

June 29, 2020

The Honourable Adrian Dix, M.L.A.
Minister of Health
PO BOX 9050 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

BY EMAIL: HLTH.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Dix,

Re: COVID 19 Community Testing in Community Pharmacy

As the province moves into Phase 3 of its COVID response and recovery, we know that broader community testing for COVID-19 is part of this plan. As you are aware, discussions about having pharmacists provide some of the testing at the community level is being discussed in various provinces.

And, as I am sure you know, last week Alberta announced that it will begin offering asymptomatic COVID-19 testing at 20 community pharmacies in Edmonton and Calgary before expanding to more pharmacies in the following weeks. Throat swabs done at pharmacies will then be sent to labs for analysis. Pharmacy testing will augment the COVID-19 testing being offered by Alberta Health Services in public labs.

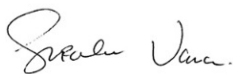
In April, the BC Pharmacy Association sent a letter to Dr. Bonnie Henry to encourage her to consider using B.C.'s community pharmacists to increase COVID-19 testing capacity and fill gaps in access to testing that may exist across the province. As you know, community pharmacies are located around the province, are easily accessible to patients, and they are able to respond quickly to meet the needs of large numbers of British Columbians for public health requirements, like vaccinations. We were pleased to learn that the BCCDC sees an important role for pharmacists once the COVID-19 vaccine is available.

We would appreciate the opportunity to engage with your staff and the Provincial Health Officer to pursue this opportunity further. COVID-19 testing in community pharmacy could be deployed in hot spots or in areas that face issues to access.

During the outbreak as doctors' offices and hospitals limited visits, we saw that patients still felt – and still do feel – safe coming into their local pharmacy to receive care.

On behalf of the BCPhA Board and our members, I want to thank you and Dr. Bonnie Henry for your tireless efforts to keep British Columbians safe.

Sincerely,



Geraldine Vance
CEO
BC Pharmacy Association
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Cc Dr. Bonnie Henry
Mitch Moneo, ADM PSD