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# Highlights from today's town hall [VIDEO]

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As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, we want to make sure you feel supported and informed. We have increased the frequency of our town halls to twice per week.

This morning's town hall can be [viewed online](#) (you do not need access to POD to view this). Below, you will find summaries of hot topics from our leaders as well as time stamps for each of the questions answered during the town

hall. Keep in mind that the latest bulletins and town hall recordings are on our external website at [www.phsa.ca/covid19staff](http://www.phsa.ca/covid19staff).

WATCH THE WEBCAST NOW

“Thank you for your continued diligence in caring for patients from across British Columbia while at the same time trying to advance our thinking about how we respond to the COVID-19 crisis. We appreciate how hard everyone is working.” - Dr. Maureen O’Donnell

## Hot topics discussed during the town hall

### Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) update from Susan Wannamaker and Dr. Maureen O’Donnell

PHSA programs continue to play an important part in the fight against COVID-19:

From a provincial perspective, the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) continues to play a significant role in understanding the epidemiology of COVID-19 and supporting the Provincial Health Officer. BCCDC and Data Analytics Research & Evaluation (DARE) teams have also been a part of the modelling work. Many people at BCCDC have changed their roles to support the pandemic, so thank you.

PICNet continues to provide overarching leadership for personal protective equipment (PPE) and infection prevention and control, not just for hospitals but also community settings.

Our Labs team is working hard to provide a 24-hour turnaround time for COVID-19 testing. This is tremendous work.

IMITS continues to troubleshoot and support our capacity and bandwidth to work from home.

We’ve seen a decrease in emergency visits at BC Children’s Hospital, which shows that people are staying at home and looking for alternate care. BC Children’s and BC Women’s Hospital + Health Centre are participating in active daily planning and preparation and working with other health authorities on surge planning.

At BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services, leadership continues to work on serving and protecting those unique and vulnerable populations, as well as keeping staff healthy. Active screening of both groups is taking place.

BC Cancer is actively engaged in COVID-19 planning while continuing to provide cancer care – both systemic and radiation therapy.

BC Emergency Health Services, including paramedics, paramedic specialists and dispatch, continue to play a huge role in care, and particularly in the transport between facilities. They are working with the Provincial Critical Care Working Group to provide transport to over 19 critical care hubs.

Communications is one of our most important roles – thanks to the team for providing information and for all your efforts.

There are so many ways that PHSA is involved in supporting the whole province and the people of B.C. – we extend sincere thanks for what you do every day.

## Parking and supply chain update from Linda Lupini

There will be free parking for everyone, starting in April.

More detail will follow for those who work in our office settings (leased buildings).

Supply chain is working hard to ensure staff are equipped with everything they need. We have made orders in the millions, but the challenge is getting them delivered on schedule. But rest assured our team is working through all of that.

Thank you to our supply chain team. Their work has a direct impact on staff and patient care, and it's something they take very seriously.

## HR update from Jaci Edgeworth

With the Provincial Health Officer's emphasis on physical distancing, PHSA advised as many employees as possible to work from home for the past two weeks. This has been extended to the foreseeable future to support flattening the curve. Many of us can't work from home, but where it's possible or with slight modifications, we encourage you to speak to your manager about this arrangement.

The Provincial Health Officer released a data collection order and a bridging order with respect to the single site directive.

Facilities were to submit information about employees and contractors. This data is needed to support planning. Exemptions include staff who provide visiting services such as physicians, dietitians,

paramedics, etc. The data collection order applies to employees who are at facilities (long-term care, residential care and any facility that falls under the Hospital Act) for entire shifts.

The bridging order allows regional medical health officers to issue single site directives for long term care facilities and limit movement of staff in those sites. Some of our staff might be affected, such as those who work casually at various sites but the impact to PHSA is considered to be somewhat low.

## Child care

Next week, school districts and child care resources are expanding services for school age/0-5 children of essential service workers, including front line care and support services.

