

## COVID-19 Facebook live update: October 28, 2020

>> Good morning.

I am Pat Living with the Department of Health and social services and I'll be your moderator for the COVID-19 update for Wednesday, it originates.

We're joined by the owner both Sandy Silver and the Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of health Dr Brendan Hanley.

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

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

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

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

If any reporters are having problems, please e-mail.

Premier Silver?

>> Thank you, out.

Hello and thank you for joining us on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Taa'an Kwächän Council.

Last week we announced a cluster of five new cases of COVID-19 in Watson Lake.

This brings our total case count to 22.

Ton -- contact tracing is actively underway and the source of the cluster continues to be investigated.

Doctor Hanley will share more on this new cluster information in a moment.

Since the first cases in Watson Lake were reported on Friday, my team and myself have been in touch with folks like the Mayor of Watson Lake and the chief of layer First Nation.

We have discussed how health officials are managing the situation and the extra testing capacity provided to Watson Lake to ensure all those that are experiencing symptoms or may have been exposed can be tested.

We also discussed the importance of accurate information when situations like this arise.

I have said it before, but rumours travel very quickly and can cause unnecessary panic as well.

Accurate, up-to-date information about the current situation is available on Yukon.ca.

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

In this case, a public health notification was issued for Watson Lake.

This occurred because of possible exposure at three locations in Watson Lake on certain dates.

I know that no community wants to be subject to a public health notification because it can cause an awful lot of stress and stigma in the community.

Accurate information is extremely important to ensure that individuals can take the appropriate actions to protect their health and safety, and thought of their community.

The last thing that we need is people worried about who might find out that they have COVID-19 and are not going to get the testing when they have symptoms.

We also do not want people to worry about the impact on their work situation if they or their employees need to be tested.

If you feel so good is extremely important that you stay home.

Use the self-assessment tool and contact 811 if necessary to get tested.

There was no doubt this will affect the workplace but it is extremely important.

We need to be patient as we continue to manage the pandemic.

A paid sick leave rebate is available for employers and individuals who are self-employed.

For those who might have been exposed in Watson Lake, if you have symptoms even wild ones it is important that you get tested.

Back in August when the residents of Dawson city, my home, were advised to self monitor due to possible exposure, it did cause a lot of concern at that time.

In a a lot of ways, it was an important wake-up call for our community.

We have been dealing with this pandemic for nearly eight months and it is easy to forget about the Safe Six back and fall into old habits especially because we have such a low case count here in Yukon.

After Dawson city was notified back then, I saw a residents, community organizers, and businesses all double down on precautions.

Making sure they are doing what they need to keep themselves and the community safe.

We each need to remember that the actions that we take are not just to protect ourselves, they are to protect our families, our friends, our colleagues, our neighbours.

Our community.

And believe you me, I know it is easy to let your guard down.

Just the other day, I was out for a beer supporting a local restaurant when I saw someone that I had not seen in a wild.

That person saw me, came over for a chat.

Before I could say anything, the staff came over in very politely reminded us of the need to physically distance.

So I want to thank the staff at polarity brewing for being so vigilant and ensuring that the Safe Six are being practised in their restaurant.

It is so easy to forget but -- incredibly important to remember.

We all have a role to play in holding each other accountable.

I encourage all communities across the territory to ensure the Safe Six are being practised in all areas of the community.

We are not out of the woods yet.

Southeast Alaska, in Northwest Territories have reported additional cases since last weekend we have seen cases climbing still in British Columbia and Alberta.

We have been very fortunate so far in the territory.

It is largely due to the many sacrifices Yukoners have made and continue to make.

Our governments are contingent -- continue to support Yukoners and Yukon businesses through these challenging times and respond to their needs.

We have been working with the mining industry to support them, adjust their operations and accommodate employees coming in from outside.

Employees of Victoria gold can now self isolate at their eagle gold camp rather than at Whitehorse.

This is part of Victoria gold's comprehensive plan which has been reviewed and endorsed by the Chief Medical Officer of health.

