

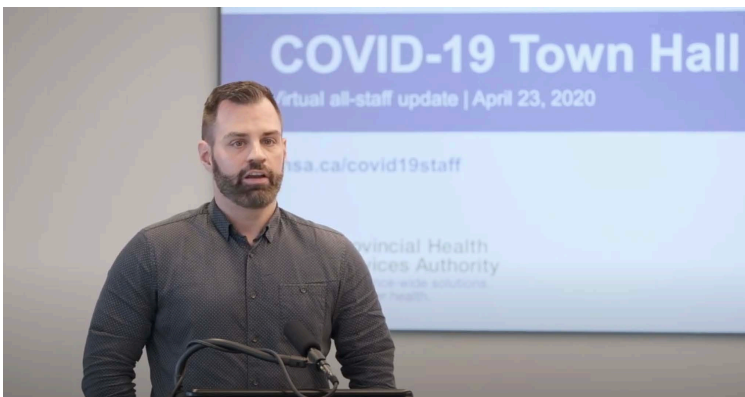


April 23, 2020

Highlights from the April 23 town hall

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We are at a crossroads right now with the COVID-19 pandemic, thinking simultaneously about the "new normal" after the recovery phase as well as maintaining the current safety and wellbeing of our workforce and patients in our care. We appreciate your diligence and dedication today, and all the thought you are putting into tomorrow and the future.

We are also thankful for your ongoing participation in our town halls - please take two minutes to [give us your feedback](#) on the town halls and other COVID-19 communication.

We are also thankful for your ongoing participation in our town halls - please take two minutes to give us your feedback on the town halls and other COVID-19 communication.

Please note the next town hall will be on Tuesday, April 28 and executive leaders including our president and CEO, Benoit Morin, will be giving updates then. There will be no town hall next Thursday, April 30 due to a previously scheduled PHSA board meeting. Thank you for your active participation!

PHSA News

Get the highlights of this morning's town hall in [this video](#), or [watch the full webcast](#) at any time. No POD connection is required for either one.

Below, you will find summaries of the leadership updates as well as time stamps for each of the questions answered during the town hall. Remember, you can always find the latest bulletins and town hall recordings on our external website at www.phsa.ca/covid19staff.

[WATCH THE FULL WEBCAST NOW](#)

Slido polls

Thanks to 366 of you who voted in two quick Slido polls at the start of the town hall.

We learned that those of you watching are very familiar with the town halls - 59 per cent have watched 5-10 town halls, while 32 per cent have watched all town halls!

We also asked about the topics you have the most questions about. The top three responses were:

HR-related policies or procedures (58 per cent)

About the COVID-19 virus (45 per cent)

Physical distancing in the workplace (35 per cent)

Hot topics

Public health update from Dr. Reka Gustafson, VP, Public Health and Wellness

I've been getting many questions about when is the peak of COVID-19 coming? I can confidently say that the peak has passed. The peak was late March in terms of cases, and in terms of hospitalizations, April 6.

The increases in cases we are seeing are largely driven by outbreaks in a specific location rather than community transmission.

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Right now we are moving from generalized population restrictions to case and contact-based interventions. We will be focusing on increasing testing and isolating every case to interrupt all chains of transmission in the community.

With increased testing there will be increased diagnoses.

Our current societal restrictions come at a huge cost, such as schools and businesses being closed. As we look to the next phase of our response, we are trying to figure out how to return to those things safely. When is it going to be past COVID-19? COVID-19 is something that will stay with us. It's something we will need to learn to live with, potentially for the next 18 months to two years, and this is a shift in thinking.

Dr. Henry has stressed that current restrictions with regards to social distancing are still in place. These measures are important, in addition to staying home if you have symptoms, no matter how mild.

Thank you for staying the course.

PPE reprocessing update from Dr. Troy Grennan, BC Centre for Disease Control

Although this hasn't been officially announced yet by the Ministry of Health, we are preparing for a move in the PPE allocation framework from stage 4 to stage 5.

The stages measure the supply of PPE that's available - the higher the number, the less supply there is. This applies only to certain elements of PPE and not PPE as a whole.

The type of PPE this is referring to is 1860 N95 masks.

Mitigation strategies are forthcoming and this includes reprocessing of N95 masks.

Across PHSA and other health authorities, active collection of N95 masks for reprocessing is already taking place. Reprocessed masks are dried and sterilized and enter supply chain to be reused.

Other strategies may include using masks beyond expiry date and using reusable masks.

Rest assured that the Infection Prevention and Control team at PHSA and PHSA as an organization would never make decisions about PPE that would compromise the safety of staff and patients. We would not prioritize safeguarding PPE over the safety of staff and patients. We are preparing for what's to come.

PHSA News

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 topics for future town halls.

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

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

Public health questions

Could you give us statistics: how many people died from flu and pneumonia last year (all cases) and how many people has died this year (all cases including COVID)? **25:18**

Medical journal report on 138 cases in Wuhan hospital noted that nosocomial transmission was 41%, including 41 health care workers. What are the stats for HCW transmission in BC? **27:04**

Does the 2 m physical distance we are supposed to maintain change depending on conditions? e.g. if it's windy outside, running, biking. **29:13**

Smartphone apps for contact tracing could improve the public health management of COVID-19 cases. Has our CTO looked into this and when will apps be available? **35:22**

How is a positive case confirmed and counted? Does a person have to be officially tested and confirmed positive for COVID-19 to be counted as a positive case or are people who are showing all of the symptoms counted as well (without being tested)? Is there a global standard for this? **32:16**

Will PHSA redeploy workers for more public health-related work (contact tracing, epidemiology)? Seems like only nurses and lab techs have been called to help. **42:45**

With 6000+ test capacity per day, why did BC conduct <1000 tests most days in past two weeks, according to the BCCDC dashboard? (The highest was Mar 16, with only 3500 tests done) **36:53**

Dr. Henry stated that essential workers are NOT exempt from quarantine after returning from vacation unless it would put staffing below essential level. Comment? **40:45**

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What will the criteria be for serology testing once that is rolled out? **38:38**

How are the unintended side effects of the pandemic measured in the long run? Mental illness from isolation, reduced screening/upstream health care. **30:31**

Is non-essential travel banned in BC? If yes, what is the rationale since the curve seems to be bending based on our current restrictions? Are there fines? **33:36**

Is COVID-19 similar to influenza where it's expected to "die out" in the summer but come back in the fall? **43:52**

If we need a certain amount of population to become immune, would it not be better to not have so much isolation going on? **48:26**

What will relaxing restrictions w/o reviving the outbreak look like? Potential second wave hits from COVID, are we sure we want to reopen schools/businesses? **49:15**

What is the minimum standard for COVID positive patients to be considered no longer at risk and resume treatments in an ambulatory care setting? **56:01**

Regarding contact tracing, what solutions are being considered to digitize methods, balancing privacy concerns as monitoring continues well into the future? **57:19**

Why is take-out food considered safe? I don't hear of any enhanced food safety guidelines in restaurants. **59:20**

What is the plan for flu season this winter when both flu and COVID will affect us? Assuming we won't have a vaccine by then. **53:32**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) questions

Do you foresee a recommendation similar to New York where they are mandating people wear masks while in public? **22:35**

At the April 7 town hall, we heard there are reusable N95 masks and we are purchasing some. Are there more details? Will attempts be made to ensure people get their own masks back as they have done in New York? **54:46**

Staff should not have to ask other staff members for permission to use the rationed PPE. What can be done to make masks for direct patient care available outside of patient rooms? **45:57**