

Charting the Course

Living with and managing COVID-19



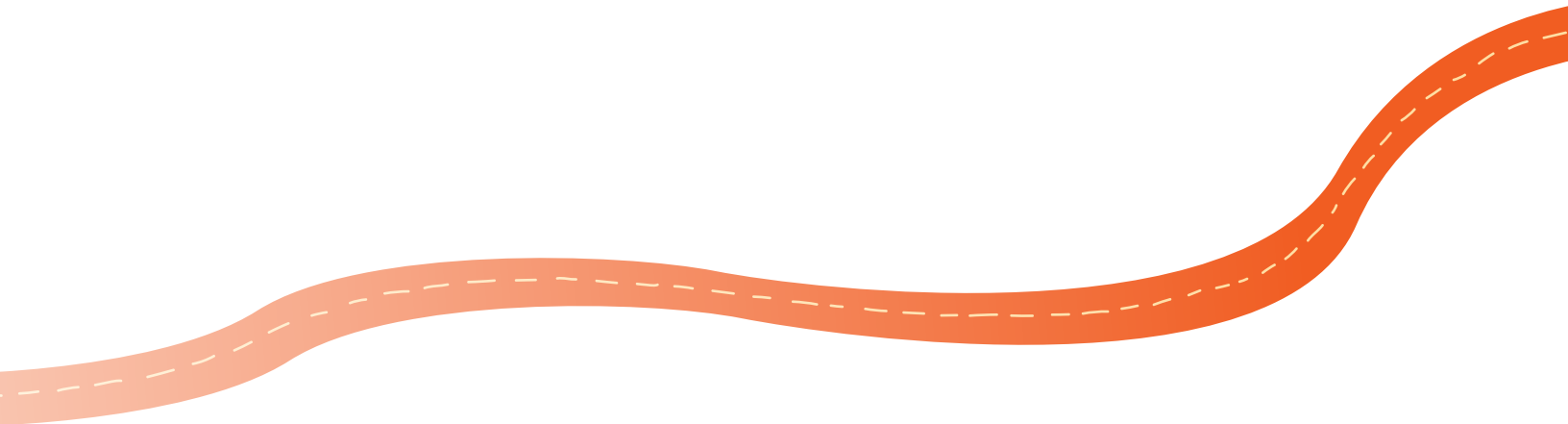
Purpose

A suite of strategic goals and actions have been developed to replace *Forging Ahead: The Yukon's Continuing Response to COVID-19*. These strategic goals and actions are collectively called *Charting the Course: Living with and managing COVID-19*. *Forging Ahead* was appropriate for the COVID-19 situation at the time, but now requires an update to acknowledge the changing circumstances locally and globally. Variants of COVID-19 currently in circulation tend to cause less severe outcomes compared to the strains from earlier in the pandemic. This is a result of the evolution of COVID-19, safe and effective vaccines, high vaccination rates and the availability of treatments that lessen the severity of COVID-19.

Charting the Course takes into account the COVID-19 situation locally, nationally and internationally. *Charting the Course* is not a step by step action plan that outlines how each goal and strategic action will be achieved. Rather, *Charting the Course* describes the approach that “charts the course” for direction the Yukon is taking to live with and manage COVID-19 for the foreseeable future.

Objectives

Charting the Course outlines a sustainable approach to managing COVID-19 while protecting vulnerable populations and supporting Yukoners' wellbeing. Similar to other public health challenges, COVID-19 has resulted in disproportionate impacts on some segments of the population. Socioeconomic status, age, vaccination status and underlying health conditions can lead to severe outcomes from COVID-19.



Goals



Vaccination

- ✓ Provide ongoing vaccination opportunities through rural health centres.
- ✓ Integrate new COVID-19 vaccines (i.e., bivalent) into existing immunization programs.
- ✓ Shift vaccine delivery in Whitehorse from a mass clinic to existing immunization programs.



Testing and Treatment

- ✓ Ensure confirmatory testing is available when warranted for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes.
- ✓ Integrate testing services into existing clinical settings, consider expanding respiratory testing through health care system (i.e., multiplex testing).
- ✓ At-home rapid tests remain available free of charge.
- ✓ Continue providing access to Paxlovid for eligible patients.



Self-Isolation and Facilities

- ✓ Provide access to self-isolation facilities in Whitehorse until December 16, 2022.
- ✓ Removal of mandatory isolation period, continue recommending individuals stay home when they are sick.



Public Reporting on Surveillance

- ✓ Release public-facing surveillance data that is more targeted to specific audiences (i.e., technical audiences, other governments).
- ✓ Move to a more sustainable approach that aligns with approaches used for other diseases.
- ✓ Adopt a more participatory approach to public health surveillance.



Communication

- ✓ Hold COVID-19 press conferences only if the COVID-19 situation changes significantly.
- ✓ End COVID-19 specific working groups and explore new ways to support First Nations governments, municipalities and stakeholders with advice relating to public health matters.

Implementation

The Government of Yukon will implement the strategic goals and actions by working collaboratively with the Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health, First Nations governments and stakeholders. Throughout the development and engagement on *Charting the Course*, thoughtful feedback was received. Some of these concerns relate to low up-take for booster vaccination; clarity on vaccination eligibility; communicating the risk of COVID-19 to vulnerable populations; clear and timely updates on changes to how COVID-19 is managed; COVID-19 data sharing and transparency; and collaboration on community-based testing initiatives.

The Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health is working to identify opportunities to work with First Nations governments and stakeholders to discuss COVID-19 and other public health matters of interest in the future. The Government of Yukon will continue to remain vigilant in its monitoring of the COVID-19 situation and adapt as required.

