

Weekly WHRI Community Update – January 15, 2021

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

Dear WHRI community,

This month many of our members will be participating in the peer review process for the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, and devoting their precious time to serve as Reviewers, Chairs, and Scientific Officers. I want to express my gratitude to these individuals for the key role they play in identifying which research will be buttressed from a limited budget pool. Often as Reviewers, we are differentiating outstanding from exceptional proposals, and there is a general sentiment sometimes that most of the applications submitted should be funded! The efforts put into serving our grant review process (for CIHR and others) is thankless, time consuming, and sometimes challenging (especially when there is disagreement among reviewers!). At the same time, it is a critical part of the scientific process, and a key means for channeling taxpayer dollars to science that improves health. I would like to thank you for the role you play in this effort.

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

### Updates from January 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>

#### Update: PHSA MASK USE POLICY & SELF-SERVE DISPENSERS

- As of Tuesday, December 22, 2020, **only medical masks are permitted** on the Oak Street Campus.
- C&W has completed the installation of self-serve medical face mask dispensers at building entrances in order to comply with the provincial mask policy, which states that masks worn in medical facilities including hospitals must be medical grade.
- The self-serve mask dispensers are intended for all care providers, staff, vendors and contractors, who should replace their personal mask with a medical mask at a building entrance, or proceed to a different entrance if there are no medical masks available.
- While staff were previously allowed to wear personal masks to their unit before switching to medical grade, going forward, no personal masks are permitted once staff and visitors enter a C&W building now that medical masks are available at all entrances.

- All patients will be offered a medical face mask by entrance screeners; however as previously stated, there may be reasons why someone is unable or declines to wear a mask, including history of abuse and trauma, mental health concerns, physical health conditions, or age.

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.

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](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.

### NEWS

#### [MSFHR Releases Upcoming Grant Opportunities in 2021](#)

MSFHR's released its upcoming funding opportunities in 2021. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, MSFHR solicited feedback from the community to better support our health research community. The 2021 funding competition lineup provides opportunities for BC health researchers across all regions of the province.

#### [Tri-agency Announces New Post-Award Regulations for Trainees](#)

Training award recipients (Masters, Doctoral and PDF) may defer the start date of their award, or request an unpaid interruption normally in four-month increments for reasons related to the COVID-19 situation.

### NEW FUNDING/AWARD OPPORTUNITIES (1/9 – 1/15)

BC Patient Safety & Quality Council – [Quality Award](#) – 1/22

SSHRC – [Connection Grants](#) – 2/1

SSHRC – [Insight Development Grants](#) – 2/2

CIHR – [Health System Impact Fellowship](#) – 2/18

Mitacs – [Mitacs Globalink Research Awards](#) – LOI(2/26), Full(3/31)

CIHR – [Training Grant : Health Research Training Platform \(2021/22 Pilot\)](#) – NOI(4/21), Full(6/22)

CIHR – [Operating Grant : HIV/AIDS and STBBI Community-Based Research](#) – 4/27

## COVID-19 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

ICODA/Gates Foundation's – [Grand Challenges ICODEA COVID-19 Data Science grant](#) – 1/19

Pfizer – [COVID-19 Vaccine Patient Education: Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy](#) – 2/10

## Updated Funding Opportunities and Deadlines List

### Have a Few Minutes?

## WHRI Symposium 2021

**Save-the-Date** for the Sixth Annual **Women's Health Research Symposium!** The event will be held virtually on **Wednesday March 3, 2021**.

The symposium is geared toward researchers, trainees, and other research and healthcare stakeholders. Registration details to follow! Email [KDewar@cw.bc.ca](mailto:KDewar@cw.bc.ca) with any questions.

