

Weekly WHRI Community Update – December 18, 2020

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

Dear WHRI community,

This will be our last weekly WHRI communication for 2020, and what a year it has been! I began writing these weekly reflections in late March when we also decided that close communication with our WHRI family was one way we could weather the COVID-19 storm together. I have used these emails to share research directives, raise awareness for mental health concerns, provide research related (and sometimes unrelated) resources, and at times, be vulnerable. I have appreciated the many emails of gratitude I've received in response to these communications, which suggests that some in our community would like to see them continue in 2021. Though we will take a break for a few weeks, stay tuned for our next weekly communication on January 8, 2021!

I will be taking time over the next few weeks to reflect on the gratitude I have for our incredible WHRI staff, students, and members. I am grateful to the sage input of the WHRI Scientific Advisory Committee, the daily guidance of our Executive, and the relentless hard work of our core staff. I am also thankful to our many partners and collaborators, and the funders and donors who have made research visions into reality this year. I feel honoured to lead the Women's Health Research Institute for the past four years, and I look forward to 2021 with a renewed vitality for continuing the work we do in women's health research.

Whatever is beautiful. Whatever is meaningful. Whatever brings you happiness. May it be yours this holiday season and throughout the coming year.

Sincerely

Lori A Brotto PhD, R Psych
Executive Director, WHRI
Professor | Department of OBGYN, UBC
Canada Research Chair | Women's Sexual Health

Updates from December 12th to 18th

Update: PHSA MASK USE POLICY & SELF-SERVE DISPENSERS

While many members of our community work in areas dedicated to research – not patient care – we are located on a hospital site and must take extra precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As such, **we now require that all personnel wear medical masks in all clinical and non-clinical areas.** This includes labs, meeting rooms, stairwells, hallways, bathrooms, elevators and cafeterias or break rooms (except when you are eating or drinking).

C&W has started installing *self-serve medical face mask dispensers* at many card- and key-accessed entrances. If an entrance doesn't have a medical mask dispenser, signage will direct to the nearest dispenser or entrance where staff can provide a mask. Entrances planned for *self-serve medical face mask dispensers* are:

- **1982 building:** Entrances 5, 11, 93; BCCH parking elevator; BCWH parking elevator and stairs
- **Shaughnessy building:** Entrances 67, 70, 73, 77, 79
- **Ambulatory Care Building:** Entrance 21
- **Teck ACC:** Entrances 59, 59; FMO entrance; two parkade elevators
- **HR Building:** Entrance 76
- **Plant Services:** Entrances 76 (contractor entrance), 78
- **Healthy Minds Centre:** Entrances 81, 83, 85, 87
- **CSB:** Main entrance

All persons entering hospital buildings are requested to don a medical mask by following these procedures:

1. Remove your personal mask if you're wearing one;
2. Sanitize your hands using hand sanitizer; and
3. Remove one medical mask from the dispenser and follow proper procedures to don the mask.

Once all mask dispensers or signage have been installed, personal masks or non-medical grade masks will not be permitted.

As a reminder, you are not required to wear a mask if you are in your office or cubicle and you are greater than two metres from other personnel or a physical barrier is in place.

Please remember that masks are only one part of our infection control strategy. Stay home if you have any signs of illness, complete [PHSA's self-screening assessment tool](#) before arriving onsite, practice physical distancing and maintain good hand hygiene.

Our goal is for everyone to feel safe while working onsite. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions, **including requests for medical masks**, to Marsha Simons at Marsha.Simons@cw.bc.ca, Todd Jacques at tjacques@bcchr.ca, and Dr. Lori Brotto at Lori.Brotto@cw.bc.ca.

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.

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NEWS

[MSFHR Report on Supporting Health Researchers During A Pandemic: A Research Funder's Response To COVID-19](#)

MSFHR gives end of year review of the effects of COVID-19 and the results from the COVID-19 impact assessment on researchers. The article shares key findings and actions MSFHR have taken to date to help BC health researchers amid the pandemic.

[CIHR Hosts online discussion on systemic racism in Canada's health research funding system](#)

Starting in January 2021, CIHR will host an online discussion on the topic of systemic racism in Canada's health research funding system. CIHR specifically invites the engagement of racialized and Indigenous communities with lived experience of systemic racism in the health research sector although the online discussion will be open to all. More information will come in newsletter and social media. To participate or for more information, contact edi@cihr-irsc.gc.ca.

COVID-19 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- N/A

UPDATES (12/12 – 12/18) TO COMPETITION DEADLINES

- NA

Updated Funding Opportunities and Deadlines List

HAVE A FEW MINUTES?

