



Critical COVID-19 News

Information for employees, medical staff, paramedics and contractors

March 20 at 6:20 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

We are all part of the global effort to fight the spread of COVID-19. Across PHSA, everyone's role – whether they provide direct patient care or they are in a supporting role – is vital.

We have PHSA team members across the entire province working to support and care for fellow citizens under very difficult circumstances. We continue to extend our sincere, heartfelt gratitude for your ongoing efforts.

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

Highlights:

Breaking news from government:

1. **Domestic production of essential medical supplies**
2. **Bars, restaurants and social distancing**
3. **Child care update**

Other important updates:

4. **New COVID-19 resource line from Workplace Health**
5. **Coding and approving invoices by email**
6. **World Health Organization direction on ibuprofen/Advil**
7. **Change to hours of staff testing site at C&W**
8. **Labelling sample requisitions for health care workers**

Domestic production of essential medical supplies

- Today, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau [announced a plan](#) to mobilize industry to fight COVID-19 and scale-up domestic production of essential medical supplies.
- The initiative is designed to help existing manufacturers of crucial items including masks and hand sanitizer ramp-up production, and for others to shift production from non-medical items, to the medical supplies that are most in need.

- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also gave a shout out on Twitter to BCCDC today, encouraging people to follow [@CDCofBC](#) for the latest information on COVID-19.

Bars, restaurants and social distancing

- Today, the [Provincial Health Officer \(PHO\) announced](#) that, given the challenges social distancing presents for restaurants, effective immediately, all dine-in food services are prohibited. Restaurants must move to delivery or take-out options only, or close.
- The Vancouver Park Board will also be closing its playgrounds across the city, effectively immediately, in an effort to minimize public gatherings and the potential of risk to the community.
- While some of PHSA's major clinical sites are in Vancouver, we recognize many of our employees are outside the city and around the province. We encourage you to watch for updates from your local municipalities.
- PHO Dr. Bonnie Henry also states that, while spending time outdoors is important, people still need to stay away from groups in any environment to prevent bringing the virus into their homes.

Child care update

- [The B.C. government announced](#) today it is taking steps to support the child care sector while ensuring parents who must work during the COVID-19 pandemic continue to have access to child care, with new funding for providers.
- The PHO has advised that all parents who can, should care for their children at home. She also recognized that while some centres may close, child care services can and must be provided in a safe manner for those families whose parents work in critical roles.
- More information about what this will mean for health care workers is forthcoming.

New COVID-19 resource line from Workplace Health

- We appreciate that many of our employees and medical staff have ongoing questions and are asking for more support from Workplace Health.
- We have established a new PHSA COVID-19 resource line – staffed by nurses – for all PHSA employees and physicians to address workplace health-related calls regarding COVID-19 matters.
- This resource line will:
 - support workplace health related calls from employees and medical staff
 - triage calls and provide direction to various resources available
 - work closely with our infection control teams
- The resource line is: 1-833-875-2155 (toll free) or 604-875-2155.
- The operational hours are currently set to be 7 days per week from 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

World Health Organization statement on Advil/ibuprofen

- Earlier this week, there was information circulating about concerns regarding the use of Advil/ibuprofen for COVID-19 patients.
- While the evidence was being reviewed, we suggested that – since there are alternatives to manage fever, such as acetaminophen – it was prudent to use those.

- However, yesterday, WHO issued a statement clarifying its position and stating there is no evidence that the use of anti-inflammatories, like Advil or ibuprofen, has any detrimental effect on people who have COVID-19.

Change to hours of staff testing site at C&W

- The staff testing site at C&W has changed its hours of operation to be from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., 7 days per week.
- It is located [beside Entrance 77](#) on the C&W campus, room E200 in Shaughnessy.
- Information on the process and testing for health care workers [can be viewed on our website](#).

Labelling sample requisitions for health care workers

- We've made testing more easily available to health care workers and have a 24-hour turnaround on health care worker test results. Our labs are increasing their capacity by extending hours and ensuring the processes are as efficient as possible.
- Provincial testing guidance for COVID-19 now includes an identified strategy to cover health care workers (HCW) who are symptomatic, are part of an investigation of a cluster or outbreak or who have known exposure to a positive case.
- When collecting specimens, label sample requisitions and swabs with the appropriate information identifying "HCW." This will aid prioritization within the testing laboratory.
- Read the [new guidance for testing health care workers](#).

Coding and approving invoices by email

- As an interim measure to support users/departments impacted by the COVID-19 situation with staff working remotely, Accounts Payable will accept coded and approved invoices submitted via email by the appropriate Financial Signing Officer authorized to approve the invoice.
- Please contact your designated Business Planner for instructions. Users should also contact their designated Business Planner to coordinate accruals for invoices not submitted by established deadlines.
- Note that the year-end deadlines for submission of invoices to Accounts Payable remains unchanged at March 20, 2020.
- Any invoices booked for accruals must not be sent to Accounts Payable until after April 6 to avoid duplication of accruals.
- This revised process is temporary and will not continue past the COVID-19 crisis.

Thank you for your continued dedication

The service that each and every one of you offers for our patients and families – and the essential support you provide to our 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.

- Continue to 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.
- Continue to check the [BCCDC's website](#) as a trusted source of information.
- We have opened up a [new staff COVID-19 section on phsa.ca](#) where employees can access the same information that is [posted on POD](#), but when off the network. BCEHS alerts and updates are on 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](#).