

**Subject Line:** Weekly WHRI Community Update – March 12, 2021

**Attachments:**

COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE Eligibility further expanded for COVID-19 immunization clinic in VCH clinics.eml

**Email Content:**

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

Dear WHRI community

Yesterday, March 11, 2021, marked one year since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. The Canadian government marked March 11 as a day of remembrance to commemorate the more than 22,000 Canadians who have lost their lives to the COVID-19 virus. One year ago today I sent an email to all WHRI staff requesting immediate work from home, and with the support of our administrative staff, putting systems in place to facilitate access to all materials to allow for a seamless transition to at-home work. When I look back and re-read the communication I sent that day, I indicated that it would be time limited and for two weeks. Among the many many lessons that the past year has taught us, for me one significant lesson is that uncertainty is more predictable than certitude.

I am sure that each of you are reflecting back on where you were one year ago today. I recognize the tremendous sacrifices each of you have made and continue to make, and am grateful for the resolve demonstrated by the women's health research community.

With the vaccine roll-out, the end of this pandemic is within sight, but we must maintain vigilance in the face of the variants of concern. Again, I encourage you to read and share with those you know the excellent COVID-19 resource maintained by the BCCDC at [BCCDC website on the BC COVID-19 Immunization program](#) and the [Frequently Asked Questions page](#).

This is not a typical anniversary. But it is an opportunity to pause and reflect.

Sincerely,

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

## Updates from March 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>

### COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Update

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, CW released an announcement regarding the newly expanded eligibility of non-direct care staff to receive the COVID-19 vaccine (attached).

Clarification has been given to the research community that research personnel who have received approval to resume onsite research activity through the "C&W Return to Onsite Research" process are now eligible to receive the vaccination (via the vaccination booking process set out in the attached email). Specifically, staff who spend time in areas where there may be **patients, including lobbies and common areas**.

Vaccination eligibility applies to staff whose regular place of work is in an acute care hospital (e.g. BC Women's); vaccination eligibility does **not** extend to staff who may visit acute care sites for other reasons, such as meetings.

Please reference the [attached email for the full details of eligibility and booking](#). We will communicate further if the eligibility criteria changes.

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

- 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.
- 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 a **Stage 2 approval** and **need to amend your application** to add new team members, adjust team schedules, etc, please email Todd Jacques [tjacques@bcchr.ca](mailto:tjacques@bcchr.ca) to request approval and email Marsha Simons [Marsha.Simons@cw.bc.ca](mailto:Marsha.Simons@cw.bc.ca) so that our site logs can be updated appropriately.

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](mailto:Eric.Lussier@bcchr.ca)

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.

\*Please note that I will be away Mondays in March. For urgent grants facilitation, please contact Dawn McArthur [dmcArthur@bcchr.ca](mailto:dmcArthur@bcchr.ca).

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## NEWS

### [Rapid SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine Research Initiative in BC](#)

MSFHR, Genome BC and the BCCDC Foundation for Public Health have announced a funding opportunity to support BC-based research that addresses, and implements solutions for, knowledge gaps around COVID-19 vaccination. BC researchers who are able to rapidly address knowledge gaps and urgently implement evidence are invited to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI). EOIs must be submitted by March 25, 2021 at 5 p.m. PDT. Projects deemed to be well-aligned with evolving sector needs will be invited to submit full proposals by April 15, 2021 at 5 p.m. PDT. For questions, please contact [covid19@genomebc.ca](mailto:covid19@genomebc.ca).

### NEW+RELEVANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES (3/6 – 3/12)

- Gynecologic Cancer Initiative – [Miller Mindell Gynecologic Oncology Fellowship](#) – ongoing
- Pelvic Floor Disorder Research Foundation – [Various 2 Year Awards](#) – Full(3/15)
- UBC FoM – [Multidisciplinary Research Program in Medicine](#) – Full(3/15)
- Molly Towell Perinatal Research Foundation – [2021 Maternal-Fetal Grant Competition](#) – 4/1
- US Department of Defense – [FY21 Ovarian Cancer Research Program \(various\)](#) – Pre(4/1), Full (7/8)
- Gynecological Cancer Initiative – [Barbara Berthon Ovarian Cancer Trainee Publication Prize](#) – 4/16
- Canada Research Chairs – [Canada Research Chair \(Tier 1 & 2\)](#) – UBC(4/30), Full(5/24)
- Rethink/Pfizer – [Improve the care of patients living with metastatic breast cancer](#) – Full(5/13)
- CIHR - [STBBI Research in Canada: Beyond HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C](#) – Full(6/9)
- CIHR – [Team Grant: Indigenous Gender and Wellness Team Grant](#) – NOI(6/22), Full(7/29)

## COVID-19 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- CIHR–[Emerging COVID-19 Research Gaps and Priorities Funding Opportunity](#)–LOI(3/15),Full (4/15)
- NIH – [Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 Infection Initiative](#) – Full(3/23)
- MSFHR/Genome BC/BCCDC–[Rapid SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine Research Initiative](#)–EOI(3/25),F(4/15)
- Research Council of Canada – [Encouraging vaccine confidence in Canada](#) – Full(4/5)
- CIHR-CEPI – [Leadership Award for Excellence in Vaccine Research for Infectious Diseases of Epidemic Potential](#) – 4/20

## Updated Funding Opportunities and Deadlines List

### Have a Few Minutes?

#### PHSA Staff Survey

Submit your questions for the **interim CEO** by [answering a quick survey](#) by end of day today (March 12, 2021). This will guide future engagement opportunities for David Byres, our interim president and CEO, including town halls, program-level leadership meetings and safely-planned site visits.

