

April 9, 2020 [Employee updates Across PHS, BC Cancer, BC Centre for Disease Control, BC Mental Health & Substance Use Services, BC Children's and BC Women's](#)

## Highlights from today's town hall

### [DAWKINS, LAURIE \[PHSA\]](#)

Vice President, Communications & Stakeholder Engagement



Thank you for your continued participation in our virtual town halls. With each day, the COVID-19 pandemic brings new challenges and new information, and we appreciate your efforts to stay up-to-date and vigilant in these unprecedented circumstances. Thank you for your dedication – you are all making a significant difference.

This morning's town hall can be [viewed here](#) – you don't need to be on the network to watch. Below, you will find summaries of hot topics from our leaders as well as time stamps for each of the questions answered during the town hall. You can always find the latest bulletins and town hall recordings on our external website at [www.phsa.ca/covid19staff](http://www.phsa.ca/covid19staff).

[WATCH THE WEBCAST NOW](#)

## Hot topics

### Benoit Morin, President and CEO

- I hope you, your family and friends are all safe and well. I hope you are calm and focused.
- B.C. is still tracking very well.
- I spoke about facts last week. Facts continue to help us stay calm and focused. It's important to note where the facts are coming from.
- There are a number of sources that are reliable – the BCCDC website, for example, and Dr. Bonnie Henry's daily news conference.
- On this long weekend, it's important to maintain social distancing and keep up with the public health measures put in place. We can feel hopeful, but we need to remain vigilant. If we lower our vigilance, the facts may tell us in the next ten days that the story has changed.
- This weekend, try to rest, if possible. Take some time to think about everything we've been going through.
- Cut through the noise and find some inner peace with this exercise I often use myself. Identify one thing that someone else has done that made you feel wonderful – it can be small or big. Share it with the person and tell them how it made you feel.
- Do the same thing with yourself. What have you done during the crisis that makes you proud, involved and meaningful? Thank yourself. You are doing amazing work.

### Dr. Réka Gustafson, VP, Public Health and Wellness

- I started about nine weeks ago and now everyone in this room is familiar. Thank you for making me feel welcome.
- B.C. is doing very well compared to other provinces in Canada and other countries.
- We are starting to see a very encouraging and flattening curve.
- As a result of this, we are going to start doing some things differently.
- This does not include social distancing and other restrictions - we must maintain this so we can start implementing other things, such as changing how we test for COVID-19.
- We introduced new testing guidelines in B.C. yesterday. Up until now, testing only focused on vulnerable populations.
- We have expanded testing capacity and access to testing so we can try to diagnose, isolate and contact trace cases of COVID-19.
- Every physician or nurse practitioner can order a test if they have concerns about their patient.
- There are no restrictions on testing, though testing in early stages or those with only mild symptoms is still not effective.
- We continue to recommend testing in people with fever and cough.
- We hope this expansion of testing will continue to drive transmission down.
- With the Quarantine Act now in place, all returning travellers to B.C. will need to self-isolate for 14 days. They will be given specific instructions on how to do so.
- With the upcoming long weekend, and the change in weather yesterday, we can start to be cautiously hopeful.
- Take a moment to reflect on the incredible work that's been done. Thank you for all that you do.

Jaci Edgeworth, VP, People Services

Single site order

- The Provincial Health Office has issued single site order, which supersedes other orders issued by the regional health authorities.
- This order is meant to protect vulnerable populations such as the elderly and mental health patients and limit movement between facilities.
- There are exclusions – this order does not apply to a number of professions – watch for more information in our daily bulletin.
- A framework has been developed in partnership with other health authorities and in the coming days we will assign the single site order to individuals impacted.

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- The BC Centre for Disease Control and Ministry of Health issued a PPE bulletin this morning, focusing on the safety of health care workers and diligent use of supplies.
- The bulletin covers procurement of safe and effective PPE as well as the reprocessing of N95 respirators.
- Health authorities will start collecting all used N95s that are not soiled for potential re-use. These will be inspected, assessed and stockpiled and only used when new N95s are not available.

