



Hon. David Eby  
Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing  
Room 232 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

September 24, 2021

Dear Minister Eby,

**Re: Reported COVID-19 outbreaks in Victoria temporary housing facilities**

I am writing to you regarding the recent reports of a serious rise in cases of COVID-19 at temporary housing facilities throughout Victoria, including the former Paul's Motor Inn, Muncey Place on Blanshard Street, the Travelodge, and 844 Johnson Street.

Staff and residents have raised concerns about the spread of the virus within these facilities, which is putting them and the wider community at risk of infection.

Despite many requests to Island Health and BC Housing for further details, there has been little clarity from your government about the current situation, leading to anxiety, concern, and uncertainty for those who live and work in the affected facilities. Recently leaked documents show that government has been aware of this rise in cases for weeks, and yet troublingly, none of the information was communicated with those impacted.

This is obviously an important issue, potentially affecting the health and safety of hundreds of people, and one where clarity, transparency, and clear direction from you and your ministry are desperately needed.

There are many specific questions that residents and staff have raised that need to be addressed:

- Most importantly, what are the current COVID-19 case counts at each BC Housing-owned housing facility and partner facilities and what is being done to manage rising case counts?
- Why was none of the information collected by Island Health released publicly and why have none of these clusters been declared outbreaks?
- At recently-purchased temporary hotel sites, why did current COVID-19 protocols fail given the purchase of these sites was originally intended to prevent outbreaks?



- What are the vaccination rates of both residents and staff at these facilities?
- Is there a continued risk of transmission between these facilities and current homeless populations in Victoria? If so, what resources are being deployed to mitigate this risk?
- Have outbreaks largely been confined to Victoria, or is a pattern of outbreaks being observed at temporary housing facilities throughout B.C.?

Clear answers to these questions are essential to provide a better understanding of the situation and allow residents, staff, and community members to make the best possible decisions to stay safe.

The absence of forthcoming information only adds to the frustration people are feeling over the lack of transparency from this government regarding COVID-19 data. This leaves many unequipped to deal with the challenges posed by the fourth wave B.C. is experiencing.

Many of the residents in these facilities are some of the most vulnerable in our community, and the Official Opposition is concerned they are failing to get adequate support from your government to deal with this situation.

I hope that you will take action, deliver the transparency that is desperately needed, and ensure the safety of those who live and work in government housing facilities.

Sincerely,

Ben Stewart, MLA  
BC Liberal Critic for Housing

CC: Shirley Bond, Interim Leader of the Official Opposition  
Adrian Dix, Minister of Health