Yukon's mining industry has taken a proactive approach to ensuring health and safety are at the forefront of mining operations throughout the pandemic and I want to thank them all for their efforts.

Any individual or organization can return for self isolation plan.

Information is available on [Yukon.ca](http://Yukon.ca).

Those coming from outside of the BC territory bubble still need to self isolate for 14 days but there is flexibility around where that can happen.

Earlier this year we worked with outfitters on these kinds of plans to ensure that they could welcome guests as safely as possible while keeping Yukoners safe as well.

We continue to gauge -- sorry, we continue to engage with various sectors to ensure we are responding to the needs of Yukoners and Yukon businesses.

Various business support programs are still available including the business relief program, Yukon business relief program.

Last week we announced additional supports to the tourism sector and we will have more details coming -- are not in the coming months.

They will also be announcing additional supports for the aviation industry in the coming days.

We are all in this together, and together we will get through this.

I want to thank everyone for supporting local businesses and organizations.

It continues to be extremely important as we navigate the pandemic, and I know how much it is appreciated.

Businesses have had to make major adjustments this year along with individuals.

I know it is not easy to continue to take precautions and to limit our interactions, but it is vital for the health and safety of our whole territory.

We have seen what happens in other jurisdictions when people let their guard down, and we do not want to see that happening here in the Yukon.

We need to continue to practice the Safe Six, especially as we enter into the colder time of year when we spend a lot more time indoors.

This week, our enforcement team laid another charge under the seven emergency measures act or failure to self isolate as required.

This brings the total number of charges to 20.

We will continue to enforce the rules under CEMA to protect the health and safety of Yukoners.

Again, a big thank you to our enforcement team for their efforts and keeping people informed about the public health requirements that are in place.

If you do have any concerns, again, please contact our enforcement team at [covid19enforcement@gov.yk.ca](mailto:covid19enforcement@gov.yk.ca).

You can also call, 1-877-374-0425.

Again, please good venue to be kind and patient and respectful of each other, practice the Safe Six.

Washing your hands, maintaining physical distancing, staying at home with that, travelling respectfully, self isolate as required and also following the guidelines including limiting indoor social gatherings to ten people if not in your bubble.

Halloween is coming up this weekend and there are guidelines for all you ghosts and goblins available online at Yukon.ca.

Please have a look and make sure the kids in your neighbourhood are safe, and you can enjoy this spooky time of year in a safe and responsible way.

Please stay vigilant and do your part to support the territory as you know -- I know you will.

Thank you very much.

Dr Hanley?

>> Thank you.

Good morning.

I hope everyone is starting well.

This has been a difficult week.

Difficult around the world, difficult for Canada, difficult for Yukon, and difficult most especially for the beautiful town of Watson Lake.

This past week, we received confirmation of five new cases of COVID-19, bringing the territory's total to 22, with our last five all being residents of Watson Lake.

The five new cases are members of two family groups, and this is a cluster of cases as all or in the same circle of transmission.

None of these individuals has recently been outside of territory, nor Watson Lake.



We have many negative tests coming back from the contact tracing and testing carried out to date, and I want to thank all those people, whether in Watson Lake, elsewhere in Yukon, or even outside Yukon who came forward for testing.

This is so important as we try to make sure that we contain the transmission from affecting other individuals.

The actual source of transmission is still unknown at this time, but our investigation continues.

Of course, we would like to find the source back but it is also possible that we will not find how this particular COVID infection entered the territory.

Given that we have tested a lot of people with symptoms around the Yukon in the last few days, I think we can say with some confidence that we are not finding evidence of ongoing transmission.

Equally importantly though is hired anyone in Watson Lake with symptoms to get tested.

We want to test as many people as possible to ensure that COVID has not escaped into the community.

Remember that COVID most often presents with mild symptoms, like a cold might present.

So even if you have a runny nose, a sore throat, a slight cough or tickle, please arrange for testing as soon as possible.

