



# Critical COVID-19 News

Information for medical staff

**March 28 at 6:10 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*

Health care is a 24/7 operation. We trust that many PHSA team members are taking well-deserved time to rest and be with their families over the weekend. We also want to recognize that many teams are working around-the-clock shifts to ensure the continuation of our services, supports and patient care. Whether you're working in one of our clinical programs across the province or in a role providing behind-the-scenes support for our provincial networks and systems, **your contributions are making a difference.**

Thank you for your continued commitment to serving British Columbia. We will continue to keep you updated on the latest information, as it comes available.

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

## Highlights:

### Breaking news from government:

- 1. Federal government introduces transportation measures**
- 2. B.C. government update and news conference schedule for next week**

## Other important updates:

- 1. Time sensitive: Single-site staffing registration due tomorrow**
- 2. How data and analytics make for better decisions**
- 3. Reminder: Child care needs for the week of March 30**

### Federal government introduces transportation measures

- The Government of Canada announced today that it is introducing new domestic

transportation measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spreading from travelling within Canada.

- Among other measures listed in the [government's news release](#):
  - all air operators must conduct a health check of travellers before they board a flight within Canada or departing from Canada and refuse boarding to a passenger that presents COVID-19 symptoms.
  - intercity passenger rail companies must do a health check to screen passengers for COVID-19 symptoms before they board a train and must refuse boarding to a passenger that presents COVID-19 symptoms. These measures do not apply to commuter trains.

### **B.C. government update and news conference schedule for next week**

- Today, B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer (PHO) Dr. Bonnie Henry, and Minister of Health, Adrian Dix, provided a [general update](#) on the cases in B.C. and outlined the anticipated news conference schedule for the coming week:
  - **March 30:** 1:30 p.m.
  - **March 31 – April 3:** 3 p.m.
- The news conferences can be viewed on the [B.C. government's Facebook](#) or through B.C. media sites (like [CBC News](#) or [Global News BC](#)). If you are on the PHSA network, please continue to be mindful of your network use so we can ensure continuity for essential business and clinical services.

### **Time sensitive: Single-site staffing registration due tomorrow**

- Many PHSA employees and leaders have received communication from their union, other health authorities and/or the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) regarding single-site staffing in relation to COVID-19.
- The communications contain an urgent deadline for health care workers with jobs at more than one site to register their preferred location of work as the province moves towards single-site staffing to help contain COVID-19 spread.
- **While physicians are exempt from having to register, we want you to be aware of the communication that has gone out to all PHSA staff.**
- There are many employees exempt from this order, which comes to all health authorities at the direction of the PHO, so we are encouraging everyone to read the detailed advice in the [Important COVID-19 Bulletin](#) that was issued at 4:15 p.m. today and, if applicable, [register their site preference on the BC Health Staffing website](#) by **5 p.m. on Sunday, March 29, 2020.**
- A couple of important notes for PHSA audiences: again, we can confirm that all physicians are exempt from this order; paramedics are also exempt, but paramedics who are also employed in health care worker roles with regional health authorities must register.
- We regret the urgency of this request and acknowledge the impact it has on all of our people, at all levels of the organization.
- You are doing outstanding work under extraordinary circumstances and we are grateful for your support in assisting with this PHO request, which is intended to help ensure the safety of most vulnerable patients we serve province-wide.

### **How data and analytics make for better decisions**

- During yesterday's news conference, PHO Dr. Bonnie Henry and Health Minister

Adrian Dix presented some truly thoughtful [modelling work](#) that is informing our provincial response to COVID-19. We encourage you to check it out – whether you approach it as an engaged health care worker or as a curious member of the public, this is important and interesting information!

- Although what was presented includes models (and not predictions), the information helps to guide what our health care system must ready itself for with respect to critical care and acute care for patients with COVID-19.
- [The presentation](#) demonstrates that the need for critical care and acute care services varies significantly depending on how much we as a population “bend the curve” with public health measures, including a continued, vigilant focus on physical distancing.
- The people leading this work often exist behind-the-scenes, but what they do truly makes for better decisions that impact all British Columbians. With this in mind, we offer enormous thanks to PHSA’s hard-working teams in Data Analytics Reporting and Evaluation (DARE) and the BCCDC.

### **Reminder: Child care needs for the week of March 30**

- As noted in our Friday bulletin, the B.C. 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 [Child Care 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 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](mailto:phsacomm@phsa.ca).
- Continue to send in your questions via [Slido.com](https://www.slido.com) using the event code **#PHSAMedicalStaff**. '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](#).