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**From:** Butler, Liam GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Friday, September 10, 2021 12:02 PM  
**To:** May, Cheryl OHCS:EX; Thomson, John OHCS:EX; Fieltsch, Raymond OHCS:EX  
**Cc:** Ramsay, Launa P OHCS:EX; Petrescu, Sarah OHCS:EX  
**Subject:** For review: Media Request: BCH: COVID outbreak at Shelters in Victoria

Hi Cheryl, John, and Raymond,

Please see the below BCH media request for your review. Apologies for the tight turnaround, this just came in.

Thank you,

**Reporter**

Jason Hallman, Editor  
CTV Vancouver Island - Victoria  
[Jason.Hallman@bellmedia.ca](mailto:Jason.Hallman@bellmedia.ca)  
250-414-6510 c: 604-837-3136

**Deadline** Friday, September 10, 2021 2:00 PM

**Request**

Question:

We understand that there are COVID outbreaks at 844 Johnson and at Paul's Motor Inn [and Comfort Inn – added later] which are causing concern among service providers. Can you please tell us how these situations are being addressed? Are there restrictions in place to mitigate transmission? How is the situation being managed with people coming and going from these facilities.

**Background**

s.13

As of September 8, there were 36 positive cases of COVID in three BC Housing sites in Victoria: Johnson Street Community (JSC), Soleil and Muncey Place.

All shelters have isolation plans at their sites in the event of COVID positive tests. If there isn't an appropriate opportunity to isolate within shelters, BC Housing has a contingency plan to move people to supportive housing units (independent units). Supportive housing tenants who test COVID positive will isolate in their own unit.

Soleil, JSC and Muncey each had vaccine clinics this week. Additional vaccination clinics are happening daily including Travelodge, and Capital City Centre and Russell Street this week. BC Housing and operators are working with Island Health to identify sites to prioritize for testing and for more vaccine clinics.

**Recommendation – BCH to provide background**

BC Housing is aware of rising COVID-19 case counts, including at some BC Housing-funded sites on Vancouver Island. Due to privacy concerns, we're unable to confirm a case count figure or provide the precise site locations.

As always, we are working closely with Island Health to advise our housing operators on appropriate protocols to keep all residents safe. Island Health is also offering onsite vaccination to residents who are interested.

All BC Housing-funded shelters have isolation plans at their sites in the event of a COVID positive test. If there isn't an appropriate opportunity to isolate within shelters, BC Housing has a contingency plan to move people to supportive housing units (independent units). Supportive housing tenants who test COVID positive will isolate in their own unit.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, BC Housing has worked with service providers to ensure the safety of shelter guests by setting up the following guidelines and protocols:

- Reduced capacity to allow for physical distancing;
- Mask wearing in common areas for both guests and staff,
- Regular hand washing and sanitization for both guests and staff,

A full breakdown of BC Housing policy regarding COVID-19 is available on our website: [COVID-19 \(bchousing.org\)](https://www.bchousing.org/covid-19).

For information regarding the number of people who have contracted COVID in the region and further details around the health protocols that have been set up, please reach out to Island Health directly.

**From:** [Cooke, Angela AG:EX](#)  
**To:** [Butler, Liam GCPE:EX](#)  
**Cc:** [Pearson, Barbera AG:EX](#)  
**Subject:** Re: For review: Media Request: BCH: COVID outbreak at Shelters in Victoria  
**Date:** September 10, 2021 12:23:37 PM

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Hi Liam,

I am happy with this briefing.

Thanks,

Angela

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 10, 2021, at 12:07 PM, Butler, Liam GCPE:EX  
<[Liam.Butler@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Liam.Butler@gov.bc.ca)> wrote:

Hi Angela,

Please see the below BCH media request for your review. Apologies for the tight turnaround, this just came in.

Thank you,

**Reporter**

Jason Hallman, Editor  
CTV Vancouver Island - Victoria  
[Jason.Hallman@bellmedia.ca](mailto:Jason.Hallman@bellmedia.ca)  
250-414-6510 c: 604-837-3136

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**Background**

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reach out to Island Health directly.

## White, Michelle CITZ:EX

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**From:** Dowler, Thea AG:EX  
**Sent:** September 10, 2021 3:22 PM  
**To:** Eby, David AG:EX  
**Cc:** Harder, Derrick AG:EX; LynesFord, Adam AG:EX  
**Subject:** FW: 3:20pm AG Media Requests

### **Théa Dowler** (*she/her*)

Executive Assistant to the Honourable David Eby, Q.C.

Attorney General of British Columbia and Minister Responsible for Housing

Cell: 604-250-9054

### **2 AG Requests**

- CTV VI, CHEK, Times Colonist – BCH: COVID-19 outbreak at shelters in Victoria – **due before 3:30pm**
- CBC/Radio-Canada - BCH: CBC - CRAB Park – **due at 4:30pm**

Ok for BCH to provide background to these three reporters?