This includes of course anyone who was in the exposure locations listed on the website.

The motel and the two stores.

But remember that our advice is for anyone, regardless of exposure, to be tested for symptoms no matter how mild.

This is how we will stay ahead of community spread.

As I stated late last Friday, I named the community because we were calling out these exposure sites and wanted to make sure that anyone residing in Watson Lake or elsewhere that may have been in those locations came forward for testing.

Yesterday, we did expand the exposure dates at the Bighorn motile based on recent contact tracing to more recent days of possible exposure.

To review the exposure sites, if you have been to one of the places of exposure during the listed dates in are experiencing any symptoms, and you haven't as yet come forward, please do let us know and arrange for testing.

Just to go over those locations again, in Watson Lake, the super eight on October 8th in October 16th, home hardware October 7th and tenth, and the Big Horn Motel October 9th -- seventh or ninth and 13<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup>.

That is a change from the original dates of October 16<sup>th</sup>.

The Watson Lake cases are another landmark event for us in Yukon, as a first cluster of cases outside Whitehorse.

This event should give us pause to reflect on what we can learn and how we can prevent or limit further episodes like this.

First of all, these cases serve as a reminder of how quickly the COVID-19 virus can take advantage of every opportunity it is given to infect.

If COVID had a goal, it would be to infect as many people as possible.

That is basically what viruses live for, if you could say that they live which technically, they don't.

Second, the Watson Lake experience shows something we already knew.

We are no different from anywhere else in Canada, or in the world for that matter.

After so many week -- weeks without a case it became easy to think somehow we were impervious to COVID.

That we could be more relaxed, not worry so much about keeping your distance from others.

Not let a few minor symptoms prevent us from keeping the business going, or getting the workday done.

Well, Watson Lake has shown us that we Yukoners are just as susceptible.

The situation in Watson Lake could still get worse before it gets better, but it could also have been much, much worse.

Think of someone who might have had COVID symptoms, and then attends a party, a large wedding, a funeral, a store where protocols are not being observed, a workplace without proper sanitation and spacing.

Watson Lake is just a small illustration of what can happen when we let our guard down.

The only way you can prevent it is by ensuring that you're following the proper guidelines to reduce your risk.

Here are some reminders from this recent exposure.

Do not work while you're sick.

Advise your employer -- employer and stay home, employers, please send stuff home if they are sick.

Please immediately self isolate if you have any symptoms.

If you do have symptoms, get tested.

And follow the Safe Six.

When we see, after such a long time, COVID back in the territory, it is natural to be upset especially when we look around the country and see COVID surges everywhere.

There may be a sense that finally, this is it.

COVID has really arrived and now it is just a matter of time before we look like so many other places down south.

But there is no inevitability here.

What happens next is entirely under our control.

I have not surprisingly heard more cries of close the border, but what matters is not so much whether COVID cases enter the territory.

What is much more important is how we prevent those infections from spreading to others.

We cannot close the door entirely, but we can definitely reduce the risk of COVID advancing into Yukon.

We have to live up to that responsibility to prevent the spread of COVID.

The actions that we all know how to do are proven to work.

Let me now review a few of those public health actions again in a little more detail.

Everywhere in Europe and North America, we are seeing the same thing.

Gatherings as a cause of COVID transmission.

Everywhere down south we are seeing social gatherings, weddings and funerals as sources of transmission, leading to outbreaks and to more vulnerable people getting affected.

So we must keep gatherings small.

That is clear, it's nice to just in, but a norther.

-- in order.

Social gatherings must be no more than ten indoors or 50 adores.

Indoor gatherings that go outside the bubble must be spaced.

Do not attend any social gatherings, no matter what size, if you have any symptoms at all that could be COVID.

Or if you're supposed to be in self isolation, or you're a named contact of someone with COVID.

Weddings or gatherings -- weddings are gatherings, funerals are gatherings.

I talked last week about how risky funerals can be.

On the website you will read the following.

No more than ten people can attend an indoor funeral service.

