



Critical COVID-19 News

Information for employees, medical staff, paramedics and contractors

April 23 at 7 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

It's not often that public health officials become household names, but B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry has garnered a devoted following of British Columbians – so much so that popular shoemaker John Fluevog designed a pair of limited-edition pumps “the Dr. Henry’s” in her honour, with all proceeds going to B.C.'s food bank. The inside is stamped with the phrase Henry has repeated many times: "Be kind, be calm and be safe."

When the online sales opened today, the John Fluevog website crashed due to the amount of traffic.

We tell you this today not to spark your interest in shoes, but to demonstrate the immense appreciation and interest that our society is showing for health care in our province. Each and every one of you is playing a part in that.

Whether it's the 7 p.m. applause we hear every night, the countless thank you messages we are receiving through our website and various social media and communications channels, the generous donations of food and comfort items being offered to health care workers, the hand-written thank you cards or the creative art, sidewalk chalk or painted rocks – we can all be proud to work in health care in B.C.

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

Highlights:

News from government:

1. **B.C.'s essential service workers matched with child care**
2. **BC Cancer's Genome Sciences Centre to begin genetic sequencing on Canadians with COVID-19**
3. **Applications for B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers to open May 1**

Other important updates:

4. **Today's all-staff town hall & PHSA News highlights**
5. **Reminder: communications survey closes tomorrow**
6. **Reminder: new phishing attacks from cybercriminals**

B.C.'s essential service workers matched with child care

- The B.C. government [announced today](#) that more than 2,500 essential service workers with children up to five years of age on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic have been referred to open child care spaces through the Province's new child care matching process.
- The spaces are prioritized for children whose parents work in public health and health services, social services and law enforcement, first responders and emergency response sectors. Additional spaces are going to families working in other essential roles.
- For essential service workers with children older than five years, the Ministry of Education has been working closely with school districts and independent schools to ensure these students have access to in-school supports during regular school hours and access to care before and after school hours.
- Essential workers looking for child care can fill out a "parent" form to identify their need for urgent child care. Forms can be accessed online: www.gov.bc.ca/essential-service-child-care or by calling (toll-free) 1 888 338-6622 and selecting Option 4.

BC Cancer's Genome Sciences Centre to begin genetic sequencing on Canadians with COVID-19

- As part of a federal [funding announcement](#) earlier today, Canada's Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre (GSC) at BC Cancer will be one of four Canadian institutions on the forefront of using genome science to understand how different people respond to COVID-19 infection.
- Effective immediately the GSC, hosted at the [BC Cancer Research Institute](#), a research institute of PHSA and UBC, will use cutting-edge genomic technology to sequence the

DNA of thousands of Canadians who have tested positive for COVID-19. Researchers expect to identify how the disease is transmitted and which people may be more vulnerable to the disease. These findings will help better inform public health policy to help keep Canadians safe by helping to better assess, triage and treat the most vulnerable COVID-19 patients.

- The GSC is part of a network of genome sequencing centres, known as CGEn, which, in addition to PHSA and UBC includes The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and McGill University in Montréal. Today, it was announced that CGEn will receive \$20 million to sequence 10,000 Canadians that have tested positive for COVID-19.

Applications for B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers to open May 1

- For British Columbians whose ability to work has been affected by COVID-19, applications for the \$1,000 B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers (BCEBW) open on May 1, 2020.
- The BCEBW is a one-time, tax-free payment for British Columbians whose ability to work has been affected as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Most people who are eligible for the new federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) are also eligible for the BCEBW, including those who have run out of employment insurance (EI) benefits and subsequently qualify for the CERB.
- More information can be found on the [B.C. government's website](#).

Today's all-staff town hall & PHSA News highlights

- Dr. Réka Gustafson (deputy provincial health officer and PHSA's vice president of public health & wellness) and Dr. Troy Grennan (infection prevention & control lead with BCCDC) provided updates and answered public health and infection prevention & control questions during today's town hall.
- If you missed it, you can:
 - [Watch the highlights reel](#) on YouTube
 - [Watch the full recording](#)
 - Find the list of questions and the time stamps for each answer in today's [PHSA News Story on POD](#) [internal link] or a [PDF version of the spotlight story](#) [available externally].
- Our next town hall will be held on **Tuesday, April 28 at 10:30 a.m.** Stay tuned for more details and continue to submit your questions via Slido.
- This week's PHSA News also features exciting stories about the [leading-edge COVID-19 test development and innovation](#) and the [innovation, courage and teamwork in B.C. labs](#), as we celebrate National Medical Laboratory Week.
- Check out the [visual timeline of B.C.'s leading-edge COVID-19 lab testing](#), an [animated video](#) that outlines how COVID-19 tests are processed and [some behind-the-scenes footage](#) of lab testing at the BCCDC.

Reminder: communications survey closes tomorrow

- We want to know if the communication you're receiving from PHSA, at this moment in time, is meeting your needs or if there are changes we can make to support you better.
- Please take **two minutes** to share your feedback **by Friday, April 24**.
- All responses are anonymous. We will use the summary report to evaluate how our communication channels and approach can evolve.

→ [Take the survey here](#)

Reminder: new phishing attacks from cybercriminals

- Cybercriminals continue to use the disruption created by the COVID-19 pandemic to lure staff into clicking on malicious links or attachments through enticing phishing emails.
- Being caught out by a phishing email, scam or fake website is a big deal. It can potentially lead to identity theft, financial or medical fraud, or even an attacker gaining control of your computer. If in doubt don't click!
- Approach all emails with caution, especially those that contain links, attachments or request sensitive information (e.g. passwords, financial or patient records). Open emails only if you know the sender and trust both the content and the context in which it has been sent.
- Scams related to COVID-19 are a popular choice for cybercriminals, but they are not the only type being used to lure us in.
- Five recent phishing emails targeting health organization staff (examples only)
 1. Receive COVID-19 benefits: This phishing email imitated an internal business department instructing recipients to click on a link to receive payroll benefits.
 2. Update banking profile: This phishing email imitated a trusted source, the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC). It requested all RBC clients to open an attachment to update their banking profile.
 3. Migrate to 2020 Microsoft Outlook: This phishing email imitates an internal IT support department instructing recipients to click on a link to access a "New 2020 Microsoft Outlook Web Portal".
 4. Log in for payroll changes: This phishing email imitates an internal finance department instructing recipients to click on a link to update their payroll information.
 5. Notification of ticket escalation: This phishing email imitates the Service Desk advising recipients to click on a link to view a ticket they had previously submitted.
- If you think you received a phishing email (either simulated or real):

- DO NOT click on any links or attachments within it;
 - Forward it to our Information Security team at spam@phsa.ca; and
 - Delete the email from your Inbox, Sent and Deleted Items folders immediately.
- To learn more, watch our video: [Phishing. What you need to know!](#) or ask us a question at IMITSSecurity@phsa.ca.

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](#).