### The long weekend

We hope you enjoy the weekend and take some time to relax and recharge, if possible. For those who will be working, collective agreements will apply in terms of hours and pay, and excluded staff can refer to the overtime and extraordinary pay guidelines.

### Answering your Slido questions

Remember to visit our Slido question page which will remain open under the event code #PHSATownHall. 'Like' questions that are similar to yours to help us prioritize for future town halls.

Open the webcast recording and skip to the time stamps listed below for specific questions and answers:

## Public health & infection control-related questions

- What if you have a person of high risk living in your household? i.e. an elderly parent or a child with asthma, etc. What are our options as an employee? 24:49
- Is there more than one strain of COVID-19? Is the virus deviating? 27:38
- Could COVID be spread from your shoes? We wear the same shoes all day. Shouldn't health care workers be wearing a change of shoes or leaving shoes at work? Same with hospital scrubs? 38:46
- Based on the April 2 Town Hall, 92% of the previous week's cases in BC are through community transmission. What considerations is BC putting towards contact tracing methods? How valuable would information gathered from potential techniques be for short term strategy as well as long term monitoring? 50:02
- If wearing a non-medical mask protects those around you, wouldn't it make sense to have everyone wear a mask so that we are all protecting each other? Why not educate everyone on how to properly put on and take off a mask to reduce risk of contaminating yourself? 41:26
- Can you speak to the work being done to develop a vaccine? 53:03
- A 40-year-old patient [note: it was corrected in the room this particular patient was 47] with COVID-19 died at home over the weekend. Why would a patient in respiratory distress not have been hospitalized? 36:07
- What are the standards of the masks used by our health care workers? I learned that all HAs are either using priMED PrimaGard Fluid Resistant Procedure Face Mask (PM-PG4-1201, ATSM Level 1) or Cardinal ASTM Level 1 Surgical Mask (AT71035). WHO recommends ATSM Level 2. What's the risk mitigation? 29:40

- IMITS staff going onsite have not been given direction on what they need to do to be safe - do we need masks, disinfectant for working on Workstations On Wheels (WOWs) and pcs? Are we at risk for entering clinical areas to fix devices? 57:41
- Should we be tracking the number of health care workers with COVID-19? 56:10

### HR-related questions

- I have had a lot of union staff cancelling their vacations. This will lead to issues down the road once we are back to providing outpatient services. What is the PHSA/C&W policy regarding vacations during the COVID-19 crisis. Will staff be allowed to carry over vacation into next year? 28:34
- When and how does a COVID-19 exposure at work become a WorkSafeBC issue? How would workers be able to confirm exposure happened at work if the claim is denied? 46:14
- Will non-contract extended benefits be looked at for counselling services? (covered amount is \$500 and a psychologist is \$150-\$200 per session). EFAP is limited to only six sessions per year. Staff may not be comfortable talking to a peer for support. 47:50
- For employees who have to work from home for a few more weeks, what options are there for funding to cover needed items not available? E.g. needing a laptop or monitor, increased internet bills, etc? 44:46
- My site's vacation policy allows for two staff to be off at one time in our department. I've asked to change a vacation day for a rescheduled event (due to covid) but been denied as there is already 2 staff off. How can we reschedule if there is no available dates? Will policies change to allow flexibility? 54:38
- There seems to be a perception among middle management that they need to develop equitable frameworks for deciding who gets to work from home before that process can start. If we wait until everyone can be accommodated it will be too late. Isn't speed is better than perfection in this case? 32:50

## Business continuity-related questions

- What is the priority of CST go-live preparation? We still have scheduled meetings and preparations requested, while trying to maintain full patient care. 34:22

You can view the 'live' questions at any time by visiting: [Slido.com/phsatownhall](https://Slido.com/phsatownhall).