

Weekly WHRI Community Update – January 29, 2021

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

Dear WHRI community,

This week marked one year since BC saw its first confirmed case of COVID-19. One year ago I certainly was not anticipating the year to come. At times it felt painstakingly slow, and at other times it went by very quickly. In listening to Dr. Bonnie Henry state this week “if I had known then what I know now...” made me think about how often I have said that phrase with regards to my academic work, my teaching, my clinical care, and many other parts of my life. It reminds us that the past is the greatest teacher, and rather than rebuking ourselves for what we should have known, we can take the opportunity to learn as much as possible from our past in order to chart a different course in the future.

Yesterday was Bell Let’s Talk Day, an opportunity to raise the conversation about mental health, which continues to be surrounded by stigma. Our partners at the BC Women’s Health Foundation launched their social media campaign #AlsoMe to specifically raise awareness about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic control measures on [women’s mental health](#). In a survey the Foundation led together with Community Savings Credit Union, they found that concerns regarding finances and job security have resulted in **44%** of women stating that their health has been affected in some way. In our own research led at the WHRI, we have seen significantly higher rates of depression, anxiety, stress, and loneliness in women compared to men. Combined, these findings support the need to increase awareness about women’s health. We encourage you to [participate in amplifying awareness](#) about these findings through your own social media accounts.

I hope that you all find an opportunity to reflect on the past year to seek its teachings, and to consider reaching out to someone who may benefit from support.

Sincerely,

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

Updates from January 23rd to 29th

Update: PHSA MASK USE POLICY & SELF-SERVE DISPENSERS

- **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, Todd Jacques at tjacques@bcchr.ca, and Dr. Lori Brotto at 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 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.

NEWS

[CIHR hosting “Ask Me Anything” sessions about the Spring 2021 Project Grant Competition](#)

CIHR will be hosting 3 “Ask Me Anything” sessions designed to support participants and answer questions about the Spring 2021 Project Grant competition. Questions will be accepted via a Slido question board.

ENGLISH SESSIONS:

When: Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 12:00 pm PT - [Join](#), and [Question Board](#) #pjt-ama-feb4

When: Friday, February 5, 2021 at 10:00 am PT - [Join](#), and [Question Board](#) #pjt-ama-feb5

FRENCH SESSION

When: Wednesday, February 3, 2021 at 8:00 am PT - [Join](#), and [Question Board](#) #pjt-ama-feb3

[Linking Pre-Diagnosis Disturbances Of Physiological Systems To Neurodegenerative Diseases](#)

Brain Canada Foundation/Women’s Brain Health Initiative in collaboration with the EU Joint Programme – Neurodegenerative Disease Research (JPND) initiative launched a transnational call for linking pre-diagnosis disturbances of physiological systems to neurodegenerative diseases. A call for linking pre-diagnosis disturbances of physiological systems to neurodegenerative diseases. Pre-Proposals deadline: March 2, 2021, Full proposal deadline: June 29, 2021.

NEW FUNDING/AWARD OPPORTUNITIES (1/23 – 1/29)

- CanSAGE – [Gynecology Research Grants 2020](#) – 1/31
- UBC FoM – [Distinguished Research Award](#) – 2/5
- UBC FoM – [Distinguished University Scholar](#) – 2/5
- Joint Programme Neurodegenerative Disease Research – [Sex & Gender approach Grant](#) – LOI(3/2)
- UBC FoM – [Dr. Chew Wei Memorial Prize in Cancer Research](#) – 3/5
- CIHR – [Team Grant: Indigenous Gender and Wellness Team Grant](#) – NOI(6/22), Full(7/29)

COVID-19 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Pfizer – [COVID-19 Vaccine Patient Education: Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy](#) – 2/10
- Mental Health Research Canada/MSFHR – [COVID-19 C, Y & F Mental Health Impact Grant](#) – 2/28

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 with any questions.

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WOMEN IN SCIENCE

BC Children's Hospital Research Institute is hosting an event to celebrate International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

Date: Thursday, February 11

Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm

At BC Children's Hospital Research Institute (BCCHR), we are proud to support our inspiring female leaders who are making groundbreaking discoveries and innovations in research. At this unique event, we will be showcasing the important contributions of women who are paving the way for research in health sciences as well as having an open panel discussion.

