

Weekly WHRI Community Update – December 4, 2020

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

Dear WHRI community,

This week, Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond released her report, *In Plain Sight*, which was commissioned by Hon. Adrian Dix to review Indigenous racism in BC's health care system following allegations about racism experienced by Indigenous peoples in some BC emergency rooms in June 2020. The review examined data through an Indigenous Peoples' Survey to collect the experiences of Indigenous people using the health care system, and a Health Workers' Survey to examine experiences of health care workers regarding Indigenous-specific acts of racism in their work. There was also a website, email, and phone number for anyone to share their experiences. Dr. Turpel-Lafond interviewed First Nations and Métis leaders and health advocates as well as healthcare leaders. In total, the review examined the experiences of almost 9,000 people and 185,000 pieces of health sector data.

The full report details the stories and experiences of extensive racism which are extremely upsetting to read. Tying together the countless stories of racism were five key findings: (1) extensive Indigenous-specific racism in BC healthcare; (2) racism limits Indigenous people's access to medical care which further compounds their health and wellness; (3) Indigenous women and girls are disproportionately impacted by such racism; (4) current public health emergencies, such as COVID-19 and the overdose crisis, disproportionately impact Indigenous peoples; and (5) racism is also experienced by Indigenous health care workers. The review also found that although there are well-intentioned efforts to address and stop these acts of Indigenous-specific racism, those efforts have not translated into real and sustainable change.

A total of 24 recommendations were made by the review team. Importantly, the first one asked that the BC government apologize for Indigenous specific racism, and that apology came on November 30 by BC's Health Minister, Adrian Dix which you can read about [here](#).

I, our teams, and our leadership at the Women's Health Research Institute unequivocally denounce Indigenous-specific racism, and racism in all of its forms to all people. We will be giving deliberate attention to how we can enact the recommendations of *In Plain Sight*. Our actions must include respectful planning and partnership with Indigenous peoples.

To all of our members, staff, and trainees in the WHRI, I urge you to take the time to read the full report [here](#) and a summary of the recommendations [here](#). It is time for us to think deeply about our own participation in and witnessing of such acts of racism in the context of our research, and to take action to eliminate it.

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 28<sup>th</sup> to December 4<sup>th</sup>

### PHSA MASK USE POLICY – messaging update

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).

In short, you are required to wear a **medical mask** regardless of where you work on the Oak Street campus. There are two exceptions:

1. You can wear personal (fabric) masks when entering the research buildings at the start of your shift and when leaving for the day. This is to allow you to travel safely through common areas and to your workspace where you should have a supply of medical masks to wear for the duration of your time onsite.
2. 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.

It's heartening to hear that they have identified so few issues and we are grateful that so many continue to show their commitment to protecting our community and those around them.

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](mailto:Marsha.Simons@cw.bc.ca), Todd Jacques at [tjacques@bcchr.ca](mailto:tjacques@bcchr.ca), and Dr. Lori Brotto at [Lori.Brotto@cw.bc.ca](mailto:Lori.Brotto@cw.bc.ca).

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### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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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### FUNDING HIGHLIGHT: [Cancer Research Society is accepting Applications for Operating Grant](#)

CRS is accepting applications for their Operating Grants competition. The project must cover fundamental, early translational and environment-cancer research on all types of cancer. Both new and established researchers are encouraged to apply. Operating grants are awarded for a period of two years for a maximum amount of \$60,000 per year. LOIs are due December 9<sup>th</sup>, while full applications are due February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

### COVID-19 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- **Mitacs** – [Globalink Research Award Pandemic Thematic Call](#) – **12/7**
- **Catalyst Foundation** – [COVID-19 and Integrated Circuits Project Grant](#) – **Full 12/10**

### UPDATES (11/28 – 12/04) TO COMPETITION DEADLINES

- N/A

### Updated Funding Opportunities and Deadlines List

## HAVE A FEW MINUTES?

### Register today! WHRI Public Event Scheduled on December 10<sup>th</sup>

Join the WHRI for our first, virtual, public event, the [@womensresearch Wellness Exchange](#). The event will be held on **Thursday December 10<sup>th</sup> from 5-6:30 pm Pacific** via zoom. The event is free and open to all. Please share through your networks and register [here](#).

We look forward to seeing you there! Please email [Nicole.Prestley@cw.bc.ca](mailto:Nicole.Prestley@cw.bc.ca) with any questions.

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Join [Dr. Farah Shroff](#) on **Wednesday December 16<sup>th</sup> at 8 am** for [“Breath In, Breath Out”](#). This free virtual event will focus on re-learning breathing.

Register [here](#).

## STAFF RESOURCES

### PHSA UPDATES

#### Don't forget to self-report

- 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](mailto:flu@phsa.ca).

#### Unconscious Bias sessions added for Dec. 8 and 11

- Celebrating diversity is vital in a large organization like PHSA. Yet, we're all biased — our brains are wired to take mental shortcuts, which means we sometimes unknowingly favor or overlook certain people based on stereotypes or partial information.
- Learn more about your biases and strategies you can use to help keep them in check in the workplace.
- Register now for the session on Dec. 8 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., or Dec. 11 from 1 – 2 p.m. on [LearningHub](#).

#### Support your mental health:

- To access the following recorded webinars from Homewood Health (PHSA's Employee and Family Assistance Provider), log in to [Homeweb](#) (or create a new account):
  - [The Second Wave and Your Mental Health](#)
  - [COVID-19 and Mental Health](#)

#### 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](#).

#### 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](http://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.