

July 23, 2020 [Projects](#) [Across PHSA](#) , [BC Cancer](#)

One year later: Victoria PET/CT supports residents on Vancouver Island and across B.C.

[VISSCHER, ANDREA \[BCCANCER\]](#)

Communications Officer



Pictured from left to right: Dr. Kim Nguyen Chi, vice president & chief medical officer, BC Cancer, Sarah Roth, president & CEO, BC Cancer Foundation, The Honourable John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia.

BC Cancer opened its third publicly funded PET/CT scanner, and first outside Vancouver, in Victoria on July 22, 2019. The opening marked the beginning of the provincial PET/CT expansion plan which supports current and future patients in the region access an enhanced component of cancer care. Prior to opening, nearly 1,900 Island residents had to travel to Vancouver to receive their scans. Helen is a Vancouver Island resident who received one of those scans.

“I am so grateful that I did not have to travel to Vancouver to receive my PET scan,” says Helen.

“Traveling when you are ill is difficult and more so amid the current COVID pandemic. Just thinking about going to Vancouver made me anxious and nauseous. The technologists in Victoria are fantastic – calm and friendly. I felt so comfortable that I fell asleep before my scan time!”

Since opening, 2,200 patients have received their PET/CT scan at BC Cancer - Victoria. Scanning capacity increased earlier this year after Helijet was approved to transport the radioactive tracer (FDG), which is produced at a special facility in Vancouver, needed to complete the scans. Because of faster transport, the PET/CT unit can scan up to 16 people per day – approximately 20 more per week than if the unit was sent by ground transport.



“Having the PET/CT scanner in Victoria is a huge ‘health care win’ for the Vancouver Island community,” says Jenn Forer, chief PET/CT technologist for BC Cancer – Victoria. “Every week we hear about the improvement this scanner has made in the lives of our patients and their support systems. Many had to travel long distances, brave stressful traffic, or even stay overnight in Vancouver to have their PET/CT scan. You can sense the relief they feel now that their many appointments can be completed in a single visit.”

A PET/CT scanner combines two different types of scans in one. It provides information on organ and tissue function (PET) and anatomical structure (CT), which means it can uncover the full extent of disease, aid in the accurate planning of radiation therapy, and determine the effectiveness of treatment by helping clinicians assess whether tumours have shrunk, grown, or spread to other parts of the body or have been eliminated.

The [BC Cancer Foundation](#) helped raise funds for the new scanner with support from over 3,500 Vancouver Island donors including Nanaimo resident and former patient Gordon Heys and long-standing supporter Thrifty Foods.

To learn more about the PET/CT program, please visit the [BC Cancer Functional Imaging](#) page.

July 23, 2020 Innovation & Research Across PHSA

COVID-19 examined by investigators across the Oak Street campus

CHERYL.ROSSI

A new virus necessitates new knowledge and that's precisely why investigators at the three research institutes at the Oak Street campus sprang into action in March 2020. Amid a rapidly changing reality and the curtailment of research activities across the campus, they were keen to protect the vulnerable populations we care for from COVID-19, improve treatment for this new virus and ensure specialized supports are in place to help our patients and their families during this and future pandemics. Investigators at BC Children's Hospital Research Institute (BCCHR), Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI) and BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services Research Institute (BCMHSUSRI) have developed studies that examine everything from how the pandemic is affecting the rate of emergency room visits, the mental health of children and families to pregnancy and childbirth.

Emergency department visits (BCCHR)

[Dr. Ran D. Goldman](#) is studying how many children and youth have been visiting BC Children's Emergency Department (ED) to see whether the rate of visits has changed compared to the previous year. Dr. Goldman's team of investigators at BC Children's Research Institute wants to make sure families of children who are seriously ill are seeking the emergency medical care they need. Investigators will examine data related to the number of children admitted, where each child hails from and their level of need for admission. Their findings are to be used to help public health officials in British Columbia reassure parents about the safety of accessing the ED and ensure that BC Children's is continuing to provide vital services to kids across the province and that children receive timely medical care.



Mental health (BCMHSUSRI)

Mental health (BCMHSUSRI)

The mental health of children and families is a key concern for [Dr. S. Evelyn Stewart](#) of BCMHSUSRI. Dr. Stewart, director of research for child and adolescent psychiatry at BC Children's, suspects that families who were already living with a child's physical or mental illness when COVID hit are particularly at high risk for poor mental health outcomes. Dr. Stewart is leading a new study to assess the mental health needs of and supports received by 50,000 vulnerable and general population families across Canada. She and her team want to ensure children's mental health concerns are addressed and to optimize online anxiety management tools in preparation for future outbreaks and pandemics.



Pregnancy (WHRI)

Questions about the impacts of COVID-19 on pregnancy and childbirth have been top of mind for many families throughout the pandemic. WHRI investigators [Dr. Deborah Money](#), [Dr. Julie vanSchalkwyk](#) and [Dr. Chelsea Elwood](#) joined forces to mobilize a [national surveillance study](#) to address the significant lack of data on COVID-19 and pregnancy. Together, this network will inform the development of evidence-based recommendations for maternity and pediatric care, as well as contribute data to international collaborations to enable a better understanding of COVID-19 and pregnancy globally.



Keeping connected

It wasn't just investigators that pivoted at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, but administrators, too. These were efforts driven by the research community to spur innovation and discovery, nurture collaboration and to assist trainees.

To support new COVID-19 research and foster alliances, the WHRI and BCCHR created a registry of COVID-19 projects. To enable knowledge sharing and new collaborations, BCCHR launched an internal COVID-19 virtual seminar series. WHRI also moved education and knowledge translation activities, such as BC Women's Research Rounds and workshops, online.