No more than 50 people can attend an outdoor funeral service.

Consider holding a service outdoors, physical distancing can be easier if there is more space.

Communal food and drink is not allowed at services for health and safety reasons.

Please follow the guidelines, and limit the numbers to the same as any other gatherings for these events.

And I will come back specifically to Halloween parties in a few moments.

Now let's look at it another area of prevention.

Stay home and away from others when you're sick.

If you work, go shopping, go to school or play sports with others while you're sick, you could be responsible for an outbreak.

You could be responsible for people getting sick, going to hospital, taking a medevac out, or dying from COVID.

You could lead to services, workplaces, or communities being shut down.

You could cause an outbreak that could overwhelm public health.

All of these are very real possibilities.

Through the advice I give to government, or through the guidance we provide, I am not trying to let -- make life more difficult for people.

In fact, it is the opposite.

I am trying to help us get through this pandemic with as little damage as possible, but we must, must, do the right thing.

Stay home, stay away from others and arrange to get tested if you're sick.

It is that simple.

So what else is there?

Practice physical distancing at all times that you're not within your household or social bubble.

That is at work, on the playground, in the stores, and a lineup.

If you cannot physically distance due to temporary grubs or poor spacing, put on a mask.

If in doubt, but on a mask.

Wearing a mask is good pandemic etiquette and shows that you care.

Respect store or workplace policies that ask you to put on a mask.

Do the right thing and show that you're being responsible, and that you care for others.

What Alice's left in the Safe Six, have we covered it all?

By the way, check the Yukon.ca website Safe Six section for a fun, a new take on the same basic messages.

But just to review.

Keep your distance, wash your hands, keep clean and keep your space clean.

Avoid crowds, and stick to your social bubble.

Stay away from others when sick.

Travel wisely and respectfully.

And self isolate when you're required to.

So, Halloween.

This is it, the last week of October, and with the bite of fall nights and a tinge of snow and the arrival of pumpkins in droves, it is certainly one of the most festive times of year.

Scream where the decorations are going up, costumes are in production, pumpkin carving is reaching new heights of artistry.

We know that Halloween will look a bit different this year, as safe Halloween plans are organized.

But that doesn't mean you have to miss out on the fun.

Trick or treating can still be done if you take the proper precautions.

As always, if you or your child are feeling ill even with mild symptoms, he's stay home.

Although you may feel it is safe to trick-or-treat outside, it is not if you're sick.



Please stick to your household.

Any child going trick-or-treating should maintain their household bubble and go with a parent or sibling.

Wearing a Halloween mask will not prevent you from passing on the virus.

It is not necessarily the same as a nonmedical mask, although you can accomplish both at once with some creativity.

Distance rules applied, regardless of your mask.

This means 6 feet apart between all people who are not in your household bubble while you're out collecting treats.

Going from house to house, as on the website, I encourage you do bring a broom, a sword, or hockey stick as part of your costume.

This will allow you to knock 2 feet away from the door.

And when knocking, do so gently.

If you don't have one of these accessories while trick-or-treating, stand a few feet back and call out, trick-or-treat!

That's the way I always used to do it, anyway.

When on the other hand, and I have treats, there are a few things you can do to better follow the Safe Six guidelines.

You can use tongs to hand out treats to kids.

Avoid putting a communal bowl in front of your house.

A member to keep your interactions brief and maintain a safe distancing from all trick-or-treaters.

This is the year to get creative with your methods of handing out goodies.

We have seen households rising to the occasion by creating candy shoots, Game of thrones inspired slingshots to give kids their candy.

Creating small, individual packages with a few tidbits is also a way you can engage in safe practices.

Well children are making last-minute adjustments to Halloween costumes, others would usually work on their own attire for annual Halloween parties.

As Halloween falls on a Saturday this year, I am aware of the temptation and have heard of many parties planned for this upcoming weekend.

But I am urging caution against participating in any Halloween parties this year.

We must avoid any Halloween gatherings over ten people, unless they are outdoors.