All survey responses will be anonymous. Only summary results will be shared for communication planning.

If you have any questions, please contact [phsacomm@phsa.ca](mailto:phsacomm@phsa.ca). Thanks for your time!

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#### Nominations are open for the 2021 PHSA+ Awards!

The PHSA+ Awards celebrate individuals and teams across our organization that demonstrate excellence and advance our organization by living our shared [values](#). Take time to recognize your peers by nominating a colleague or team for an award by **April 2, 2021**.

This year, we are excited to announce one more category to the program: **Volunteer Award**. This award will go to one outstanding volunteer across PHSA's programs and services.

Visit the [PHSA+ Award page](#) on POD to find the nomination process and eligibility criteria.

Questions? Email [phsaplusawards@phsa.ca](mailto:phsaplusawards@phsa.ca).

### Staff Resources

#### PHSA Updates

### **Additional vaccines approved in Canada**

- The COVID-19 vaccines that have been approved by Health Canada are safe, effective and will save lives. To date, four vaccines have been approved for use by Health Canada. Learn about the:
  - [Pfizer vaccine](#)
  - [Moderna vaccine](#)
  - [AstraZeneca vaccine](#)
  - [Johnson & Johnson vaccine](#)
- Vaccine supply is distributed by the Government of Canada and B.C. receives an allocated number of doses of vaccine on a weekly basis. The allocated amount is expected to increase throughout 2021.
- Due to vaccine logistics and to make sure people get the vaccine as quickly and safely as possible, people generally will not be able to choose which vaccine they get.
- In B.C., people eligible for a vaccine in [Phase 2](#) will get either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.
- For [Phase 3](#), at this point, essential workers prioritized for vaccination will be able to:
  - Get the AstraZeneca vaccine when their priority group is eligible; **or**
  - Receive the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine with their age cohort.

### **Act now! The 2020-21 fiscal year-end is coming with tight timelines ahead**

- The fiscal year-end is **March 31, 2021**, with tight deadlines that must be met for external reporting purposes.
- Please be sure to allow enough time for your items to be processed in this fiscal year. These deadlines are only a few weeks away:
  - Approved purchase order invoices for consulting, services or “amount only” purchases: March 19 at 4 p.m.
  - Approved and coded non purchase order invoices: March 19 at 4 p.m.
  - Billing and revenue accrual: March 23 at 4:30 p.m.
  - Corporate credit card: March 26 at noon
  - Purchase order invoices for received purchases: March 31 at 4 p.m.
  - Online expense and petty cash claims: March 31 at 3 p.m.
- Please mark your calendars with these due dates – all PHSA programs, departments and staff are required to follow these timelines. See the [Finance page](#) on POD or speak to your leader for more information.

### **T4/T4A tax statements available**

- T4/T4A tax statements will be available electronically, via your online pay advice (PHSA: <https://pay.phsa.ca> or BC Emergency Health Services: <https://pay2.phsa.ca>) on Feb. 24, 2021.
- Google Chrome is the recommended browser to access your online pay advice, including your T4/T4A statement. If you are unable to view your pay advice in Chrome, please copy/paste the portal URL (<https://pay.phsa.ca> or <https://pay2.phsa.ca>) into your Internet Explorer address bar.
- Learn more by reviewing these [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (BCEHS employees: visit [this page for FAQs](#)) or contact PHSA Payroll at 604-297-8683 or 1-866-875-5306 (select option 2) or [payrollphsa@phsa.ca](mailto:payrollphsa@phsa.ca).

### **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.

### **2020/2021 influenza season is now over**

- The Ministry of Health has declared the end of the 2020/2021 influenza season in B.C.
- Thank you to everyone who worked to protect our patients, families and clients from the flu during a unique and challenging year by getting a flu vaccine—especially to our peer immunizers who helped immunize staff at their home sites across the province.
- Please note that infection prevention and control practices are still in effect as we continue to manage COVID-19 in the community. This includes following guidelines from the Provincial Health Officer, adhering to physical distancing and PPE measures and practicing good hand hygiene.
- For further information, visit the [Flu Prevention page on POD](#).

### **Resources to support your health and wellness**

- Stay up to date on the latest tools to maintain your health and wellness by reading the March 2021 issue of PHSA's [Psychological Health and Safety: Working Well Newsletter](#).
- It's full of information, upcoming webinars, and other resources that are available to support staff and team resilience.
- Looking for additional tips and strategies for feeling good? Check out the library of [Working Well Columns](#).
- March is Nutrition Month! Learn more about healthy eating and meal planning in these Wellness Wednesday Webinars:
  - [Eating Plan for Stress Management](#) (March 3, 12 – 1 p.m.)
  - [Eating Well During Shiftwork](#) (March 10, 12 – 1 p.m.)
  - [Healthy Workplace Habits](#) (March 17, 12 – 1 p.m.)
  - [The Science of Happiness](#) (March 24, 12 – 1 p.m.)
- Access [free nutritional counselling](#) from your Employee and Family Assistance Program, and one-on-one coaching with a dietician to develop a personalized food plan and to receive nutritional information.
- [Mindfulness Meditation sessions](#), including the [Lab of Rest and Respite series](#).

### **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](#) resources to support you.