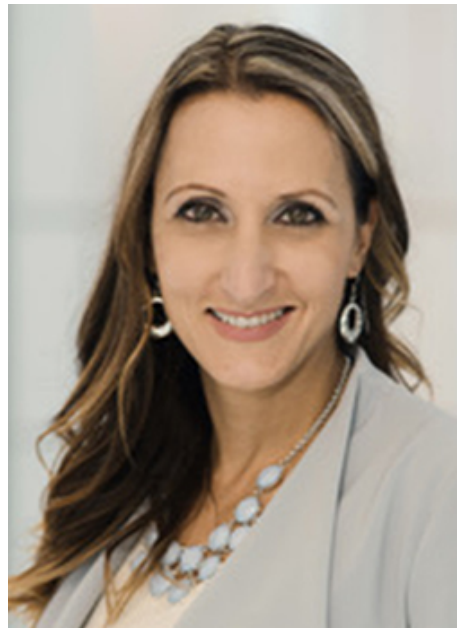
The WHRI created a COVID-19 Resource Hub, which is updated in real-time to provide clinicians, researchers, community partners, patients and decision-makers and partners with a centralized location for information pertaining to research curtailment, research resumption, ethics and funding opportunities.

Trainees

No one wanted to see trainees flounder when work shifted from being located at the institutes to being from home. The WHRI leaders [Dr. Angela Kaida](#) and [Dr. Lori Brotto](#) quickly mobilized a survey to understand the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 on women's health research trainees. The WHRI reported that 96 per cent of the 119 respondents were worried about the overall impact of COVID-19 on their physical, mental and professional well-being. During the time two weeks prior to completing the survey, 37 per cent of trainees reported they were finding it challenging to cope. Slightly more than three-quarters of trainees said they were somewhat, very, or extremely concerned they will not be able to present at conferences that have been delayed or postponed. Over the coming weeks, the WHRI will share these and more comprehensive findings with the trainee community, including women's health research stakeholders.



To continue to train the investigators of tomorrow, BCCHR introduced a virtual version of the 2020 Summer Student Research Program. Through this program, 82 undergraduate and medical students are gaining valuable experience with BCCHR, WHRI and BCMHSUSRI investigators and making important contributions to research. Thanks to additional support from the BC Children's Hospital Foundation, additional students will be able to further COVID-19-related research this summer.



Quarantine couldn't curb the passion of trainees, investigators and those who support them from hunting for answers that could quash the pandemic and provide better health-care to those in need.

Links to two of the media stories about the COVID-19 and pregnancy study:

[Global News Morning BC](#)
[CBC](#)

July 23, 2020 [Health & Wellness](#) [Across PHSA](#)

Let's boost resilience and combat burnout with self-care

GEORGE, KATHRYN [PHSA]

Manager, Psychological Health and Safety

When we are able to operate at our peak wellness, we are able to give our best to others. [Self-care](#) helps to manage stress, boost's [resilience](#) and replenishes our capacity to provide compassion and empathy. During times of high stress, routine can help us make healthy choices, and get through the day in a more balanced and positive way. Self-care helps to [combat burnout](#) in many ways, including maintaining a manageable work schedule, connecting with colleagues, taking vacations, and spending time with family and friends (even if it's virtual). The greatest and primary asset of helpers is the "self", and as such, it is up to helpers to take steps to [find ways](#) to refresh, rejuvenate and revitalize.

Renovating our self-care

Over the past few months, PHSA staff have gone above and beyond like never before to support British Columbians during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, we may not have been prioritizing our own self-care. We may have promised ourselves that when things settled down, we will get back to our routines. As we learn to co-exist with COVID-19, for many of us, our self-care will need to undergo a small renovation as priorities have shifted.

Taking an opportunity for [self-reflection](#) can help us to assess where we are currently with our [self-care strategies](#). Developing a self-care plan can be a very useful tool to show us where we want to go. Recommitting to a well-balanced and holistic plan will help us to get there.

Taking care of your WHOLE self

Holistic wellbeing requires a personal approach as it relates to what you do at work and outside of work to look after your entire self. Below are some different aspects to self-care that can help to create a roadmap that you may find useful:

- 1 Emotional
- 2 Spiritual
- 3 Physical
- 4 Mental
- 5 Social

[Having a written plan](#) can help us visualize how to integrate and balance our personal and professional life, in order to protect our whole self. What works for others, may not fit with your schedules and preferences, so it is best not to measure your self-care plans with others. That being said, it can be very helpful to share it with a person that you are comfortable with to help with areas that you may find to be more challenging or for accountability to help you stick with your plan.

Want to get started today? It's not too late to [join](#) the five days of self-care - register on LearningHub.

Leaders: want to support your team? Consider booking a Co-existing with Covid-19 Team session, facilitated by a Psychological Health and Safety leader to discuss and share self-care strategies both inside and outside the workplace by contacting psychhealthsafety@phsa.ca.

PHSA resources

Visit [PHSA's Supporting Our Workforce](#) page for articles, resources, and tools that provide psychosocial support during COVID-19.

Resilience at Work (R@W) workshop: Interested in learning how to maintain or boost your resilience during COVID-19? [Register on the LearningHub for Resilience in the Workplace – Co-Existing with COVID-19: What is your plan?](#) These 90 minute interactive Zoom sessions are facilitated by R@W accredited practitioners and offered either as an open forum (any PHSA employee can sign up), or for teams. Leaders can request sessions for their teams by contacting psychhealthsafety@phsa.ca.

Employee Psychosocial Check-In: Training for Leaders sessions: For managers, supervisors, and directors. [Sign up here](#) to join this 1.0 hour session and learn, step-by-step, how to provide a first-line response to staff who are experience psychological distress in the workplace.