



# Critical COVID-19 News

Information for employees, medical staff, paramedics and contractors

**April 27 at 5:55 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*

Throughout the day, other provinces and jurisdictions, including Ontario, Quebec and the United States, have started to share plans and even specific dates about when they will start easing up on social distancing measures. The natural temptation is to ask, "What about us? What about B.C.?"

In this moment, it is important to remember that our province has responded well at every stage of the COVID-19 pandemic – and that response has been based on local needs, strengths and opportunities. With this wisdom in mind, our Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry has stated, "We have a made-in-B.C., province-wide plan that will allow us to remain as we have been – kind, calm and safe."

Dr. Henry and Minister Dix shared that this plan will soon be forthcoming, but at this moment in time, they do not have specific dates in mind to "re-open" the province or allow children to return to school. PHSA will play a leading role in informing this plan, through our efforts related to public health, data, analytics and modelling, laboratory testing, supply chain and more. In fact, all of us will play an important role as health care workers and as citizens who appreciate that with so much at stake, we must continue to support one another and stay the course until the moment is right for B.C. to move forward.

We thank you for your individual and collective efforts, which are making a difference now and will continue to do so in the days that lie ahead.

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

### **Highlights:**

#### **News from the provincial government:**

- 1. Province secures shelter and supports for people living in major encampments**
- 2. More support for family caregivers**
- 3. Virtual opportunities for LGBTQ2S+ students to connect**

#### **Other important updates:**

- 4. New location for PHSA COVID-19 Collection Site at the C&W Campus, effective April 29**
- 5. Join us at Tuesday's all-staff town hall**
- 6. Update on communication frequency for bulletins**

#### **Province secures shelter and supports for people living in major encampments**

- On April 25, the [B.C. government announced](#) it is working with the cities of Vancouver and Victoria to transition people living in encampments in Oppenheimer Park, Topaz Park and on Pandora Avenue into safe, temporary accommodations with wraparound supports to protect their health and safety in the overlapping COVID-19 and overdose crises.
- Since March 2020, the Province, in partnership with BC Housing and local municipalities, has worked to secure and operate 686 hotel and community centre accommodations in Vancouver and 324 hotel spaces in Victoria. The Province is focused on reducing the immediate health and safety risks to people living and working in these densely populated encampments, as well as those in the neighbouring communities.
- This transition is supported by an order under the Emergency Program Act under the provincial state of emergency issued by Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, as part of the Province's all-of-government response to COVID-19. The order sets May 9, 2020, as the deadline to transition people out of the encampments.

### More support for family caregivers

- As part of British Columbia's emergency COVID-19 response plan, the Province [announced yesterday](#) that it is doubling this year's funding for Family Caregivers of British Columbia to \$1 million, helping support both caregivers and seniors.
- Family Caregivers of B.C. is a not-for-profit organization that supports people who are caring for elderly loved ones, family or friends. With a network of local agencies throughout B.C., Family Caregivers will increase the capacity of its toll-free helpline with longer hours and offer a number of virtual connections related to emotional supports and health-care navigation.
- Seniors and people who are caring for elderly loved ones, family or friends in need of supports can call 211 or 1-877-520-3267.

### Virtual opportunities for LGBTQ2S+ students to connect

- Students from the LGBTQ2S+ community, who may be feeling vulnerable and disconnected from their peers and schools, now have more virtual opportunities to connect with each other during the COVID-19 pandemic thanks to new provincial supports [announced on April 26](#).
- For the first time, B.C.'s Gay-Straight or Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) meet-ups will be held virtually rather than in person, where students can join their friends online or over the phone.
- The new approach and resources to be provided are informed by consultation with educators from 40 school districts, 14 independent schools and two First Nations, who recently took part in a webinar to learn ways to protect students' privacy and safety while holding virtual GSA meet-ups. Virtual GSAs can provide a comfortable, supportive forum for students to share education information, or discuss LGBTQ2S+ issues, movies or books, and activities like playing networked video games or creating stuck-at-home music playlists.
- These at-home materials complement the recent Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions announcement of \$5 million to expand existing mental-health programs and launch new services to support British Columbians during the pandemic.

### New location for PHSA COVID-19 Collection Site at the C&W campus, effective April 29

- Effective Wednesday, April 29, the PHSA COVID-19 Collection Site at the C&W Oak Street campus is moving to the 1982 building in the 1A clinical space near Entrance 17, as noted in the [campus map](#).
- The new location is closest to the Oak Street entrance and some reserved parking spots near Entrance 17 will be available if you are getting tested.
- Call to pre-register: 604-875-2154. It is open 0800 to 1600 hours.
- Open to health care workers (all health authority employees and physicians, community GPs, and health care workers from affiliated sites and services such as hospice, First Nations health services, etc.)

## Join us at Tuesday's all-staff town hall

- Join PHSA's CEO and president Benoit Morin at our next virtual town hall for COVID-19: **Tuesday, April 28, 2020 from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.**
- In addition to Benoit's CEO address, we'll share the latest HR and Supply Chain 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/d8cd591acf184a4b887c4b0e20b31eab1d>  
**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.

## Update on communication frequency for bulletins

- Thank you to more than 1,200 of you who answered the recent survey about the COVID-19 communication you're receiving through PHSA. We're taking time to consider your thoughtful comments and will soon share back what we've learned – and how we plan to adjust accordingly.
- In the meantime, however, we are acting on one of the early findings: While most of you appreciate the communication frequency, some of you feel that you are starting to receive too much information.
- In response to that, we will be adjusting the frequency of the COVID-19 email bulletins to align with the PHSA Emergency Operations Centre schedule, which this week shifted to Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, pending any urgent, time-sensitive updates.

## 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](mailto:phsacomm@phsa.ca).
- Send in your questions via [Slido.com](https://www.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](#).