This weekend, I advise you to go one step further.

Please limit any indoor gatherings to your household and social bubble only.

Keep the rest outside.

I understand that this is a weekend spent having fun with friends, but I urge you to keep the fun outside and spaced.

There is evidence and the rest of Canada that some of the rising COVID cases were due to increased social gatherings over the Thanksgiving weekend in private homes.

So please find an alternative to going to a crowded house party.

Instead, watch a scary movie with your favourite goodies, visit one of the local haunted walks, take pleasure in handing out imaginative treats to neighbourhood kids, or hold a small outside gathering around a warm fire.

Let's not jeopardize our good place with parties that can go off the rails and take us all with them.

I ask all Yukoners who are planning to party to reconsider.

Your participation may have severe consequences not only for yourself but for all of us along with you.

Think of all the life changes since March.

Working from home.

Reducing our public outings.

Seeing friends, large gatherings, foregoing travel.

COVID fatigue has proven to be a very real thing, that most of us have or have experienced.

Pandemic fatigue is something that evolves.

We may feel okay one day, drained and exhausted the next.

We want to see our loved ones, just for once in person rather than through zoom or at a socially safe distance.

But we can't give up.

We have come too far to go back to what was considered normal before COVID became a part of our new normal.

The day is getting darker and colder, we need to prioritize finding things that alleviate pandemic fatigue.

If we let our guard down and pretend it is not a threat, we will simply invite COVID in.

There are ways to manage your COVID exhaustion.

In a time where routines can be thrown out the window, attempting to establish a routine is one thing to introduce into your day to day.

In an unpredictable time, daily rhythms provide a sense of stability and something to look forward to.

Making sure you take time for yourself is also very important.

If you have time on your hands, try out something new or revive an old hobby or pastime.

What makes you feel good?

If it is a walk around the block, or clearing snow for your neighbour, or maybe checking out in new Canada reads book or savouring a new recipe, learn to do something new or talk to someone you haven't talked to for a while.

Reach out and give someone a helping hand.

Remember that a kind act as a boost for you as well.

This has been a difficult week, but despite it all, we are still doing okay.

We live in a wild and fiercely beautiful place, and we have each other.

This week, we are one people with Watson Lake, as much as we are all Yukoners.

We have had some challenges, and we will, believe me, face the more.

If we stay together, maintain our spacing in our connection in our kindness, take care of ourselves and each other, we will get there.

We are slightly battered, about all the stronger, and we are still team Yukon.

That is all for my update.

Thank you.

Take care of each other.

Stay well.

>> Pat: Thank you, Dr Hanley.

Thank you, Premier Silver.

Now to the phone lines and we will begin with Nick Wells.

>> Reporter: Can you hear me?

>> Pat: Yes, we can.

Go ahead, please.

Maybe you can hear us.

>> Reporter: Now I can hear you.

Oh...

I was wondering if there is any concern about the cluster of cases spreading in Watson Lake.

I know that Dr Hanley thought there has been no other case seen but I am curious if the government is able to talk about the concern of the clusters spreading.

>> Yeah, of course there is a concern about the potential to spread, two things are behind that.

One is, some of the contact investigations and testing is still being done as of today.

So we are expecting more test results over the next couple of days in by the end of the week, I think we will have completed testing on at least the people that we have identified as contacts and more -- have been more concerned about.

On the other hand, all of the testing, apart from the known cases we have already announced, has been coming back negative.

So that is all reassuring.

But at the same time, this is an incomplete investigation.

It does take several days to complete an investigation of a cluster, and as well as that, the reason that I emphasized testing of people regardless of the exposure which is important to look at those dates in think about if you were there, regardless of that, anyone with symptoms-- if they come forward for testing, it gives us another mechanism to ensure that there has been, as I say, no escape of COVID into the community, or anywhere else for that matter.

We never know for certain, I mean part of the concern is this is why we do as careful an investigation and is thorough and investigation as we can.

So yes, I am concerned.

