turn.

But I also know that some are holding back, or still not sure about the vaccines or have questions.

I understand and I know the pace, from onset of the pandemic to arrival of the vaccines, has been dizzying if not astounding.

I urge you though to look for the answers to your questions.

We have posted information on the website, and you will now see a list of questions and answers.

Ask questions.

Ask your Doctor or healthcare provider.

Called the COVID info line.

Talk to your community leaders.

I know that a frequent question is about adverse effects and how we are doing and how we are following them.

First of all, we do track adverse events following immunization.

That is a critical part of successful immunization program.

We know that these vaccines were very safe as they went through clinical trials.

Apart from minor local side effects, allergic reactions were the only serious side effects observed between both messenger RNA vaccines, the Pfizer and Moderna projects, at a rate of about one per 100,000 individuals vaccinated.

This is generally as well as what is being seen in real life since these vaccines have been deployed.

All of these immediate allergic -- allergic reactions that have happened have been successfully treated on the spot.

Minor local side effects are common with Moderna and you need to anticipate these.

A sore arm, and muscle aches for a day or two, even a rash at the injection site and sore lymph glands under the arms.

These are a nuisance, but they are also a sign of how the body's immune system is reacting and getting primed to recognize and fight off the COVID virus.

Annoying as they may be, local reactions are a sign of successful vaccine uptake and a strong immune response.

The second shot, as it boosts immunity, will also bring increased local side effects.

In Yukon, after more than 2,000 vaccines in arms, we have had only two adverse events reported to us in both of these had to do with allergic type reactions.

Not of the anaphylactic type, and neither with any lasting effects.

We do report these nationally so they are fed into a national monitoring system.

As of January eighth in Canada, there were 24 reports received from both Pfizer and Moderna products.

Only one due to Moderna with no serious consequences attributed to either vaccine.

So far then, the overall number of adverse events is low in there are no safety signals, surprises, or unusual events that were not expected from the trial data.

These results should be updated in the next few days.

You can find these results online, if you search for COVID vaccine adverse effects Canada.

For those of us waiting anxiously for our turn, a few more comments.

Since the beginning of this pandemic, of course I have encouraged all of us to remain together in these unprecedented times.

And we really largely have.

We are a close-knit community and we do need to remain as such.

We mustn't forget that we are in this together as a territory, and making sacrifices for the health of our family, our community, and ourselves.

The anxiety as we see cases surge down south, and here of the ongoing containment efforts in Fort Nelson and Fort Liard, it can bring on a scents of urgency and the need to receive the vaccine as quickly as possible.

Let's remember that, as reflected in our current COVID position, we know what to do to keep COVID numbers low.

We can and need to keep doing this in the weeks and months ahead of us.

But we also will get there vaccine with a vaccine, and let me remind you that we have that promise from Canada of sufficient vaccines for all who want and need vaccines.

And in a few short weeks, on February 10th to be exact, all adult Yukoners over the age of 18 will be able to book an appointment for the weeks ahead.

As the premier said, the mouth, rinse and gargle test is now going to be available.

A nasopharyngeal swab is not a pleasant experience, especially for children.

We all know that.

But until this point it was the only method of testing we have been able to offer.

Now is the premier mention, we are launching the mouth rinse and gargle test for children aged five to 18 years old in Whitehorse at the COVID testing assessment centre.

We are close to having this available in community health centres as well.

If your child is feeling ill and requires testing, and again use the traffic light guidance to know when you should get tested and how, then they may be able to get a COVID-19 test by forgoing that swab way up through the nose and instead doing the swish, gargle and spit with star I'll saltwater or saline solution into a tube.

We have worked closely with our colleagues at the BC CDC lab as they evaluated British Columbia's pilot test of the swoosh and gargle test.

After our own pilot testing here, we can now offer this method of testing as an alternative to nasal swabs ages five to 18.

One of the great features of the rinse and gargle collection for the test is a healthcare professional is not required at the time to collect the sample.

Most children and their parents or caregivers can do it themselves within the comfort of their own homes.

We have created step-by-step instructions which you can find online at Yukon.ca.

This test though is not just spitting into a tube.

It is essential for parents, where the caregivers of the children, to ensure that children follow these instructions to ensure that the sample is viable for testing.

To ensure that the results are accurate, we will be sending all collections to BC to confirm the results, as we do with all our tests.

As of the pandemic continues, we will continue to explore alternative options for testing.

The mouth rinse and gargle test is not yet available across Canada.

Only a few provinces having introduced it so far.

We're very happy to offer this less invasive option to children ensuring they can be tested adequately with all that invasive nasal swabbing.