For children age K to 6, please contact your local school district.

For children age 0-5, your local child care and resource referral centre will connect essential workers with child care service.

In Vancouver, the Vancouver School Board is utilizing their child care and resource referral centre for all age children, age 0 to grade 6.

If you have a child older than grade 6, you can make requests for that age group with your school district.

## Staff resources

**PHSA COVID-19 Resource Line:** For all staff or medical staff to call with COVID-related workplace health questions. Open 7 days/week 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Call 1-833-875-2155 (toll free) or 604-875-2155.

**Staff Psychosocial Support Service:** A single central phone number or email to book an appointment with a peer support worker during times of stress and anxiety. Call 604-875-2982 or email [workplacewellness@cw.bc.ca](mailto:workplacewellness@cw.bc.ca).

**Employee Family Assistance Program:** Visit [homeweb.ca](http://homeweb.ca).

Thank you to everyone who's working through this challenging time.

## Answering your Slido questions

Remember to [visit our Slido question page](#) which will remain open under the event code **#PHSATownHall**. 'Like' questions that are similar to yours to help us prioritize for future town halls.

[Open the webcast recording](#) and skip to the time stamps listed below for specific questions and answers:

Reports are coming out that the virus maybe airborne for up to 3 hours. Is it true? If yes, shouldn't we all be wearing PPE? **29:54**

Can you become a carrier of COVID-19 and not display symptoms even after the 14 days? **32:46**

On what evidence are we basing our PPE precautions when most of the world is using full PPE, including N95, for workers anywhere in the Emergency Departments? **33:30**

There are reports in the US that as the virus has mutated, cases are presenting as gastrointestinal symptoms and not respiratory. Should we be watching and screening for this? **38:50**

Dr. Bonnie Henry's update on March 25th stated gatherings should be no more than two people, but my workplace is still following the 50-person rule and won't let us work remotely. What rule should we follow? **45:25**

How can PHSA justify qualifying every single staff member as essential? At what point do our rights to refuse unsafe work conditions come into play? **39:57**

Last town hall we were instructed to reach out to our immediate supervisor/manager for concerns about our health & safety at work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Who do we reach out to if they will not help us? **44:35**

I have Citrix and am able to work from home. However, my manager is not supportive, citing that others in the same department cannot work from home. Does that matter? **47:10**

It's very unclear what options are available for non-essential employees if they need to stay home to care for their children. Can we use paid sick days? **48:01**

Why is the work from home situation rolling out so slowly? PHSA has repeatedly claimed that most people would be sent home to flatten the curve. My colleagues and I are still in the office two weeks later and are constantly told to wait. **50:52**

What if a program's regular work has reduced greatly because of health service suspension? Are staff required to register for redeployment? **54:10**

For those who are in close contact with patients daily, is there a plan or policy to test clinicians with mild or no symptoms to protect our high-risk patients? **38:00**

I work in a lab. The space is small and only can accommodate a few workers. I cannot maintain a safe distance from my coworkers. We are told physical distancing does not apply at work. Why? **49:24**

How do you know the flattening curve talked about last week isn't because BC stopped testing most people with symptoms? How did this change in testing strategy get factored into the modeling? **51:48**

At BC Children's Hospital, if a patient has COVID-19, what are the rules for the families? Will the parent that stays with the patient be required to stay in the patient room and isolate there? **36:10**

Paramedics are high risk: they are entering homes and close quarters with possible COVID-19 patients. Can you speak to enforced, mandatory COVID-19 testing for crews at the start of block and end? **43:40**

## Thank you

Thank you to each and every one of you for your commitment and dedication during this unprecedented time. Whether you are on the front lines of the pandemic, or doing important work behind the scenes, you are making a significant difference for the people of B.C. Thank you.

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HEALTH AUTHORITY INTRANETS

FEEDBACK ABOUT THE INTRANET?

We want to hear from you!