



# Critical COVID-19 News

Information for medical staff

**April 8 at 7:50 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*

Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer (PHO), continues to say during her daily press conferences: **“Be kind, be calm and be safe.”**

This advice applies to us as citizens and as health care professionals, as COVID-19 continues to impact our lives both personally and professionally. And while we are cautiously optimistic that our efforts in B.C. are making a difference and helping us to start 'bending the curve,' we must continue our vigilance and, as Dr. Henry says, “keep our firewall strong.”

We remain grateful for your continued dedication and the ongoing care, compassion and support that you show – every day – to your colleagues, clients, patients and families.

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

## **Highlights:**

### **Breaking news from the provincial government:**

- 1. Requirement for international travellers to provide self-isolation plan**
- 2. Province provides emergency fund for children with special needs**
- 3. BC Parks closed**

### **Other important updates:**

- 4. New testing guidelines**
- 5. Town hall for PHSA staff tomorrow**
- 6. Virtual Symposium highlights COVID-19 research**

### **Requirement for international travellers to provide self-isolation plan**

- B.C. Premier John Horgan [announced today](#) that the B.C. government is introducing new measures to make sure British Columbians returning home from international destinations have the support they need to self-isolate and keep their communities safe from COVID-19.

- The measures, which include a new legal requirement to provide a self-isolation plan, support the provincial health officer's travel orders and reinforce the federal emergency order under the Quarantine Act requiring people entering Canada to self-isolate for 14 days.
- Effective today, international travellers (including from the United States) coming to the province are required to provide a self-isolation plan before or upon arrival to B.C., regardless of their point of entry to Canada. This document, which can be submitted online or completed in person on arrival, must show that returning travellers have supports in place to safely self-isolate for 14 days.

### Province provides emergency fund for children with special needs

- The [B.C. government announced today](#) it is providing a new Emergency Relief Support Fund and has added service flexibility for parents of children with special needs to help during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The fund will provide a direct payment of \$225 per month to eligible families over the next three months (to June 30, 2020).
- Using a needs-based approach, the emergency funding will support 50% more of the eligible families that are currently awaiting services. This payment can be used to purchase supports that help alleviate stress.

### BC Parks closed

- Today, [BC Parks announced](#) they are closing all provincial parks in response to the widespread call for increased action to address COVID-19.
- The closure responds to both the federal and provincial directives that people should stay close to home to reduce COVID-19 transmission risk.
- This temporary measure means people should not be going to provincial parks until further notice.

### New testing guidelines

- New testing guidelines have been [posted on the BCCDC's website](#). The guidelines for testing *health care workers* have not changed.
- Under the new testing guidelines, broadly, testing for COVID-19 is recommended for groups that are more vulnerable to complications due to COVID-19 and people who care for these vulnerable people.
- Also, under the new guidelines, any physician can order a test for COVID-19 based on their clinical judgment.
- For some individuals and populations, the results of a COVID-19 test will change clinical or public health management. COVID-19 testing recommendations are focused on highlighting these individuals and populations.
- Patients who are asymptomatic should not be tested for COVID-19.
- Information on testing for health care workers and a list of the staff collection sites [can be found on our website](#).

### Tomorrow's all-staff town hall

- Our next virtual town hall for PHSA staff is tomorrow, **Thursday, April 9, 2020**, from **10:30 – 11:30 a.m.**
- Medical staff are also welcome to join. 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/9af553c3224841b8816fdc2be0bb3a7c1d>

**We are currently experiencing certain browser challenges for the webcast, so please use Internet Explorer.**

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.

- Our next **medical staff** town hall will be on **Wednesday, April 15 at 7 a.m.**

### Virtual Symposium highlights COVID-19 research

- On Thursday, April 9, from 1:30-4 p.m., BCCDC and the University of British Columbia (UBC) will co-host a Virtual BC COVID-19 Symposium aimed at bringing together individuals actively involved or interested in COVID-19 research to facilitate collaboration and share collective insights about this new disease.
- Opening remarks will come from PHO Dr. Bonnie Henry, Dr. Robert McMaster, Interim Executive Associate Dean of Research at UBC, and Dr. David Patrick, Director of Research and Medical Epidemiology Lead for AMR, BCCDC.
- While this symposium is open to all with a professional interest in COVID-19, content will be targeted to those directly involved in clinical care and research. Capacity is limited; participation will be capped at approximately 500 guests.
- To see the full symposium program and to register on the Zoom event platform, [visit this website](#).

### 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](#) 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.
  - 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](#).