So again, for today, some take homes.

If your child is ill, we have the rinse and gargle test available.

Visit the website for more information

The vaccine clinics are continuing to advance well and we're only a couple of weeks away from the time when any adult wanting the vaccine can start booking a timeslot for immunization.

That begins February 10th.

And as we reach zero active cases once more, keep your guard up and consider testing any time you get symptoms that might be COVID.

As the premier says, always remember the Safe Six plus one.

Use your mask.

This is the best way we have to protect ourselves from COVID-19.

That is all for my update.

Thank you.

Remember to take care of each other.

Stay well, thank you.

>> Pat: Thank you.

We will now go to the reporters and we will begin with Haley, Yukon News.

>> Reporter: Thank you.

I guess my first question is not COVID related.

It is about the comments about inauguration day down in the states.

Could you elaborate on what you meant by closer to home, maybe a closer relationship with Alaska?

>> I think it just gives us pause.

We have a new administration and we know we have new things to consider with overall conversations.

One thing that comes to mind for me is the porcupine caribou herd.

Good to see a federal government that hopefully will be more supportive of productions there.

>> Reporter: Thank you.

My other question was about the Moderna vaccine supply.

We saw this week changes in the Pfizer delivery.

Do we have news about how many modern a doses are confirmed now from the federal government?

>> We have nothing new to report at this point.

Other than I had a conversation directly with Minister Dominic LeBlanc about again, I have always said, the quicker we get shipments, the better.

Especially when you have a commitment, the federal government's commitment of having 75 percent of our adult population immunized-- enough vaccines in the first quarter.

My bushes do continue to say, this is great for Canada.

If Yukon and the other territories get to herd immunity as quickly as possible, being smaller population wise, but also the proof from our medical teams to be able to effectively and safely get into our communities and start vaccinating folks.

We are building capacity every day, moving forward and working through those things that come up along the way.

But we are there.

We have the ability as a territory to immunize our entire adult population and this would be great for Canada.

This would be great for us as well to do that as quickly as possible.

Continuing to urge the federal ministers to give us all the details on distribution.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Now to John, CKRW.

>> Reporter: hi.

My question is also vaccine related.

I am just interested, Premier Silver, you mentioned how, once the vaccine is thawed out it is go time.

So I am wondering if there will be any repercussions for someone

who misses an appointment that is scheduled, seeing as we are trying not to waste any doses?

>> That is a really good question.

What I have noticed this week, talking with Dr Hanley and the team and also with managed -- Minister Frost is information will come in on a case by case basis.

Whether it is not being able to get your second shot for an emergency situation that you did not know of when you book your vaccines, those types of things.

We will have less issues than other jurisdictions in Canada, because we do have an expedited process here in the first three months.

But those individual cases are being worked out.

I have talked to Dr Hanley a but a few incidents in Dawson where people asked me what happens if, those types of things.

But really, we're looking at it on the other side of things as well.

If we get out to a particular community and we don't vaccinate as many people as we thought, then we could use those access supplies for the general supplies in Whitehorse.

I think, I know what I am seeing from the team at health is that they are very stingy with making sure that all of these vaccines are used.

They take a lot of pride, the conversation we had last week where half of a dose was ruined.

People were really upset about that.

The care and consideration that we have of the vaccines gives me a lot of confidence that we won't see a lot of wasted doses in the strategy that health and social services and the Chief Medical Officer team in clinical disease have designed for Yukon.

>> Pat: Follow-up?

>> Reporter: Yes.

Now it was mentioned we are hoping to achieve herd immunity as soon as possible.

I guess, what are some of the limitations with allowing people to choose whether or not to get the shot as opposed to some sort of a mandatory vaccination?

>> I'm sure Dr Hanley would have some conversations historically about Canada and vaccinations.

I have not heard, in any conversations I have had in the last year, on this particular vaccination or the disease itself about any mandatory anything.

We really believe, as a nation, we can get to that herd immunity it would be very unprecedented to do something like that which is unprecedented.

>> I can echo that.

I think there are no plans or efforts that I am aware of to make this mandatory.

I think we can easily get to herd immunity.

Even though again, we don't know what that number actually is yet and it may take us some time, but if we are aiming for kind of that 70, 75 percent mark, as a reasonable estimate of herd immunity, I see absolutely no reason why we can't get to that.

Or potentially even significantly higher with just providing the right information.

So I know that there are always going to be hardliners out there who will not get the vaccine and making it mandatory would not significantly change that number.

There is always going to be a few roof users.

