

From: [Simons, Marsha \[CWBC\]](#)
Subject: WHRI COVID-19 Community Bulletin: Curtailing research activities – March 25, 2020
Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2020 3:00:22 PM

Sent on behalf of Dr. Lori Brotto, Executive Director, Women's Health Research Institute

The message below is based on the email sent on behalf of Dr. Wyeth Wasserman, BC Children's Hospital Research Institute (BCCHR) on March 25, 2020, with minor adaptations for WHRI membership.

Dear WHRI members,

As you will have read on [March 19, 2020, UBC announced that they are curtailing research activities](#) on their Vancouver and Okanagan campuses as of Tuesday, March 24, 2020 until April 15, 2020. The BCCHR and the WHRI, along with research institutes across the Lower Mainland, are adopting this same policy.

In consultation with UBC, PHSA, the other research institutes and centres, and in line with the directives of the Provincial Medical Officer, we are requiring WHRI members continue only the most essential research operations. All research by WHRI members on the C&W campus that is not time-critical, not COVID-19 related and/or that would not result in significant negative impacts must be postponed. All researchers and staff who are not needed onsite to further such approved essential activities must work remotely.

Please note that this is a difficult decision that will impact many investigators, students, their teams, and of course, the research itself. However, ceasing all but only the most essential research (as outlined above) is necessary at this time in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The health of our community and of our country is at stake unless drastic measures to enforce social distancing are followed.

We will maintain critical research activities

Critical research may include such things as COVID-19 research and essential clinical trials. It may also include the preservation of critical research resources such as data, animal models, cell lines, materials and reagents that are deemed essential and extremely difficult to replace. New studies should not be started at this time, and essential activity will require approval to continue. You will have received a communication from me on March 20 at 4pm (email attached) providing further instruction about handling confidential research information remotely. If you are unclear about what kinds of research activities or documents can be handled remotely, please contact us at whri_cwbc@cw.bc.ca

Does your research need exemption from curtailment?

If your research team must continue critical research activities, please complete the [BCCHR/WHRI/BCMHSUS Exemption Form](#) available online in the REDCap system OR **copy and paste this link** <https://rc.bcchr.ca/redcap/surveys/?s=8MWWRETf78> into your web browser

(preferably Chrome). Once submitted, the form will be reviewed and determination provided by myself, potentially in consultation with senior leaders within BCCHR and the WHRI, PHSA and UBC: The key dates are as follows:

- Please submit the [Exemption Form](#) by end of day **Thursday, March 26**.
- You will be notified whether your application is approved by approximately end of day **Friday, March 27**.
- As of **Monday morning (March 30)**, only researchers and staff who have been granted an exemption will be allowed to work onsite.

If you have questions about whether your research activities are critical, please contact [Dr. Kathryn Dewar](#).

We must continue to prioritize social distancing and lab safety

Researchers and staff who have been granted an exemption to work onsite must maintain social distancing while ensuring their personal safety. Please note that, as per UBC policy, either two people must be present at all times or a documented process must be in place to report and/or monitor the presence and safety of anyone working alone in the lab.

If you're sick, stay home

It is critical that anyone displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 or any other illness — coughing, sneezing, fever, sore throat and difficulty breathing — stay home. Please put plans in place to continue vital research activities should anyone get sick and, if anyone on your team is displaying symptoms, send them home immediately.

For more information on how to minimize the impact of this curtailment on your research, funding and trainees, please [visit UBC's planning checklist and FAQs](#).

For more information on working remotely, please check out [Research IT's tips and resources \(March 18\)](#) and [UBC's bulletin for faculty, staff and graduate students \(March 16\)](#).

The WHRI will continue to send weekly emails to our membership on Friday afternoons and have created a [COVID-19 Researcher Resources webpage](#). You might also wish to receive the BCCHR newsletter by emailing comm@bcchr.ca to be added to the mailing list.