But so far the indications are positive for not seeing spread in the community.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Follow-up?

>> Reporter: Yes, for the premier and it is slightly off-topic, related to the briefing today.

But I'm curious, with this upcoming weekend and the time change happening in other provinces around the country, the Yukon not adjusting it squawks, I am curious if the premier things the government is prepared for, I guess, the headaches of dealing with the different time zones from the rest of the country, a large portion of the rest of the country.

>> I would say equally to that, Yukoners are ready to not deal with the headache of circadian rhythms being all messed up.

And Dr Hanley just spoke about our rhythms and patterns in the winter under COVID conditions.

One thing that we won't have to do is readjust our clocks.

The government has been doing an awful lot of great work, ensuring that we have reached out to service providers, the international timekeepers, and all of these folks.

We believe we are ready for it.

It will be an adjustment, but again, one of the biggest surveys that we have had in Yukon history with overwhelming support from Yukoners to stop messing with the clocks.

And we also believe that BC is poised and ready to go as well.

I know that they had bigger issues to deal with this year, so that paused what is already a legislative change in BC so I would expect that to happen very soon it, for them to join us in not changing the clocks.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Sarah Connor's?

>> Reporter: Hi there.

I am just wondering, you know, the Yukon government working with Liard first nation to address concerns regarding the virus.

-- Liard First Nation.

So what are some ways that the government is working together to ensure the safety of the first nation?

Lamb wondering because I have spoken to a Liard First Nation citizen in the people I have spoken to are fearful of community spread.

>> Yeah, for sure.

The communities we have gone to, Minister Streicker has done his community tours starting that, do you want us to come to your communities or not, do we do this by Zoom?

It is definitely on everybody's minds.

The fear of COVID.



And we ask, if your fear is based upon the science in we can work together to mediate any of your concerns, then we can work together.

What we have seen with the Liard First Nation, and the new leadership there as well, speaking to the Chief the other day, well aware of the parameters, well aware of how his government can lend supports including a presence of the border, and we are working with the chief to talk about this, which is great.

And what we hear from the chief as well as his concerns are based upon science.

And wailing to help out, and Dr Hanley said it perfectly.

We are all Watson Lake right now.

We are all a community of Yukoners but our hearts are in Watson Lake.

Whether it is with the Mayor and Council, the chief and Council, the health department down there, the school.

What we are seeing is a community coming together to make sure people are safe and I hold up the Liard First Nation for their efforts.

The first thing that the chief told me was that he had spoken earlier that day with Mayor Irvin, so they are already in communication as governments down there, working hand in glove with recommendations from our government based upon Brendan Hanley and his team.

So I am really thankful for the strong leadership we are seeing in Watson Lake.

>> Pat: Dr Hanley?

>> Yeah, I want to echo everything the premier has said, and I have been in direct conversation with the chief since Friday, since that weekend, and through the weekend.

So as with all the chiefs, I maintained a close relationship.

I have spoken with several other chief since then and you know, there is nothing-- I mean, however, we talk about COVID and try to prepare for it, there is nothing like the impact of having COVID in your community.

It is a shock, no doubt about it.

It is a stressful time, but it's also a time to show-- to come back to, what is the facts, the science and the best evidence.

So knowing that we can be in control of this, and we have the means to be able to prevent spread and transmission I think is a very powerful thing to remind ourselves of.

So I think a lot of our conversations are really about that.

Okay, it this year, what do we do next and how do we work together to follow the steps that we know work, and work every time.

So, yeah,, I just echo that.

And also, in addition to the First Nation, we have also been working directly and closely with the Mayor and the CAO of Watson Lake.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Another question, Sarah?

>> Reporter: That's everything.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Luke McGrath?

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

I spoke to the Mayor of Watson Lake yesterday and he mentioned, at least in the grocery store which was identified as one of the exposure sites, that they had increased a bit of preventative measures.

A lot of people are wearing masks now, there are lines directing people where to go on stand.