But most people just want the confidence and the right information, that is what we are hoping and helping provide with our ongoing collection of information with these individual conversations that we are having.

I know the physician community here is going to get passionate about helping patients, with questions to also get the right information.

That's the climate that we work in and that's the most successful model when it is applied properly.

So that's the approach we are taking.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Now to Nick, Canadian press.

[Inaudible]

>> Pat: It would appear at Nick is no longer with us.

We will check back on the end.

-- at the end.

[Speaking French]

>> Reporter:

[Speaking French]

>> Interpreter: So with the vaccination campaign going on, and going positively, what that have an impact on the grade 12 students coming back full-time into schools?

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

>> Just to translate what I explain, the question about whether this will have an impact on the full-time return to school.

Again, this is a Department of Education decision of course, so I don't want to speak for the department.

But I think in the advice that I provide Bay storm the situation and the general health situation, I think that would not be a realistic projection to factor in vaccine immunity into that conversation.

I think by the time we get to our goal, which is April to have reached our target hopefully, I think that would be quite problematic to then change the rest of the school year.

I know disruption in itself will interfere with the learning experience, weather for the students, the families, or for the teachers and personnel.

I think that's probably not realistic.

It's more like, how will this influence the planning for next year and of course that's already a conversation started with the Department of Education.

>> Pat:

[Speaking French]

>> Reporter:

[Speaking French]

>> Interpreter: The question is for the premier.

There are a lot of discussions right now for a vaccination passport, or at least discussion the vaccination has been done.

Do you have discussions on this and how much influence can't it have on the opening of the borders?

>> Very good question, and I think it is a good segue from the other question from John about mandatory.

What we are hearing from you corners, as far as vaccinations most Yukoners see a vaccine as an ability to be more mobile.

As far as conversations on a national level, I would imagine more of those conversations are happening at the national level that Dr Hanley is having as far as what that would equate to.

We have talked in these updates in the past about previous vaccines that were used, like polio for example.

We don't talk much in terms of what it means to have a passport to travel based upon a vaccination.

What we do talk about is the ability for our healthcare system to monitor and to ID everyone who does have the shot, making sure that we have that system in place so that we have the records and place.

That is really important to us right now.

I think what we are going to see, and I think Dr Hanley would be the authority on this, again whether it is a vaccine or wearing a mask or self isolating, these are all tools in our toolkit that we are going to use to plank the curve.

We want the curve to plank, and we believe what we are hearing-- and again, six months ago to think we are in a situation to have a vaccine rolling out would have been very optimistic.

So I think we will see a situation in Canada, in other nations as well, where the vaccine strategies will plank the curve and that alone will help us to get back to more of a sense of normalcy.

>> Pat: Dr Hanley?

>> I agree with what the premier said, and clearly this is a very important question.

And it is one that we just don't have enough information yet to answer.

It -- we saw intense, urgent interest internationally, not just in Yukon, and nationally.

So I think more to come.

Again, our approach is really on the population immunity.

There are really questions as to how this applies to a particular individual.

And just keep in mind some of the questions that are outstanding.

If we for instance find in real life, as at work, that this vaccine is 95 percent effective as clinical trials have shown, that still means that one in 20 individuals may not be protected.

If you're talking about a passport that applies to one individual, what about those one in 20 where, in fact, it is a blank passport and away.

The other thing is we still don't have the effect, or the evidence on the effect of vaccine on transmission.

We don't have that durability information of how long will the vaccine last, and therefore how long would you need to either renew your vaccine or your passport, as it were.

So there are many, many questions, and right now our goal is to continue to get our population vaccinated up to that goal of herd immunity, to get to that big next wrong.

Then with all of our other layers to use that to figure at where we are and where we can go next, whether talking nationally, internationally, or as a territory.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Philippe, CBC Yukon?

Before.

[Speaking French]

--

>> Reporter:

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

>> Pat: Now to Philippe at CBC Yukon.

[Inaudible]

>> Pat: Philippe?

>> Reporter: I apologize.

Is there any news around BC, they are not included in the Yukon schedule.

I have been unable to get news from northern house -- northern health BC regarding vaccinating people there.

>> Pat:

>> I talked with John Horgan yesterday.

We had a great meeting about a bunch of things but we definitely talked about our continuing commitment to place -- places like lower post and also at.

That is being dealt with as we speak and we made good on that commitment.

Unless you have anything else to share, Dr Hanley?

We don't have information on one right now for Atlin but that commitment is still solid.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Follow-up, Philippe?

>> I wonder if it would be possible for residents of Atlin to ever come into the Whitehorse clinics?

Could people from other communities come into Whitehorse once that is open?