The 2021 faculty includes:

- **Amy Inkster**, Graduate Student, Robinson Research Team, BCCHR
- **Dr. Bhavi Modi**, Research Associate, Turvey Lab, BCCHR
- **[Dr. Gina Ogilvie](#)**, Investigator, BCCHR; Physician, BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre; Assistant Director, WHRI; Senior Public Health Scientist, BCCDC; Professor, School of Population & Public Health, UBC
- **[Dr. Patricia Spittal](#)**, Investigator, BCCHR; Head & Professor, Division of Health in Populations, School of Population and Public Health, UBC; Associate Director for Research, Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Health
- **[Dr. Cynthia Verchere](#)**, Investigator, BCCHR; Head & Clinical Professor, Division of Plastic Surgery, UBC

Moderated by: [Dr. Allison Eddy](#), Investigator, BCCHR; Head & Professor, Department of Pediatrics, UBC

Participation is open to high school students, university students, health care professionals and members of the general public. As space is limited, [please register here](#).

For more information, please visit [https: the BCCHR website](https://www.bcchr.ca) or contact reseduc@bcchr.ca.

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Researchers in the C&W News

- [Dr. Lori Brotto receives MSFHR innovation to commercialization award](#)
- [Creating healthier future children through clinical research: Q&A with Dr. Quynh Doan](#)
- [A Conversation with Dr. Ginal Ogilvie](#)

Staff Resources

PHSA Updates

COVID-19 vaccine update

By now, you have likely heard about B.C.'s [four-phased COVID-19 Immunization Plan](#), which was announced publicly on Friday, Jan. 22. Phase 1 of this plan is already underway, focused on those who are most vulnerable to severe illness and death, including long-term care residents, staff and visitors; health care workers in settings like ICU, and emergency departments; paramedics; and remote and at-risk Indigenous communities.

Work is well underway to develop a detailed vaccine rollout plan for C&W that prioritizes vaccine in descending order of risk, in consultation with operations and medical leadership. We look forward to sharing details of this plan once it has been finalized in the coming weeks.

We also wanted to share that there is now a general [FAQ document about COVID-19 vaccines](#) on POD (*Reminder: You can now access POD remotely using your PHSA login ID. If you are not able to access the FAQ on POD currently, the FAQ will also be posted on PHSA's website in the [Staff Resources section](#).*)

If you have any questions about vaccine planning underway, including prioritization of vaccines at C&W, please speak with your director or medical leader.

PPE and public health measures remain critical

- With the news of a vaccine for COVID-19 and the anticipation that, eventually, we will be able to start returning to our normal activities, it can be easy to grow complacent.
- However, we must remember that we are still in a pandemic; COVID-19 continues to transmit in our communities, and we know that people with COVID-19 can transmit the infection before they have symptoms.
- We cannot let our guard down now. As health care professionals, we have the elevated moral responsibility of ensuring our patients, clients, families and colleagues can remain safe and so we must follow the [Provincial Health Officer orders](#), [Workplace Health Safety Plans](#) and infection control policies and procedures.
- Now, more than ever, **it's critical that we are meticulous in our adherence to all levels of the hierarchies of control, including following PPE protocols and the public health orders and guidelines.**
 - **Remember to wear eye protection.** For patient interactions, eye protection provides a barrier to infectious materials entering the eye and should be used in conjunction with a mask, as an integral part of protection against transmission of viral particles. Review [PHSA's guidance on protective eyewear](#) and the [Dos and Don'ts of Eye Protection](#).
 - **Wear the correct mask for the setting.** Medical masks are needed in all patient care areas, N95 respirators (or equivalent) are needed for aerosol-generating medical procedures (AGMPs), while non-medical masks are acceptable in non-patient care and administrative settings. Review C&W's [masking FAQs](#) and PHSA's [mask use policy](#).
 - **Practise frequent hand hygiene.** Clean your hands regularly with soap and water or with alcohol based hand sanitizer.
 - **Maintain physical distance.** Regardless of mask use or vaccines, we still need to follow physical distancing measures.

- Complete daily [self screening](#) and stay home and arrange for COVID-19 testing if you are sick or if public health has recommended you do so after a close COVID-19 contact.
- These protocols, orders and guidelines apply even if you have received the COVID-19 vaccine.

Updated BCCDC poster on types of face masks

The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) has updated their poster on the different types of facemasks: <http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Face-masks.pdf>

C&W mask/hand hygiene posters available for download

A reminder that posters about masks and hand hygiene are available to download. Two C&W versions have been created:

1. For a [patient/family audience](#)
2. For a [staff audience](#)

New CRA guidance on claiming home office expenses

- PHSA staff who worked from home during the 2020 tax year due to COVID-19 have two options to claim home office expenses as developed by the Canada Revenue Agency:
 - A temporary flat rate method for claims up to \$400.
 - A detailed method for claims over \$400.
- For more information, view this [infographic](#) and visit the [Government of Canada website](#).
- If you had previous arrangements to work from home on a permanent basis under [PHSA's Flexible Work Options Policy](#), we will be issuing the regular T2200.

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.

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 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](#)