

**From:** [PHSA Communications](#)  
**To:** [PHSA Communications](#)  
**Subject:** All-staff bulletin: The latest COVID-19 information - March 16 at 2:45 p.m.  
**Date:** Monday, March 16, 2020 2:53:30 PM

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## All-staff bulletin

### The latest COVID-19 information: March 16 at 2:45 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*

Thank you for your continued vigilance and attention to these regular updates, as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve quickly. As mentioned in [yesterday's all-staff bulletin](#), we will be sending daily all-staff emails.

This morning, the government of Canada announced:

- Entry to Canada will be limited unless you are a Canadian, a Canadian permanent resident or, at this time, an American. There will be exceptions for air crew, diplomats and immediate family members.
- Air carriers will be mandated to screen passengers with symptoms of COVID-19 out of line-ups, so they don't board planes back to Canada.
- Starting on March 18, international flights will only be allowed to land at four airports: Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal.

The B.C. Provincial Health Officer (PHO) [announced today](#):

- All gatherings greater than 50 people should be cancelled for the foreseeable future. **Note:** This is an update from the previous direction that all gatherings of greater than 250 people should be cancelled.
- British Columbia's health authorities are directed to immediately move all hospitals in the province to Outbreak Response Phase 2. This means hospitals will undertake only urgent and emergency procedures and will postpone all non-urgent scheduled surgeries.
- Pharmacists are being directed to refill prescriptions without a doctor's note.
- Doctors will be paid to provide virtual care services to reduce transmission possibilities.
- A dedicated phone service has been set up for general, non-medical, public inquiries to free up 8-1-1. The number is 1-888-COVID19. This is also a text service.
- Only essential visitors will be permitted at long-term care facilities.
- Retired health care providers are being recruited to provide support as needed.
- Casinos are being asked to temporarily close.

More information on the impacts of these decisions to PHSA and sites for health care worker testing will be forthcoming. There will also be more information coming tomorrow from the PHO on B.C. schools.

#### Hot topics covered in this bulletin:

1. General colds/sniffles
2. Live streaming
3. Spam messages
4. Working from home

#### 1. General colds/sniffles

- Anyone with **respiratory symptoms** should stay home and not come into work. This

includes runny nose, cough, congestion, shortness of breath, etc.

- If staff are critical to providing health care or support services and have *mild* symptoms, like the sniffles, they may come to work and need to wear a surgical mask.

## 2. Live streaming

- There is increased interest in following the regular briefings from our public health and political leaders. These are happening daily.
- We have noticed quite a large spike in traffic on our hospital networks as staff watched live events at work. These huge network loads can directly impact our ability to access clinical systems and deliver patient care – especially during peak usage times when our Internet connections are already fully utilized.
- **Please refrain from streaming live event briefings at work.** Along with receiving the information through the daily emails from PHSA, such as this one, you can also follow many of these updates on various Twitter accounts, including:
  - @cdcofbc
  - @CPHO\_Canada
  - @BCGovNews

## 3. Spam messages

- Cybercriminals are using the sensitive global environment to tap into people's fears with phishing emails.
- Please be very careful with anything related to COVID-19: this includes both personal and work emails, attachments, any social media, texts on your phone, anything.
- If you receive a suspicious email to your work account, forward the email to [spam@phsa.ca](mailto:spam@phsa.ca) and then delete the email from your Inbox and Deleted Items folder.
- If you accidentally clicked on a malicious link and entered your credentials, immediately:
  - Reset your password.
  - Contact the Service Desk at 604-675-4299.

## 4. Working from home

- At this time, it is the position of PHSA that all employees and physicians are essential to the delivery of patient care and facilitation of the provincial health system.
- [Read yesterday's bulletin](#) for the latest information on self-isolation and working from home.
- Over the coming days, we will be assessing what work is most critical at this time and take steps to ensure we have the right people, doing the right work, in the right place, at the right time.
- More information for PHSA leaders on handling these requests will be coming soon.

## Thank you for your continued dedication

The safety and wellbeing of our employees and physicians is critically important to us. We understand this may be a stressful time and we are committed to keeping you informed.

Your service to the patients and families we serve – and the support you provide to our provincial systems that are essential to delivering these services – is making a meaningful difference in B.C.

## Your ongoing sources of information

- We are sending daily updates to PHSA staff. Watch for emails from [phsacomm@phsa.ca](mailto:phsacomm@phsa.ca).

- [Our Slido question page](#) will remain open throughout the week under the event code #PHSATownHall. 'Like' questions that are similar to yours to help us prioritize for the weekly virtual town halls. Not all questions will be answered directly on Slido, but they will help inform the 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 are working on a health professionals section on [www.phsa.ca](http://www.phsa.ca) so that employees can access the information off the networks. Stay tuned for more information.
- 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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