

Weekly WHRI Community Update – November 20, 2020

Sent on behalf of Dr. Lori Brotto, Executive Director, WHRI

Dear WHRI community,

Ten simple rules for women Principal Investigators during a pandemic. That is the title to a piece in PLoS Computational Biology published on October 29, 2020 by Pamela Kreeger and colleagues. In their article the authors point squarely to the claim that the pandemic has created “extra time” for researchers. They aptly call out this claim’s highly gendered nature, and cite evidence that any increase in academic productivity has been experienced primarily by men, whereas women may have experienced far less productivity due to their increased burdens of child- and eldercare, higher teaching loads, and more service and committee work. After reading the article twice, I wanted to share some key passages with our WHRI community. Of course, I would highly recommend you to read the [full article here](#) as it may speak to you in different ways.

They provide ten rules (eleven, actually, if you include their foundational rule that “there are no hard rules for a situation that has been described as unprecedented an unprecedented amount of times”). As our community is likely feeling the increased weight of this already weighty pandemic this week with rising case numbers, I felt that these ten rules are particularly important now for our women PIs, for their students and colleagues, and for leadership. Among them are: cut yourself some slack; support women PIs who need to cancel external service work; be flexible about meeting times and attendance for committee service since faculty may be juggling multiple responsibilities at home; and normalize conversations about work-life balance.

In my opinion, this is an important piece with advice directed at individuals as well as institutions, and is worth the time to consider. Their conclusion “we will take what we learn from this unprecedented challenge to generate a more equitable and welcoming environment for women PIs” (p.8) provides the hope we need in darker times.

Sincerely,

Lori A Brotto PHD, R PSYCH
Executive Director, WHRI
Professor | Department of OBGYN, UBC
Canada Research Chair | Women’s Sexual Health

Updates from November 14th to 20th

PHSA MASK USE POLICY

As you know, earlier this month the Provincial Health Office (PHO) introduced a new [provincial masking policy for health care facilities](#).

[PHSA’s new mask use policy](#) is now in effect and C&W has worked through the details related to implementation on our campus. This new policy tightens up mask requirements for everyone onsite.

Masks are now required in all common areas, patient care areas and while moving around our buildings. There are exceptions for cubicles/private offices where there are barriers or enough space to ensure appropriate distancing between people. Details are below.

We've heard a few concerns about masking and safety from our community and know this news will be welcome to many. It's important to remember that masks are one part of our infection control strategy. It's the combination of physical distancing, masks and PPE, hand hygiene and staying home when you are sick that will prevent the spread of the virus.

We cannot emphasize enough how important it is to stay home if you have any signs of illness, even mild ones. We know this can be challenging for a community accustomed to working long hours. With the rising numbers of COVID-19 infections in our region and across the province, it's essential that we not become complacent. Today, being a strong contributor to your research team means staying home when you are sick.

If you are working onsite, please complete [PHSA's staff self-screening assessment](#) tool at home or on your mobile device before coming in. You can sign up for the new PHSA tool by [downloading this Outlook invite](#).

Masking policies

In non-clinical spaces (research labs, dry labs, offices) **[Non-medical mask](#) must be worn in common areas, while moving around the office and when you cannot maintain a two metre distance from others.** This includes places such as labs, meeting rooms, stairwells, hallways, bathrooms, elevators and cafeterias or break rooms (except when you are eating and drinking).

You do not need to wear a mask in your office or cubicle if you are greater than a two metre distance from other staff or a physical barrier is in place.

IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Medical masks must be worn by all persons working in a clinical/patient care areas including common areas and break rooms, unless eating and/or drinking. Please [review the policy](#) carefully for full details. This applies to all researchers working in clinical spaces and any participants attending clinical research visits.

You do not need to wear a mask in your office or cubicle if you are greater than a 2-metre distance from other staff or a physical barrier is in place.

Other PPE protocols remain in place for patient care scenarios

IN PUBLIC SPACES

Stay kind, calm and safe

We are in the middle of a global pandemic and, as much as we have adapted to this reality, stress and uncertainty is a concern for many of us.