Do you know if any other businesses in Watson Lake have increased their preventative measures in their safety measures?

>> My understanding...

I can't tell you directly for the home hardware store.

I think, you know, if you were to reach out directly they would be happy to talk to you.

My understanding is the Big Horn Motel is actually closed at the moment, and really for logistical reasons at the moment.

But I'm quite sure this is going to give the very capable staff, and very dedicated staff I might say, a chance to refresh and review their protocols and look for what they can do better.

This is not just about these three businesses, and I think it is really important to emphasize that.

This is maybe a gift in a way, to all of us to look at what are our practices, as citizens, as businesses, as business owners and workplaces.

I think we need to focus on these particular locations because of the exposures, about not as sort of isolated examples of perhaps not having followed protocol is completely.

It is really, what can we learn from these cases to improve our preventative practice from here on, and move on.

>> Pat: Premier Silver?

>> We have been calling it somewhat of a wake-up call.

I would not necessarily say a wake-up call.

That guidelines are already there, people know what they are supposed to be doing but what happens in these situations is people up there games.

That is what we heard from the mayor.

And I will add from the conversation I had with the chiefs, his initial response right away was, a day to shut down offices and sanitize.

Again, going above and beyond the guidelines, and his perspective it was to show the public servants in his government how important safety and health is to him in his leadership position.

Then we went into a conversation about the balance we have to share as leaders, in providing safety from COVID but also the mental health of individuals at -- that work in these government offices, or in grocery stores, or the like.

It was really good to hear of both what Doctor Hanley -- Dr Hanley -- just saying in also from our conversations of leadership in Watson Lake.

They were already awake, but definitely stepping up their game to make sure that the safety of people in Watson Lake is the number 1 concern.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Do you have a second question?

>> Reporter: I do not, thank you.

>> Pat: We will move to Haley.

Are you still there, Haley?

[ Inaudible ]

>> Pat: We will come back.

Philip?

>> Reporter: Yes, hello.

Dr Hanley, you mentioned previously that Yukon has some rapid testing machines.

Only a few of them.

Were those used in Watson Lake?

>> Yeah, yes.

We only have one rapid testing machine currently online.

The rest are in the process of acquisition, for instance the Abbott IV machines which are a potential tool for us to use.

But we are not there yet.

So the gene expert a machine that is the analyser, that is in place at Whitehorse Hospital and that is not a machine that a move around, it is kind of a fixture -- fixture at the lab.

But it does allow us to take advantage of that more rapid turnaround when we needed.

For example,, some of the Watson Lake testing was over the weekend carried out on the gene expert and some of the testing today and tomorrow is also on the gene expert.

There is still a process of quality assurance, so any test currently done on the gene expert is also done as a quality check in BC.

But we are definitely using that and sort of doing gate triage until what is tested here versus what is sent out.

We are continuing to see very good turnarounds for our BC testing and some tests we had over the weekend actually tested in Watson Lake and resulted in a day and a half.

From the BC labs.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Second question?

>> Reporter: Yes.

Just to clarify, out of Watson Lake, is material being flown out?

Is that how tests are being sent or testing?

>> So no, it has actively been by road.

The testing with drivers has been from Watson Lake to Whitehorse by road then sent by the usual routes which is the flights out from Whitehorse.

And of course, I am not saying a day and a half is the expectation from now on.

That was really all the stars on mining to show how well it can work when the road transport alliance with the shipping times out, and once the BC CDC lab-- despite the high volume of testing in BC, and I mean, they have certainly phased some pitches attesting turnaround in BC.

But once at the lab, the turnaround time continues to be quite good.

>> Pat: Thank you.

We will move to Laura Hall's?

>> Reporter: hi there.

Question for Dr Hanley.

I wanted to ask about the time delay in publicly reporting these cases.

You mentioned you had found out about the first cases in Watson Lake on Thursday night but there was no press conference until after 5:00 PM on Friday.

Then on Monday, some new cases were written announced live on CBC radio with my colleagues but there was not an update on the government website until much later that day.