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## BC WOMEN'S RESEARCH ROUNDS

Join us at **BC Women's Research Rounds** next **Friday January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 8 am**. Dr. Lori Brotto, Dr. Gina Ogilvie, Dr. Angela Kaida, Dr. Liisa Galea, and Dr. Manish Sadarangani present survey data from the [COVID RESPONSE study](#). The data from over 5,000 British Columbians will include the:

- Impact of pandemic controls on mental health
- Intention to receive COVID-19 vaccinations
- Economic impacts of pandemic control, including impact on income, housing, and food security
- Impact of pandemic controls on reproductive health and access to contraception outcomes

For details on how to join: <https://whri.org/news-events/bc-womens-hospital-virtual-research-rounds/>

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## MINDFULNESS WORKSHOP

Register for the [C&W Staff Online Mindfulness Workshop](#) co-facilitated by our own Dr. Lori Brotto. The workshop will be held on **January 29<sup>th</sup> from 12:05 to 12:55 pm.**

Content of this interactive workshop includes:

- Short hands-on mindfulness practices
- Mindful eating together
- Research evidence and a short history of mindfulness in medicine
- Informal mindfulness practice and how to find present moments in other activities

To register, email: [minfulness@cw.bc.ca](mailto:minfulness@cw.bc.ca)

## Staff Resources

### PHSA Updates

#### Highlights from yesterday's vaccine town hall

- Thank you to everyone who tuned into the first town hall of 2021. For those who missed it, there are several options to get the information on demand:
  - [Watch the full webcast](#) recording or skip to these timestamps for each speaker:
    - (08:20) Our health and wellness: Dr. Réka Gustafson, vice president, public health and wellness and deputy provincial health officer
    - (19:00) COVID-19 vaccine general update: Susan Wannamaker, executive vice president, clinical service delivery
    - (27:12) COVID-19 vaccine planning and logistics: Patrick Whalen, director, workplace health
    - (33:42) HR update: Jaci Edgeworth, vice president, people & culture
- Read the [highlights](#) in PHSA News on POD (now accessible off the network)!
- Watch these video clips for answers to the most popular questions asked through Slido, including:
  - [What kind of immunity does the COVID-19 vaccine provide? Will PPE still be required after the vaccine is administered?](#)
  - [Why did administrative staff get the COVID vaccine? It is not consistent with the policy.](#)
  - [Is vaccine wastage being tracked as a measure of how well vaccine clinics are being run?](#)
- Keep an eye on POD for the next staff town hall in February.

#### Infection and prevention measures remain the same for COVID-19 variants

- COVID-19 variants are raising questions about our recommended approach to personal protection and preventing the spread.
- B.C. confirmed its first case of the COVID-19 variant that originated in South Africa, as well as a fourth case of the UK variant referenced in previous bulletins.

- Dr. Bonnie Henry reiterated that B.C. is carefully monitoring these variants through whole genome sequencing.
- She also emphasized the importance of British Columbians continuing to follow public health orders and take measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in their communities.
- It's important to remember that variants of viruses emerge all the time, but the presence of variants of COVID-19 does not change our approach to PPE or steps for preventing the spread of the virus. The mode of transmission is not different, so our approach to protection and prevention remains the same.
- Watch Dr. Réka Gustafson (at the 15:55 mark of the [webcast from yesterday's town hall](#)) speak about virus variants.

### Reminder: Travel guidelines

- It's critically important right now that we stay the course and continue to follow all of the public health measures we've grown accustomed to so that we can keep transmission low while the vaccine program expands.
- The provincial orders around limiting household contacts remain in effect at this point, as we try and curb transmission in our communities.
- Dr. Bonnie Henry also continues to encourage people to "stay small, and stay local," keeping in mind there may be instances where people really do need to travel for personal or medical reasons.
- Although it's not recommended, if you need to travel out-of-the country please remember that PHSA has [issued travel guidelines](#), which speak to the 14-day quarantine requirements.
- Even if you have the ability to work remotely, it's important that you speak with your supervisor before travelling out of the country.

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

### Invest in your wellness this winter

- 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 Staff Resources

- 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.

- Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document on ePOPS for information on mask use: [CW Mask Use in Health Care Facilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic: FAQ](#).
- For workplace health questions, call the PHSA COVID-19 Resource Line at 1-833-875-2155 (toll free) or 604-875-7244, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Visit [phsa.ca/covid19staff](https://phsa.ca/covid19staff) for COVID-19 staff guidelines and updates.
- Continue to check the BCCDC's website as a trusted source of information.
- Learn about [health and wellness](#) resources to support you.