MEMBERS in the MEDIA

Dr. Gina Ogilvie speaks with Stephen Quinn about the findings of the [RESPPONSE](#) study and what it means for public roll out: <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-91-the-early-edition/clip/15814046-new-study-suggests-british-columbians-ready-vaccine>

Dr. Deborah Money speaks to [CTV](#), [News 1130](#), [Globe and Mail](#), and [CBC National](#) about the latest evidence and considerations related to COVID and pregnancy.

Dr. Teresa Liu-Ambrose was also featured in the news this week for some COVID-related research: [\(1\) Coronavirus: How COVID-19 could damage the brain - National | Globalnews.ca](#)

Couldn't attend our virtual [@WomensResearch Wellness Exchange](#)? Watch the video on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/WomensHealthResearchInstitute/videos/1069915966818572>

Sincere thank you to our research community members for presenting their evidence and evidence-based resources to our public audience.

STAFF RESOURCES

PHSA UPDATES

Contact tracing process for positive staff cases

- If you test positive for COVID-19, these are the steps:
 - 1) **Public Health will contact you.** You may already be aware of your positive result if you have signed up for text notification or checked my eHealth.
 - 2) **Contact PHSA's COVID-19 Resource Line** (1-833-875-2155) to get further information while you wait for direction from Public Health.
 - 3) **Public Health conducts contact tracing and will contact the individuals who need to be contacted** with specific instructions, based on their exposure criteria.
- If you are aware of another staff member who has tested positive, it's important that you respect their privacy. Please do not start contacting other employees who may have been exposed unless you are directed to do so by Public Health or PHSA's Occupational Health & Safety nurses.
- If you have questions in the meantime, please feel free to discuss them with your manager and/or contact PHSA's COVID-19 Resource Line.

Trusted vaccine information sources

- There will be lots of information circulating about the COVID-19 vaccine. It's especially important that we, as health care professionals, turn to trusted and reliable information.
- One of the 'sources of truth' that can be relied upon when it comes to COVID-19 vaccine information in B.C. is the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) website.
 - A dedication section on the BCCDC website – www.bccdc.ca/covid19vaccine – has been set up to house information on the vaccine.
 - You can also [find vaccine information](#) on the B.C. government's website.

- Continue to watch [PHSA's staff resources](#) on phsa.ca for information about the vaccine, as it becomes available.
- Recently, Dr. Eleni Galanis provided an update on the COVID-19 rollout at our PHSA town hall. You can [read a summary on POD](#) and [watch the webcast on-demand](#) (starting at 17:30).
- We also had Dr. Manish Sadaragani speak at about the vaccine trial process during our November town hall. [Read the summary](#) or [watch the webcast on-demand](#) (starting at 14:55).
- Our next town hall is planned for January 2021. Stay tuned for more information.

PHSA employees can claim up to \$400 in home office expenses

- As stated at last month's town hall, [PHSA will not be issuing the tax form T2200](#) to employees who are working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The T2200 will continue to be issued to employees who work from home on a permanent, regular basis.
- On Nov. 30, 2020 the federal government announced in its "[2020 Fall Economic Statement](#)" that the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) will allow employees working from home in 2020 due to COVID-19 to claim up to \$400 in home office expenses, based on the amount of time working from home, without the need to track detailed expenses.
- The CRA will generally not request employees to provide a signed Form T2200 from their employer (still to be confirmed). The CRA is expected to communicate further details in the coming weeks.

Flu policy now in effect: Please self-report

- Flu season is here, and the [provincial influenza policy](#) and [PHSA's influenza prevention policy](#) are now officially in effect. These will remain in effect until the end of the flu season is declared, usually at the end of March.
- Please make some time 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.

Make sure to update your contact information

- With many staff continuing to work remotely, it is especially important to ensure that your personal and emergency contact information is up to date. You can update your information through [the Employee Address Change form](#) and [Emergency Contact Change form](#).
- You can check who's listed as your current emergency contact by logging onto [PeopleSoft](#), then selecting personal information and emergency contact. For more information, check out the [COVID-19: Interim Remote Work Guidelines](#).

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.
- LearningHub will be unavailable Sunday, Dec. 20 at 5 pm until Tuesday, Dec. 22 at 9 am due to server upgrades.

Invest in your wellness this winter

- Start your new year off right by registering for the Jan. 14 session of “[Resilience in the Workplace – Co-Existing with COVID-19: What is your plan?](#)”
- Check out our [psychosocial resource](#) page for information on staying psychologically well and the [COVID-19: Pandemic Toolkit](#) from Homewood Health (our Employee Family Assistance provider).

Ongoing resources

- Visit phsa.ca/covid19staff for COVID-19 staff guidelines and updates.
- Visit [POD](#) for stories about our workforce and supporting resources.
- Learn about [health and wellness resources](#) to support you.
- For site or program specific questions, check in with your supervisor or clinical leader.