

**From:** PHSA Communications  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 17, 2020 5:40 PM  
**To:** PHSA Communications <[phsacomm@phsa.ca](mailto:phsacomm@phsa.ca)>  
**Subject:** All-staff bulletin: The latest COVID-19 information: March 17 at 5:40 p.m.



## All-staff bulletin

### **The latest COVID-19 information: March 17 at 5:40 p.m.**

*Sent on behalf of Dr. Maureen O'Donnell & Susan Wannamaker  
Chief medical officer and chief operating officer of PHSA's COVID-19 EOC*

Our employees, physicians and support teams play a critically important role in British Columbia. Now, more than ever, we have an essential and important job to do. We must continue to work together, across PHSA and alongside our health sector partners.

This means prioritizing the work required for COVID-19, as we continue to deliver care and services to patients and families across the province and provide essential supports to the health system. We will continue to evaluate the situation on a daily basis and act in a focused, coordinated, and measured manner.

Our daily bulletins contain the latest workforce information. **Please read them carefully.**

#### **Breaking news from the provincial government:**

1. B.C. declares public health emergency
2. Upcoming B.C. school closures

#### **Health care testing:**

3. Testing and collection sites for health care workers
4. Public self-assessment tool

#### **Operational updates:**

5. Unused 2019 vacation for non-contract staff
6. Cancelling vacation or other leave
7. When to wear a mask

#### **1. B.C. declares public health emergency**

- This afternoon, the B.C. Provincial Health Officer declared a provincial public health emergency. All bars and clubs to close and that all restaurants and cafes that cannot maintain distancing must close or shift to take-out-only.

- Grocery stores, pharmacies, and utilities, which will remain in operation, also need to incorporate distancing measures.
- Tomorrow we will provide more information regarding what a public health emergency means for B.C.

## 2. Upcoming B.C. school closures

- The B.C. government announced K-12 classes are suspended in B.C. This is being done indefinitely.
- We realize this will be a concern for many members of our workforce. PHSA is working collaboratively with the Province and our health authority partners to identify ways we can support child care options for essential workers, including health care workers. More information is forthcoming.

## 3. Testing and collection sites for health care workers

- The new [testing guidelines](#) highlight that testing is limited to a number of specific groups, including health care workers (this includes physicians, paramedics and all other health care employees).
- For health care workers, this information will be identified on their requisition and their samples will be prioritized.

### **PHSA sites**

- Starting today, a COVID-19 Testing Clinic will be open specifically for PHSA staff, physicians and paramedics and Lower Mainland Consolidated staff working at PHSA sites who are concerned that they may have COVID-19 **and are symptomatic**.
- The Testing Clinic will be open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., 7 days a week. It is located [beside Entrance 77](#) on the C&W campus, room E200 in Shaughnessy.

### **Testing criteria**

- Staff must meet testing criteria, which includes:
  - Fever & cough or shortness of breath (new/worsening – not pre-existing)  
OR TWO of the following symptoms:
  - Fever, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, fatigue/malaise, rhinorrhea
- Less frequent symptoms associated with COVID-19 include: sore throat, nausea, vomiting, palpitations, chest pain, conjunctivitis. Clinic staff will discuss with a designated medical microbiologist if staff requesting testing have these or other symptoms not meeting the criteria above.
- If you are self-monitoring while at work or are on your days off and experiencing symptoms as described above, you may come to get your test (nasal swab), followed by self-isolation until your test results are back.
- You will receive a phone call with your results.

### **Steps to follow before going to the site**

1. Complete the [staff screening form](#).
2. Call 604-875-2345 (local 2727 or 2277) and pre-register prior to coming to the clinic. A registration clerk will enter your Personal Health Number and other information into Cerner.
3. If you will be absent from your shift, please call 604-63-PEARL (73275).
4. Bring your completed [staff screening form](#) and your health authority ID to clinic.
5. Clean your hands with hand sanitizer and wear a mask when you enter the hospital.

#### 4. Self-assessment tool

- The Ministry of Health has partnered with Thrive Health to launch a COVID-19 [self-assessment tool](#). The tool helps users determine whether they need further assessment or testing for COVID-19.
- We encourage you to share this tool with patients, family members, friends or colleagues who are asking whether they need to be tested.

#### 5. Unused 2019 vacation for non-contract staff

- As per our non-contract employee policy, carry-over vacation from the previous year must be used (or will expire, no pay-out) by March 31 the following year.
- Given the emerging needs related to our response to COVID-19, we recognize that many employees will be unable to take vacation time before March 31, therefore: **non-contract employees with unused 2019 vacation time will be allowed to carry-over up to 75 hours to use before December 31, 2020.**
- Employees with more than 75 hours will have those hours over 75 removed from their balances after March 31, 2020, unless an exception is submitted and approved by the VP, People Services.
- Physicians at BC Children's Hospital and BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre as well as physicians, researchers and scientists at BC Cancer will continue to follow the language in their terms and conditions.

#### 6. Cancelling vacation or other leaves

- Effective Friday, March 13, 2020, all employees are allowed to cancel pre-approved leaves scheduled in the next 60 days, including vacation, union leaves, banked overtime leaves, etc.
- Cancellations will be at the discretion of the employee. Any plans to cancel should be discussed with the manager or supervisor in charge and also must be updated in Infor (Workbrain).

#### If you plan to cancel your leave:

- Prior to cancelling a leave, please notify your manager. To cancel a leave:
  1. If you have a scheduler, notify the scheduler to cancel the leave.
  2. If you are a self-serve employee, cancel the leave directly on the leave request form in Infor (Workbrain) by selecting the cancel box next to the pre-approved dates

and submitting the form. This cancellation request will go to the manager for approval prior to the timesheet and balances being update.

- Self-serve employees can find [additional resources](#) on POD and any questions about how to use the leave request form can be directed to [Workforce Central](#).

## 7. When to wear a mask

- Some staff have asked for clarity about when to wear a mask at work following international travel.
- Until advised otherwise, the advice of the Provincial Health Officer is that all health care workers who are returning to work following international travel wear a surgical mask at all times, in all places, for 14 days.

## Thank you for your continued dedication

The service that each and every one of you offers for our patients and families – and the essential support you provide to our provincial systems – is critical, and is making a meaningful difference in B.C.

## Your ongoing sources of information

- We are sending daily updates. Watch for emails from [phsacomm@phsa.ca](mailto:phsacomm@phsa.ca).
- Continue to send in your questions via [Slido.com](#) using the event code **#PHSATownHall**. ‘Like’ questions that are similar to yours to let us know the priority topics to cover at our virtual town halls and in future communications.
- Continue to check the [BCCDC’s website](#) as a trusted source of information.
- PHSA has a [dedicated area on POD](#). BCEHS alerts and updates are on the [BCAS intranet](#) and in the [BCEHS Handbook](#). *[Note: you must be on the respective PHSA and BCEHS networks to access these links].*
- We have [opened up a new section on phsa.ca](#) where employees can access the same information that is posted on POD, but when off the network.
- For site-specific questions, please check in with your manager or clinical leadership.
- For trusted information from around the world, please check the [World Health Organization website](#).

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