



BC Centre for Disease Control
AN AGENCY OF THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH SERVICES AUTHORITY

NEWS RELEASE

Current SARS Picture from the BCCDC: No New Cases in 21 Days

VANCOUVER – April 24, 2003 British Columbia is faring well in its containment and management of SARS. Through ongoing collaboration between the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BC CDC) Public Health Officials and all Health Authorities effective surveillance and identification mechanisms as well as appropriate screening mechanisms appear to have made a positive impact.

“It has been 21 days since BC’s last probable SARS patient developed symptoms,” said Dr. David Patrick, Director of Epidemiology at BC CDC. “The fourth case is that of the health care worker who represented the only proven instance of SARS transmission within the province,” he added.

The three previous cases were imported. “Two of the people affected by SARS have already recovered and been discharged home”, said Dr. Patrick. BC’s four probable SARS patients tested positive using the new investigational test. Other suspect cases were tested as well, but all produced negative results suggesting this test may be an effective diagnostic tool.

Public Health nurses and physicians remain on the look out for further imported cases. This type of surveillance has resulted in the identification and tracking of the recent passengers who developed symptoms upon returning to BC from New Delhi via Taipei. Public health has been using the term “suspect case” for anyone recently returned from a high-risk area who has a fever and a cough. This approach will continue, because SARS is still a large problem in parts of Asia.

“Public health will continue to identify returning travellers who may have a small chance of developing SARS. But this activity must be understood to represent a barometer of vigilance, not of risk,” concluded Patrick.

It is important to recognize that the majority of suspect cases identified in BC have never developed into probable SARS cases. If we look at the history of “suspect cases” in BC, they are clearly not a measure of the SARS problem. Of 60 ever reported in BC, only 4 remain in hospital. All the rest have either never required hospitalization or have been discharged home. Most no longer require follow-up. None have progressed to SARS and none of those tested to date have tested positive for the SARS virus.

View the SARS Epidemic curve updates: <http://www.bccdc.org/download.php?item=1071>

View the SARS BC situation map by Health Authority: <http://www.bccdc.org/download.php?item=1074>

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