

Critical COVID-19 News

Information for employees, medical staff, paramedics and contractors

April 15 at 6:20 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

In both our personal and our professional lives, we have made adjustments to respond to, and cope with, the impacts COVID-19. A question that is likely on many of our minds is: "When will things return to 'normal'?"

While we are encouraged by the positive trends we are seeing in B.C., we must continue to be vigilant, stay the course and follow the advice, guidance and direction of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and our public health leaders. We remain focused on the task at hand, however, we also want to assure you that PHSA's executive leadership team is keeping sight on the longer-term strategies, planning and sustainment of our organization's operations and ensuring continued support for our workforce.

Data is an important tool that helps us to plan and strategize. During [today's press briefing](#), Health Minister Adrian Dix and PHO Dr. Bonnie Henry outlined that extensive data modelling that shows where we are in this pandemic in B.C., and where we may be going, will be shared on Friday (April 17). B.C. was the first province in Canada to present modelling of this nature, and we are honoured to say that PHSA has a leading role in this work – in particular, the BCCDC and the Data Analytics Research and Evaluation (DARE) team.

Thank you to everyone for your continued contributions, hard work and resilience. Our people are truly our most valuable asset. We are all in this together.

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

Highlights:

News from the provincial government:

- 1. B.C. extends provincial state of emergency**
- 2. Federal government announces expanded access to Canada Emergency Response Benefit**

Other important updates:

- 3. Thursday's all-staff town hall**
- 4. Updated link: BCCDC and UBC COVID-19 research symposium**
- 5. Skype for Business: Preferred option for corporate video conferencing**

B.C. extends provincial state of emergency

- The B.C. government [has formally extended](#) the provincial state of emergency, allowing Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, to continue to use extraordinary powers under the Emergency Program Act to support the Province's COVID-19 pandemic response.
- The state of emergency is extended through the end of the day on April 28, 2020, allowing government to continue to take the necessary steps to keep British Columbians safe. The provincial government can extend the period of a declaration for further periods of time for up to 14 days at a time.
- Premier John Horgan says: *"British Columbians should be proud of the way we have responded to this crisis. But the work is not over. We must hold our ground and take all the steps needed to make sure our communities remain safe and our essential service workers are supported in our ongoing efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19."*

Federal government announces expanded access to Canada Emergency Response Benefit

- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau [announced today](#) that the government is adding further supports for those who don't qualify for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), and Canadians working in essential jobs who make less than they would if they received the benefit.
- To help more Canadians benefit from the CERB, the government will be changing the eligibility rules to:
 - Allow people to earn up to \$1,000 per month while collecting the CERB.
 - Extend the CERB to seasonal workers who have exhausted their EI regular benefits and are unable to undertake their usual seasonal work as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.
 - Extend the CERB to workers who recently exhausted their EI regular benefits and are unable to find a job or return to work because of COVID-19.
- In recognition that some essential workers' salaries may be less or similar than what they would receive from the CERB, the government will work with provinces and territories through a new transfer to cost-share a temporary top-up to the salaries of workers deemed essential in the fight against COVID-19, who make less than \$2,500 a month.
- More details as to the application and delivery of this measure will be released following further work with the federal government, provinces and territories.

Thursday's all-staff town hall

- Join PHSA's CEO and president Benoit Morin at our next virtual town hall for COVID-19: **Thursday, April 16, 2020 from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.**
- In addition to Benoit's CEO address, we'll share the latest Public Health and Lab updates—and spend most of our time on Q&As. Remember to [log-on to Slido](#) using the event code **#PHSAtownhall** to ask or "like" questions in the queue.
- We're offering three options for viewing:
 - 1) **Watch the webcast live at 10:30 a.m. using this link:**
<https://mediasite.phsa.ca/Mediasite/Play/611f15c3af7d48ab8c84c9e918df16231d>
If you experience any technical issues, please try using Internet Explorer as your browser.

There is no password needed to watch. If you are prompted to log in, it means the webcast connections are at capacity (we are prioritizing our clinical applications) and you should use options 2 or 3.

- 2) **Listen by teleconference live at 10:30 a.m. by calling: 1-833-353-8610** and using **Participant code 4478028 #**
If you hear a busy signal, try calling again. If a message says the conference bridge is full, use option 3.
- 3) **Watch the webcast at 12:30 p.m. onwards:** Use the same link above to watch the webcast recording on demand. There is no difference between the live or recorded experience and you do not need to be on the PHSA network.

Skype for Business: Preferred option for corporate video conferencing

- In [yesterday's bulletin](#), we shared information about Zoom for Healthcare, which is a licensed tool for virtual health visits.
- For **team meetings** and **corporate** use, Skype for Business is our preferred video conferencing service licenced and supported through IMITS.
- It offers instant messaging and videoconferencing, and allows participants to share content on their desktops, such as documents and presentations.
- The *basic* version is available for all staff with a health authority network account. If you need the ability to host meetings with telephone dial-in as an option, as part of your job, you can request *standard access* by completing the [request form](#) in the IMITS Service Catalogue.
- Stay tuned for top tips for using Skype for Business.
- If you have been using ZOOM software for team meetings and corporate use, at a minimum you must ensure to follow these [privacy and security tips](#).
- **Note:** In yesterday's COVID-19 News, we included the incorrect link to the COVID-19 Virtual Health toolkit. The link we provided was for patients. For **health professionals**, please [visit this page](#) for information about accessing ZOOM for Healthcare.

Thank you for your continued dedication

The service that each and every one of you offers for patients and families – and the essential support you provide to 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.
- 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.
- Check the [BCCDC's website](#) as a trusted source of information.
- Visit the [staff COVID-19 section on phsa.ca](#) to access [PHSA News](#) and COVID-19 information when off the network.
- For BCEHS alerts and updates, check the [BCAS intranet](#) and in the [BCEHS Handbook](#). *[Note: you must be on the BCEHS network to access these links].*
- 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](#).