

Critical COVID-19 News

Information for medical staff

April 16 at 7:25 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 a [written statement](#) issued today by Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, they state: “*Our shared efforts to flatten the curve make a difference. Each day that we hold the line, we are stronger and better for it.*”

While COVID-19 has had – and continues to have – significant impacts on our personal and professional lives, we know that this is not forever. And while the impacts of COVID-19 have been significant, they are, in many ways, making us stronger and better. We are in the midst of building new, incredible partnerships and generating powerful stories about collaboration, teamwork, problem-solving and innovation. These partnerships and stories will stay with us when this is all over and we start to shift into our ‘new’ normal.

Until then, we must continue to ‘hold the line.’ Thank you for your continued efforts, your ongoing vigilance and your service to our provincial systems, clients, patients, families and communities.

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

Highlights:

News from the provincial government:

- 1. New counselling service for post-secondary students**
- 2. COVID-19 supports for businesses and local governments**

Other important updates:

- 3. Updated link: BCCDC and UBC COVID-19 research symposium**
- 4. In case you missed it: Today's town hall highlights**
- 5. Upcoming town halls**

New counselling service for post-secondary students

- The B.C. government, through the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, today announced [Here2Talk](#), a new mental health counselling and referral service for post-secondary students.
- The service offers confidential, free single-session services by app, phone or online chat, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- Chat sessions with a trained counsellor can be accessed by downloading the Here2Talk app, visiting here2talk.ca, or by calling 1-877-857-3397.

COVID-19 supports for businesses and local governments

- Responding to key concerns from local governments, the B.C. government today [announced a number of new measures](#):
 - authorizing local governments to borrow, interest-free, from their existing capital reserves to help pay for operating expenses, such as employee salaries.
 - delaying provincial school tax remittances until the end of the year. This will provide significant relief to local governments facing cash flow issues.
 - providing local governments greater flexibility to carry debt for an additional year.
- The B.C. government is also reducing most commercial property tax bills by an average of 25% and postponing the date that late payment penalties apply for certain commercial properties.
- In addition, a new [B.C. Business COVID-19 Support Service has been announced](#) for businesses in the province looking for resources available during the pandemic.

Updated link: BCCDC and UBC COVID-19 research symposium

- In the [April 11 Critical COVID-19 News bulletin](#), we referenced the virtual COVID-19 research symposium that was co-hosted by the BCCDC and UBC on April 9.
- The URL that was provided was not properly displaying the recording.
- We are pleased to be able to share the updated URL, where you can [view a recording of the symposium](#).
- The symposium was focused on recently-funded projects and collaborations among partners. Participants included BCCDC and UBC researchers, as well as the Health Research Council of B.C., which includes senior research leads from all the research-intensive universities, all B.C. health authorities, plus major funders such as the Ministry of Health, Genome BC and the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research.

In case you missed it: Today's staff town hall highlights

- For the highlights from today's virtual, all-staff town hall, you can:
 - [Watch the highlights reel on YouTube](#)
 - [Watch the full recording](#)
- You can find the list of questions and the time stamps for each answer in today's [PHSA News story on POD](#). For those not on the network, we also have a [PDF version of PHSA News](#), which includes a [spotlight story with time stamps](#), posted to the staff resources section of our website.

Upcoming town halls

- Our next medical staff town hall will be on **Monday, April 20, 2020** from **7 – 7:45 a.m.**
- Our next all-staff, virtual town hall on COVID-19 will be on **Tuesday, April 21, 2020** from **10:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

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](https://www.slido.com) using the event code **#PHSAMedicalStaff**. '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](#).