>> Again, we will have the clinic opened in a couple of weeks in Whitehorse for the general population and we are seeing, for example, people and communities, like Watson like for example, if you missed return for whatever reason you would still be able to come into the general clinic as well.

That would be the same for people in Atlin or lower post, Fort Liard, those areas.

>> Philippe, I think there are still just some operational details being worked out.

But as the premier said, we are committed to covering Atlin.

We have been working hard with northern health, in BC.

So some of those details are still being worked out.

Once we have all that confirmed, we will make sure of course that Atlin residents as well as Yukon residents are informed of the process for Atlin.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Chris, CBC?

>> Reporter: Thank you.

Premier Silver mentioned that 91 percent of long-term care residents had now been vaccinated.

I'm wondering if either the premier or Doctor Hanley could explain, what accounts for the 9 percent who haven't been vaccinated yet, and I guess when do you foresee them getting vaccinated?

>> I can comment on that.

You know, again, I think it goes back to that more general conversation.

Some people may not have been ready.

They may not have felt ready.

We are of course not mandating the vaccine.

We are encouraging those conversations.

So I can't really speak individually for those 9 percent.

I think the 91 percent is a very encouraging number.

It really gives that assurance of having that level of protection amongst the residents.

It puts us in a really good position to prevent circulation of COVID-19 in the facility.

Then it comes back to having those individual conversations with the residents, and if they are ready, then making sure that we give them the opportunity for the vaccine and perhaps, perhaps that is going to be...

I would anticipate that when they go back, which is not that long from now, when they go back for the second dose there may well be individuals who have decided they are ready for their first dose.

Then we would take care of them in another round for the second dose.

>> Pat: Next question, Chris?

>> Reporter: Thanks.

Just to follow-up on one of Haley's questions, just sort of reading in between the lines of the response, for example, as long as our vaccine supplies continue to roll in, it does not sound to me like you're sure that the next shipments of the Moderna vaccine are going to actually arrive.

How concerned are you that we are actually going to get the shot that we have been led to believe we are getting, and if I can tack onto that, what in your mind is the risk that the Pfizer shortages going to create a situation where perhaps other provinces decide to dip into the supply of Moderna vaccine that was supposed to go to the Yukon?

>> I would say I am not concerned at all.

Again, as we follow the national advisory committee's recommendations, northern, world, and indigenous communities being prioritized, not concerned.

But really wanting to expedite the three-month window as quickly as possible.

The reason why we can say that is because of the amazing work the teams have done to be ready to vaccinate.

So it is more of a call of when Moderna says internationally, we want to make sure we are going to give doses out where we can

expedite them as quickly as possible, Yukon is saying look no further.

I think a lot of Canadian provinces are saying that.

As far as Pfizer, all along the way whether it be approval from health Canada, shipments, everything from the original plans that we saw, we have seen everything shorten up and be expedited.

The only time we ever heard of delay was the announcement of Pfizer.

That's the one time I have really seen a delay in any of these supplies.

Not concerned at all that Ottawa won't be able to make good on our commitment.

But our conversations with Ottawa have been, we would really appreciate that as soon as you know the exact dates of delivery.

And the other comment, as aggressive, as we are ready for those doses as soon as you get them.

>> Pat: Dr Hanley?

>> I will just add, again, I also have complete confidence.

It's just, you know, the Pfizer disruption was not anticipated.

So just to recognize that sometimes, something happens.

There is a disruption.

We have seen this with other vaccine campaigns.

So really just to have the what if, and then contingency planning in the back of our minds.

But no, and again I have been involved in national conversations on this, do not anticipate in a disruption of the Moderna supply based on what is happening with Pfizer or any of that.

Not at all, no intention to do that.

I have had no information to indicate any implication about supplies of Moderna.

As the premier says, so far they have been, if anything, ahead of schedule.

And there is no indication up to now that we will be seeing any delay in delivery.

It is just, we always like to see those delivery dates even into March nailed down.

That is what we want to see.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Tim, Whitehorse Star?

>> Reporter: Yes hello.

My first question is about the subject of vaccine hesitancy that you were referring to earlier.

One are two of the common things I have heard from people who are reluctant to get the vaccine is one, they don't like the fact that they have to continue with the safety precautions like wearing a mask.

And two, those safety precautions exist because there is no evidence one way or another as yet that these vaccines will prevent transmission.

They might give you immunity but that doesn't mean that you can't pass it on.

So someone with concerns like that, what would you say to them?

>> Yeah...

They are really good questions.

And you know, there are I hope a few useful things we can say.

One is this is not uncommon with a new vaccine.