Why has there been such a delay on formally sharing this information about new cases with the public?

>> So, you know, the reason is that there was always going to be a lag between when we actually learn about the results.

In this case, for instance Thursday night, late Thursday evening was the first result.

We do not carry contact tracing out at night, or during the night.

It is not night shiftwork.

We need our team on the ground and sustainable and preserved.

A small team of skilled nurses do contact tracing, so that begins first thing in the morning.

Then what we need, we need the information before we publish information about cases.

Including whether or not a public exposure notification is required.

That takes some investigation.

It takes talking to people, sometimes talking to them several times.

Finding them, of course.

Getting the story, corroborating one-story with another.

Then really building a picture of what is actually going on, to inform what we need to tell the public because what we need to tell the public is, what is the risk?

And where is the risk?

Clearly that takes time to put together in a reliable way, in a coherent way, in an understandable way clear .

Really, to have under 24 hours from learning of cases to a reasonable amount of information for the public to know what is going on and what the risk is, and where the risk is not, is actually a pretty good turnaround.



>> Pat: Thank you.

Follow-up question?

>> Reporter: Yes, thank you.

I'm wondering if your advice will change on travelling between communities.

>> I am not anticipating changing advice.

So again, the advice that I have on travelling between communities is to respect community wishes, to travel wisely, to travel with respect.

And otherwise, to follow the other Safe Six measures that are part of that package.

So if the question is regarding the Watson Lake cases and the exposures, no.

I have no reason to change travel advice based on this recent cluster of cases.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Gabrielle?

>> Reporter: I know in BC and possibly in other jurisdictions as well, you can check your woven test results online and often get a foster result that way.

Are there any plans for that here?

>> Yeah, it is a good question.

I think it is something we have obviously noted.

It is something that takes a lot to set up successfully.

A lot of infrastructure, and a lot of time investment.

I would say it is on the table, but we are very concerned about giving the results in the right way.

The whole process-- you might think all I need to know is whether it is positive or negative, that is part of the story but it is not the whole story.

The real story is around, okay got what do I do now, what do I do with that information?

That is why the kind of personalized system we have now with skilled nurses giving the results along with the advice about what to do.

It could be for instance someone who is highly suspected to have COVID, who has a negative test, but has to continue -- or is advised to stay in isolation for another test because maybe the first test wasn't done early in the infection in maybe negative but misleadingly negative.

So it is all around the circumstances of why the test is carried out and then what the instructions or advice days after that.

It is hard to reproduce that by simply phoning up and getting a negative test and potentially having misleading information to go on.

Right now what we have is a gold standard and quality of results, and I would say, looking at sort of other ways is something we are very much interested in, should we need to get at that high volume of results.

Then we have to look at other ways of maintaining turnaround time and efficiency of results.

But for the moment, I think we have a very good process in place that suits the circumstances of our territory.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Follow-up?

>> Reporter: Wondering if you're -- could speak to parents who are concerned in hearing your advice but wondering why not just put on more restrictions, why not be really save around Halloween versus allowing trick-or-treating to go on?

>> You know, the guidance we have produced as guidance we feel confident and safe.

But of course it depends on the parent and the family.

Some parents may just not feel comfortable with trick-or-treating and that is perfectly fine.

This is a COVID year, everything is different this year and any family that doesn't feel comfortable should not feel -- feel quashed or coerced into doing something they do not feel comfortable with.

There are a number of activities we have suggested as part of the following guidance on the website about other ideas, maybe that is a bit of a group discussion amongst parents.

But I feel very comfortable with the advice we put out, and with the safety we have built around the advice that we give.

So from here on, it is really a matter of choice.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Now to Lauren, Radio-Canada.

Lauren?

>> Reporter: And miscommunication there.

I have already asked my question.

>> Pat: Sorry, I am looking for Lorraine?

And if not, we will thank everyone for their time today.

Our next COVID-19 update will take place Wednesday, November 4th, at 11:00 AM.