Our goal is for everyone to feel safe while working onsite. As such, we encourage you to let us know if you have any concerns or have observed practices that don't seem safe. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions to Todd Jacques at tjacques@bcchr.ca Marsha Simons at Marsha.Simons@cw.bc.ca, and Dr. Lori Brotto at Lori.Brotto@cw.bc.ca.

Masks, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and staying home while sick are all ways we can take care of ourselves, our loved ones and our colleagues. Thank you for your diligence, compassion, patience and understanding. We are all in this together.

Please refer to the **“Talking to Your Team about Mask Guidelines”** (attached), a resource for staff on the CW campus.

[Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund \(CRCEF\) Resources](#)

- **Deadline for Stage 3 claims, 11:59pm on November 30, 2020**
- [Instructions on how to submit a CRCEF Stage 3 application](#)
- [Register for a drop-in session](#) for more information.

OAK STREET CAMPUS STAGE 2 RESUMPTION OF ONSITE RESEARCH

The intake process to resume onsite work has been streamlined in Stage 2. In this stage, assuming the activities fit within the Stage 2 criteria and cannot be done offsite, PIs will determine the scope of their research activities and who on their team should resume onsite work.

If you applied to resume onsite work during Stage 1, you do not need to apply again. Please email Todd Jacques at tjacques@bcchr.ca with any updates to your onsite personnel and research team safety plans.

If your team includes any new personnel or existing personnel who require training on new tasks, you are also required to create a written training plan for these staff. This could include detailing whether training will happen virtually or in person and the types of PPE that will be used to protect all those taking part.

For **new research activities**, please submit a request through the [Oak Street Campus Research Institutes Return to Onsite Research Intake Form](#).

If you have any questions, please email KDewar@cw.bc.ca

FUNDING AGENCY UPDATES and OPPORTUNITIES

Updated COVID-19 WHRI Funding Updates

For all the latest funding news, COVID-19 funding opportunities, latest updates for deadlines and official statements from funding agencies regarding grant programs.

Email [Eric Lussier](#)

For assistance with grants applications or grants revisions. I am available every Tuesday from 8am-4pm for virtual office hour meetings with WHRI researchers, or by appointment.

[New Integrated calendar of agency and interagency funding opportunities](#)

Canada's federal research funding agencies—CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC—together with the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), have released an integrated calendar that lists the principal funding opportunities for researchers, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students and research institutions offered by the four agencies.

[COVID-19 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES](#)

- CIHR – [COVID-19 Rapid Research Funding Opportunity \(Clinical Trials Network\)](#) – **11/27**
- Fulbright Canada – [Post-COVID Challenge](#) – **11/30**
- Mitacs – [Globalink Research Award Pandemic Thematic Call](#) – **12/7**
- Catalyst Foundation – [COVID-19 and Integrated Circuits Project Grant](#) – **Full 12/10**

[UPDATES \(11/14 – 11/20\) TO COMPETITION DEADLINES](#)

- Mitacs – [Globalink Research Award Thematic Call](#) – **12/7**

[Updated FULL Funding Opportunities and Deadlines List](#)

HAVE A FEW MINUTES?

SAVE-THE-DATE! WHRI Public Event Scheduled on December 10th

Join the WHRI for our first, virtual, public event, the [@womensresearch Wellness Exchange](#). The event will be held on **Thursday December 10th from 5-7 pm Pacific**.

The event is free and registration will open via Eventbrite this coming Tuesday November 24th.

CanCOVID Speaker Series: Dr. Money on What the Research Says on Pregnancy and COVID

Well over six months into the pandemic, what research has been done on the impacts of pregnancy? Are there increased risks for mothers or children? Dr. Deborah Money is a Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at UBC, and active clinician and researcher in reproductive infectious diseases. Join us as she shares the latest developments in reproductive health and COVID.

November 24, 2020, 1:00pm - 1:30pm Pacific

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/89262387269>

Meeting ID: 892 6238 7269

Passcode: 831843

Click [here](#), for more on CanCOVID

STAFF RESOURCES

PHSA UPDATES

Critical COVID-19 News Information for employees, medical staff, paramedics and contractors

Please refer to the attached PHSA Communication (Critical COVID-19 News: New PHO orders, town hall highlights and testing options) for a summary of new, province-wide orders and restrictions to help slow the transmission of [COVID-19 announced by Provincial Health Officer \(PHO\) Dr. Bonnie Henry](#).