Obviously information about how long it is going to last, and some of the nuances of the actual biological action that need to be worked out with further study of the phase three trials and also with the real, kind of aftermarket experience or real life experience in ongoing effectiveness.

So that is information that we will get as we go, but it is only information we will have as we get our population vaccinated and then see the actual, real-life effect.

I would also say that, you know, it is more likely that it will have an effect on transmissions and not.

We just-- the studies have just not yet been able to document that.

But also, if you have an 80 percent vaccinated population, then automatically by having that many people protected, you will disrupt transmission.

Because they will be less susceptible hosts to get sick with a vaccine.

So in effect, you're hugely dampening down the effect or the

burden that COVID will present just because the impact will be that much less.

And, I can't actually remember what the first part of that was...

Maybe you can reiterate?

>> Reporter: The first part is asking what the point of having the vaccine is if they have to continue with safety precautions, like wearing masks.

>> Clearly this is because we need to get to that level first, and we also need to fully answer all of this other questions.

I think it is, you know, we can't really have one without the other.

We all want the vaccine.

We know the vaccine is key to our way out of this pandemic in we also know, I feel there is some urgency to reach herd immunity or population immunity as soon we can whether we are talking about Yukon or Canada or even globally, because then we have the best chance of limiting the effects of new variants.

Other complications with mutations in this vaccine.

We are looking to a future when we will be able to unravel many of these public health measures and that is something we are already trying to work on and anticipate.

But clearly we need not only population immunity in order to do that, but that kind of accumulating evidence to then figure out the order and the way of unraveling those public health measures.

So really, it goes together.

The vaccine is clearly going to get us to a much more comfortable level in terms of protection from COVID.

Then we will be in a position to analyse the way that we can gradually lift measures.

It is just that we need to get their first.

And while we are getting their, we need all of these measures to be in place to protect us from circulation of COVID within the community.

>> Pat: Premier Silver?

>> The simple analogy for me is, Watson Lake may be one of the first communities in Canada that have a general population being vaccinated.

So I am going to go up to Dawson next week, and I will be part of a general population vaccination there as well.

Can't wait to get my shot.

But that doesn't mean I am going to stop washing my hands, or socially distancing.

Everyone of these things that we do, every week we are here, we are doing these precautions to keep others protected.

Whether that is -- that is as of the jurisdiction of Yukon or as a neighbourly community, I have the ability to pass the virus on through hand-to-hand contact even though I have received my vaccination.

So again, we do these measures for our community.

Not as much is ourselves.

Once we get vaccinated and get ahead of the curve, we still have to maintain our diligence until the curve gets plankton general.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Do you have a second question?

>> Reporter: I do.

I would like to refer back to information coming out from the government in regards to policies, and particular self isolation.

I was watching a conversation on social media earlier this week that kind of fascinated.

There was all kinds of confusion over what the proper techniques were for self isolating.

A lot of people were quoting stuff from the government, or from government officials.

At least half of them were not agreeing with each other.

So has there been an adequate job done informing the public of what some of these measures are?

>> I absolutely believe so.

Information has changed as we have gone through phases of our plan forward.

But the most accurate information is always available on Yukon.ca.

Also the phone number we mentioned over and over as well.

I have used those phone numbers quite a bit myself, asking and answering questions.

They have the most up to date information.

Now, information does change over time.

And we saw in the summer, because of the diligence of Dr Hanley and the guidelines and working with community services to get alternative isolation plans, lots of questions about what one plan means for one group and one -- compared to another, those types of things.

Anecdotally the information I have received, also in our weekly updates with all of the providers of emergency measures or health measures, what we see is a coordinated team that has a really good ability to communicate, and our website is always up-to-date.

>> Pat: Dr Hanley?

>> I will just add a couple of things.

One is, when I'm thinking through something, I always go back to check what is the actual written guidelines they include that's kind of the gold standard.

The second thing is, if I notice something that is not clear, I will certainly pointed out and fix it.

I think if there are specifics about something that is not clear, we will and have a history of always trying to clarify, to make sure that people have clear information about what to do.

So I do think, you know, some of this is pretty complex information.

And we are really trying to achieve clarity within that complex information.

But we have spent a lot of time working on the messages around self isolation and what the requirements in orders are.

I think it is all they are, but if you see something specific that is not clear, I think we are happy to take another look and adjust the wording.

>> Pat: Thank you.

I will just circle back to see if Nick from Canadian press is with us?

And hearing nothing, I would like to thank everyone for their time today

The next COVID-19 update will take place on Wednesday, January 27th, at 1:30 PM.