### **Reporters**

Jason Hallman, Editor  
CTV Vancouver Island - Victoria  
[Jason.Hallman@bellmedia.ca](mailto:Jason.Hallman@bellmedia.ca)  
250-414-6510 c: 604-837-3136

April Lawrence  
Reporter  
CHEK News  
office: (250) 480-3700  
cell: (250) 415-8168  
[alawrence@cheknews.ca](mailto:alawrence@cheknews.ca)

Cindy Harnett  
Times Colonist  
[CHarnett@timescolonist.com](mailto:CHarnett@timescolonist.com)  
2502133603

**Deadline** 3:30 PM

### **Request**

From CTV:

We understand that there are COVID outbreaks at 844 Johnson and at Paul's Motor Inn [and Comfort Inn – added later] which are causing concern among service providers. Can you please tell us how these situations are being addressed?

Are there restrictions in place to mitigate transmission? How is the situation being managed with people coming and going from these facilities.

From CHEK:

I just heard CTV mention that BC Housing confirmed clusters of COVID in its supportive housing facilities in Victoria... are you able to confirm this is something you're experiencing? How many facilities/residents are impacted? And is this the first time in the pandemic BC Housing has had COVID-19 clusters appear in its supportive housing facilities.

From TC:

I'd like information on the extent of the Covid cases at Paul's Motor Inn, Comfort Inn and Johnson St. and what's being done to mitigate risk regarding infection control and housing alternatives - how /where are you quarantining the sick and/or removing the healthy.

Is lack of vaccination and/or the housing an issue related to this outbreak?

### **Background for MO:**

s.13

As of September 8, there were 36 positive cases of COVID in three BC Housing sites in Victoria: Johnson Street Community (JSC), Soleil and Muncey Place. .

Soleil, JSC and Muncey each had vaccine clinics this week. Additional vaccination clinics are happening daily including Travelodge, and Capital City Centre and Russell Street this week. BC Housing and operators are working with Island Health to identify sites to prioritize for testing and for more vaccine clinics.

### **Recommendation – BCH to provide background to both CHEK, TC and CTV**

BC Housing is aware of rising COVID-19 case counts across the province, including at some BC Housing-funded sites on Vancouver Island. Due to privacy concerns, we're unable to confirm a case count figure or provide the precise site locations.

As always, we are working closely with Island Health to advise our housing operators on appropriate protocols to keep all residents safe. Island Health is also offering onsite vaccination to residents who are interested.

All BC Housing-funded shelters have isolation plans at their sites in the event of a COVID positive test. If there isn't an appropriate opportunity to isolate within shelters, BC Housing has a contingency plan to move people to supportive housing units (independent units). Supportive housing tenants who test COVID positive will isolate in their own unit.

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Ok for BCH to provide background?

**Reporter**

Timothé Matte-Bergeron

CBC/Radio-Canada

[timothe.matte-bergeron@radio-canada.ca](mailto:timothe.matte-bergeron@radio-canada.ca)

604-404-3725

**Deadline:** 4:30 pm

**Request**

I'm a journalist working for CBC/Radio-Canada in Vancouver, and doing a story about Crab Park encampment, where are still living a few dozen people.

Some of them say they have not been offered suitable housing (but mostly just shelter spaces), even though efforts to evict them have started. I know BC Housing is not directly involved in these efforts, but I was wondering if there was anything you had to say about what is going on at that park.

Are there enough possibilities for people living in tents right now in Vancouver who would like to move into housing? Are there some available spaces in housing managed by BC Housing (or an affiliated provider) right now in the city? What about the many hotels that were converted in housing over the last year and a half? What is the average wait time for most housing managed by you in Vancouver?

**Recommendation – BCH to provide background**

The Province and BC Housing are not involved in issuing or enforcing the Vancouver Park Board's order to restrict overnight sheltering in CRAB Park. However, BC Housing, working with our non-profit housing providers, shelter operators and other community supports, has been actively reaching out to people living at CRAB Park for many weeks now and continues to offer indoor spaces. BC Housing has enough indoor spaces for everyone currently sheltering in CRAB park.

Applicants are prioritized for housing based on their immediate need. Those who are living precariously and are at-risk of homelessness, for example, are typically considered for housing before those who are already in relatively stable housing and have applied to transfer to another building or unit. The Supportive Housing Registry is not a "first-come, first-serve" and so BC Housing does not keep track of average wait times. BC Housing and is working with our non-profit partners to help each individual sheltering in CRAB Park access the most appropriate housing option for them.

Earlier this year, more than 300 people successfully moved indoors, including into hotels that were purchased, from Strathcona Park. Since then, our housing intake has never closed and people sheltering outdoors have been encouraged to connect with outreach teams to move into an indoor space. Over the long term, BC Housing staff, the City of Vancouver, and its non-profit housing operators are working on building supportive homes for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Since 2018, BC Housing has opened more than 1,700 supportive housing units in the City of Vancouver – that's 1,700 people who are no longer sleeping outside and have homes with 24/7 supports and access to healthcare. Over the next two years, more than 1,100 spaces for people experiencing homelessness will open in the city.