

🔍 Search...

❤️ 📍 👤



April 7, 2020 [Employee updates](#) [Across PHSA](#) , [BC Cancer](#) , [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) , [BC Children's and BC Women's](#) , [BC Mental Health & Substance Use Services](#)

Highlights from today's town hall

DAWKINS, LAURIE [PHSA]

Vice President, Communications & Stakeholder Engagement

👍 1 like 💬 0 comments

Highlights from April 7 COVID-19 Virtual Town Hall



As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, we hope our town halls are providing the information and support you need to make decisions both professionally and personally. Thank you for your active participation via Slido and for your ongoing service to our patients, our provincial systems and partners, and each other.

This morning's town hall can be [viewed here](#) – you don't need to be on the PHSA network to view it. 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. You can always find the latest bulletins and town hall recordings on our external website at www.phsa.ca/covid19staff.

WATCH THE WEBCAST NOW!

Hot topics

EOC update from Susan Wannamaker and Dr. Maureen O'Donnell

- Today is World Health Day and a great day to recognize the amazing work that's happening across PHSA and other health authorities – not just the work related to COVID-19 but all the other work we do every day to care for patients and keep the health system running.

Situational update:

- BC Children's Hospital and BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre is partnering with other health authorities to enact lower mainland pediatric surge planning and to work on a maternal, newborn strategy.
- BC Cancer is actively tracking staff redeployment, and universal screening will begin tomorrow across all sites.
- BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) is working with union partner CUPE 873 to continue to ensure a safety and focus for staff. BCEHS also implemented new personal protective equipment (PPE) guidelines across B.C., and continues to work on patient transport. We have enacted a seven days/week patient transport Emergency Operations Centre with our health authority partners to support new ways of transporting patients while remaining flexible, responsive and ensuring access to care.
- At BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services (BCMHSUS), there has been an increase in crisis support and BCMHSUS has been actively engaged in supporting that process. There is also a focus on BC Corrections and keeping our inmate population safe.
- The Virtual Health team and IMITS are leading great work, providing increased access to virtual care and supporting staff to work from home.
- BC Centre for Disease Control is working on the next iteration of models in conjunction with the data analytics team – what we're expecting to see in terms of the effects of social distancing, and what we'll see when we start coming together as a society again.
- The Intensive Care Unit (ICU) dashboard is now up and running and we are continuing to refine it.
- Data and analytics is also working on modelling for PPE needs across the province.
- Supply chain is working with data and analytics to track ventilators and where they are.
- We are working on fair PharmaCare and the affordability of certain medications and situations for families.
- We are also working with BC Transit/HandyDART for patients who need transportation to appointments and care.
- Perinatal Services BC is working on increasing home birth supplies and PPE.
- PICNet continues their work with infection control.
- Child Health BC continues to work on pediatric planning.
- This is not an exhaustive list; we know there is so much work going on behind the scenes. Thank you for everything you do, every day.

Green Shirt Day

- Today is also Green Shirt Day, honouring the victims of the Humboldt Broncos bus crash. Logan Boulet was one of the victims and he was also an organ donor, saving six lives after passing away on April 7, 2018. Green Shirt Day supports organ donor awareness – wear your green shirt at home and post your photo online in support of BC Transplant.

IPAC update - Dr. Troy Grennan

PPE guidelines

- PPE guidelines have been posted, thanks to the hard work of the Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) team.
- These are general recommendations based on various sites, but you're likely to encounter exceptions.
- Get in touch with your site IPAC practitioner if you have questions.

Non-medical masks

- Dr. Theresa Tam, chief public health officer of Canada, suggested that you may choose to wear non-medical masks at times when you're not able to physically distance in public.
- It is important to remember that, if you're using non-medical masks, it should be in addition to other infection control measures – non-medical masks are not a replacement for hand hygiene or physical distancing.

HR update – Jaci Edgeworth

Contact tracing process

- See the town hall slide deck for a [flow chart of the process](#).

- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, infection control initiates contact tracing in any patients the employee may have seen or interacted with and also follows up with manager.
- Workplace Health leads the communication with an employee's manager. The employee is contacted if there is a positive test result. Their manager is also contacted.
- Public health or occupational health nurses will contact all staff impacted by the employee's test result and will be provided with instructions on self-isolation, symptom monitoring, testing.
- Staff affected with receive continual updates.

Temporary staff housing

- A new temporary staff housing program has been developed for staff who are working with COVID-19 patients or are redeployed.
- There are two options: paid accommodation for staff who meet eligibility criteria or accommodations at a discounted rate for other health care workers.
- You are eligible if you've been redeployed to a geographic location other than your primary location and cannot safely commute to and from your home, or if there's an active outbreak at work and you are unable to go home and need to isolate from your family.

Easter weekend

- It's important to take this time to rest and recharge, if possible.
- We recognize that some groups may not be able to do so, and there will be more information to come for these employees.

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:

- When do we expect the virus to peak? How does that peak relate to hospital capacity and general infection levels in BC? 44:00
- The health minister discussed opening “pop up” hospitals at the Convention Center and at Royal Columbian Hospital (RCH)'s new tower. Who will staff these units? Can PHSA staff be redeployed? 42:00
- New pregnancy guidelines were released by the UK Royal Colleges of OBGYNs and Midwives on March 30th: Pregnant woman should not work directly with COVID patients. After 28 weeks, pregnant women should not work in patient-facing roles. What is PHSA's response to this update? 51:00
- Are there any options for admin/reception staff who do not feel comfortable being moved into patient screening roles? If asked, do we have a choice? 55:45
- Since BC Children's is not currently seeing large numbers of patients has there been any thought to opening up one or two more OR's per day for simple day cases? I am worried we will not be able to catch up with the back log when essential services only is discontinued. 57:00
- Why is lab staff the only department not supplied or not allowed to wear hospital scrubs? We are not supplied with masks either. Every day we have to go to a ward and ask the nurses station for a mask. We interact with patients, too. 39:25
- There have been recent reports that ZOOM iOS app shares data with Facebook without user knowledge. Are we investigating if this also occurs with our ZOOM accounts and how it is impacting our patients' privacy? 48:59
- Why does PHSA continue to downplay asymptomatic transmission? Please comment on how asymptomatic transmission can be addressed. 29:00
- Is there an issue if someone desires to wear a face mask in a cubicle office setting? Our manager took great exception to a co-worker of mine wearing a face mask at their own choice. 33:40
- Can N95s be disinfected and reused when we begin to run low? What about other re-useable options, like a rubber mask with filters? 52:29
- For staff who cannot afford the unexpected cost of childcare and/or need to support home-schooling, will accommodations be made to allow for evening/weekend work? 27:26
- What about Mental Health Days for full time employees who are not working from home? 35:30

- Given that most of our health benefits are no longer usable given Covid closure orders, can we opt out of our insurance or be reimbursed? I'm getting taxed on insurance benefits I cannot use (e.g. RMT, physio, dentist, optometry, psychologist) 37:55
- Is there any hiring for casual, on call or part-time roles? There are external candidates more than capable to help and are looking for work at this time. This would eliminate overworked employees and would give job opportunities. Is there a contact? 47:01

You can view the 'live' questions at any time by visiting: [Slido.com/phsatownhall](https://slido.com/phsatownhall)

Are you finding the town halls helpful? Are there improvements we can make? Provide your comments in the section below.