New PHO orders and province-wide guidance

- On Nov. 7, the PHO issued **regional** orders to slow the rapid transmission we are seeing in social interactions, in certain workplaces and in higher-risk indoor settings. Those orders have now been expanded and amended so that they apply across the entire province. They will remain in effect until Dec. 7, 2020 at midnight, and they may be extended again.
- The new province-wide orders focus on three areas: **social gatherings, workplaces and group physical activities.**
- The PHO is also asking all British Columbians to avoid **non-essential travel** and is stepping up **inspections and contact tracing.**
- [View more details from the B.C. government](#) about the orders.

Workplace safety: Continue to work remotely where possible, undergo screening and wear masks

- The PHO has asked B.C.'s Public Safety Minister to implement a requirement for workers and members of the public to wear masks in all retail environments, restaurants and indoor public spaces, including common areas of workplaces, except when eating or drinking. This does not include schools.
- All businesses and worksites must conduct active daily screening of all on-site workers using their COVID-19 safety plans.
- **What does this mean for us at PHSA?** If you are currently working from home and can continue to do so effectively, then you should work from home for the time being. If you are working on-site, please undergo the [staff self-screening assessment](#) before going to work. The [medical mask policy](#) that was recently introduced for our health care facilities remains in place and, if you are working in one of our corporate buildings, this new masking requirement aligns with the direction PHSA provided in the [Nov. 9 Critical COVID-19 News](#).

Flu clinics still available! Don't forget to self-report

- Thanks to those of you who have already [booked your flu vaccine](#) at your primary worksite.
- For all other sites, [check for availability](#) through the booking system.

- Don't forget to [self-report your flu protection choice](#) as soon as you can! **All PHSA employees, including medical staff and contractors, are required to self-report.**
- Questions? Visit [Flu Prevention on POD](#) or email flu@phsa.ca.

2020 vacation carryover policy (for PHSA employees)

- After nearly eight months of living and working through a global pandemic, you or your teams might have higher unused vacation balances at the end of the calendar year.
- As we continue learning how to co-exist with COVID-19, we must remember to look to the future and plan for the long game. We all need to rest, recharge and reset, and part of that means disconnecting from work and taking vacation time, where possible.
- Please review your 2020 unscheduled vacation hours in [WFM](#) and talk to your leader about taking time off by the end of the calendar year.
- For further information, visit the [vacation carryover page](#) on POD or email vacationleave@phsa.ca.

Register for mindfulness meditation sessions

- Looking for ways to better cope with stress, increase resilience, enhance connections with others, and bolster your ability to experience more joy and peace?
- [Register on LearningHub](#) for weekly, virtually-delivered mindfulness meditation sessions.
- In addition, this November we are also partnering with the [Lab of Meditation](#) for a [special 3-part series of meditation sessions](#) that invites a place for rest and respite.

Don't forget to sign up for free virtual fitness classes!

- Sign up on [LearningHub](#) for a variety of free classes during the month of November, including Zumba, Pilates, yoga, stretch breaks, power circuit, high intensity interval training (HIIT), mindfulness and more!
- Fitness classes are 45-minutes long and available Monday to Friday at various times throughout the weekdays to accommodate different work schedules.

PHSA has the following resources available to you during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **C&W COVID-19 collection site** – Open seven days per week, 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Priority given to health care workers and priority population patients between 7 and 8 a.m. Health care workers have a unique number to call **(604-875-2016)** that allows them to leave a message.
 - **C&W COVID-19 learning modules** – Three courses for all C&W staff and students to provide a current overview of the COVID-19 pandemic. Courses are for staff already working at the C&W campus. Staff also need to review prior to returning to the workplace. Courses are available on [Learning Hub](#) and will take about two hours to complete.
 - **Visit www.phsa.ca/covid19staff** for COVID-19 staff guidelines and updates.
 - **Visit [ePOPS](#)** for all C&W clinical practice and policy documents.
 - **Learn about [health and wellness resources](#)** available to support you.
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