



Critical COVID-19 News

Information for employees, medical staff, paramedics and contractors

March 27 at 7:15 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

As we enter into the weekend, we hope you can take a moment to pause and reflect on the incredible contributions that you and your teammates have made this week in the fight against COVID-19. By now, you've probably heard many people say this: it's a marathon, not a sprint. We'll continue to work together and overcome the new challenges that come our way.

Each and every one of you is making a difference. We are so grateful that you have made the decision to serve in health care, and to serve the province of British Columbia. Thank you.

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

Highlights:

Breaking news from the provincial government:

- 1. Update on child care**
- 2. PHO briefing on COVID-19 modelling and projections**

Other important updates:

1. PPE update
2. Clarity on PHO single site order

Update on child care

- This afternoon, the B.C. government [provided an update on child care](#). Government is encouraging all child care facilities that remain open to prioritize any available spaces for children of essential service workers – specifically prioritizing placements for children whose parents work in direct-to-public health services, such as those **individuals delivering patient care in hospitals and emergency response**.
- For the week of March 30, if there are **urgent situations where frontline health care workers** require care for their children, the B.C. government is asking those parents to take the following steps based on the age of their children:
 - **School-aged children (K-6)**: Contact your school principals (public and independent) as soon as possible to determine how best to meet the need for urgent child care beginning the week of March 30th. Principals will be available over the weekend for this purpose.
 - **Children aged 0-5 (Pre K)**: Contact child care providers that operate on school grounds to see if they have capacity, or call their local Childcare Resource and Referral Centre and they will work to match frontline health care workers with a child care provider that have available space.
- The government's immediate focus is for critical need only, for those with no other childcare options for the week of March 30.
- For other health care employees, the government is currently building an online resource for all essential service workers that will support and match them with local child care providers beginning next week.
- School districts and independent school authorities are also working on longer-term plans to provide child care and supports for school-aged children of essential service workers, with a priority focus on Health and Health Services, Social Services, Law Enforcement, First Responders, and Emergency Response. More information on these plans will be available by April 3.
- Thank you to all PHSA employees who took yesterday's survey on child care needs – this helped us to provide important information to the B.C. government. We will continue to keep you posted as information becomes available.

PHO briefing on COVID-19 modelling and projections

- Today, the PHO and Ministry of Health [released modelling work](#) that has been done to anticipate the number of cases in the province and prepare hospitals to care for critical and acute patients.

- This work was supported by PHSA teams, including the BCCDC and the Provincial Critical Care Working Group.

Clarity on PHO single site order

- On March 26, the PHO issued an order to limit staff movement between long-term care facilities.
- Since the risk differs from facility to facility, and in different regions of the province, the regional medical health officers will determine where steps need to be taken to reduce the risk arising from the movement of staff between facilities.
- The order does not apply to dietitians, laboratory technicians, nurse practitioners, paramedics, pharmacists, physicians, or any other class of worker/care provider who are exempted by the medical health officer and who provide **visiting** services at a facility.
- As this rolls out to long-term care facilities across the other health authorities, there may be an impact to PHSA casual employees who also work in long-term care facilities.
- We will share more information on further impact to PHSA as it becomes available.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) update

- [Yesterday's bulletin](#) (March 26) referenced the pending release of a new PPE allocation framework from the Ministry of Health.
- The primary motivation behind the creation of this framework is to ensure best practice Infection Control and Prevention (IPAC) practices while ensuring PPE is preserved and used where it is most needed and clinically appropriate.
- This PPE allocation framework required further clarification with ministry leaders, PICNET and the other health authorities.
- Today, IPAC medical leads, along with clinical site leaders, have been working to develop clinical site-specific practice guidelines based on the provincial framework. The engagement with the program leads has been of great value to ensure patient population specifics, as well as infrastructure specifics, are taken into account.
- We expect these practice guidelines to be completed over the next 24 – 48 hours and site leaders will distribute them to staff when available. Continue to watch for updates in the [PPE section of our website](#). Additionally these guidelines will be posted to the program websites for clinicians and staff to access.
- We would like to thank all our leaders and staff involved for their work on this. We know their efforts to make this PPE guidance more site-specific will ease our ability to use the

provincial framework in a meaningful way that ensures the ongoing safety of all of our employees, physicians, paramedics and patients.

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 PHSA News](#) and 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](#).