

Weekly WHRI Community Update – March 19, 2021

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

Dear WHRI community,

Our current [Strategic Plan \(2019-2024\)](#) embeds four strategic frameworks to guide the actualization of our Strategic Plan objectives. One of these four is focused on [Trainees and Mentorship](#).

As part of this effort, one goal was to create strategies to be responsive to the impacts of COVID-19 on trainees. You have likely read about our survey of 119 WHRI trainees, seeking to better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their training and well-being. We encourage you to share the findings with the trainees you work with, including the five infographics that depict the [main study findings](#).

In direct response to the findings of this survey, we, thanks to the leadership of Dr. Angela Kaida, Scientific Advisor to the WHRI, led a series of working groups with faculty involved in trainee programs and mentorship from across BC institutions. These discussions led to a repository of information on how institutions, programs, and people could better support trainees currently during the pandemic, but also beyond. Last week, we held a [Trainee Mentorship and Networking Event](#) with various breakout rooms and an opportunity for 50 trainees to have conversations with different women's health and institutional leaders on topics related to: research pathways for clinician-scientists; experiences from early-career researchers; non-traditional paths to research careers; interdisciplinary aspects of health research; careers outside of academia; leadership; learning through failure; facing and overcoming frustrations; and creating community for Indigenous, Black, and other trainees of colour.

I want to express my sincere thanks to all of the speakers at this very successful event! It is evident that trainees found this opportunity to ask candid questions of our experts to be very useful. Based on our learnings, we hope to empower other institutions to offer the same program to their trainee base. If this is of interest, I invite you to reach out to me at whri_cwbc@cw.bc.ca.

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 13th to 19th

UPDATED COVID-19 Education Modules

As a requirement of site access, staff are expected to complete the C&W COVID-19 education modules on the LearningHub. These modules have recently been updated (March 5th). Managers, please ensure you and your teams have completed the most up-to-date versions on the [LearningHub](#).

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COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility for Research Staff

On March 2nd, CW released an announcement regarding the newly expanded eligibility of non-direct care staff to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Research personnel who have received approval to resume onsite research activity through the “C&W Return to Onsite Research” process are eligible to receive the vaccination. 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.

C&W held the final COVID-19 Health Care Worker First Dose vaccine clinic on Friday, March 12th. Eligible C&W care providers and staff can continue to book at any VCH clinic (links below).

Booking links for clinics in the VCH region:

VANCOUVER GENERAL HOSPITAL CAMPUS

Blusson Spinal Cord Centre, 818 W. 10th Ave, Vancouver

[BOOK AN APPOINTMENT HERE](#)

RICHMOND HOSPITAL

5 North, 7000 Westminster Highway, Richmond

[BOOK AN APPOINTMENT HERE](#)

NOT ELIGIBLE: Non-direct care staff who do not work in patient or client care areas; health authority staff who work in corporate/research/administrative areas; health workers who are not employed by a health authority. If you are not currently eligible, please assume that you will need to register to be immunized as part of the age-based cohorts as part of the public vaccination campaign.

Appointments continue to be available on a first-come, first-served basis. If you are not able to secure an appointment this week, please continue to check back – appointments continue to be added and there will be more appointments available in the weeks to come.

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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, 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 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 to request approval and email Marsha Simons 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

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.

NEWS

[NSERC and SSHRC COVID-19 Grant Extensions](#)

In March 2020, NSERC and SSHRC allowed researchers with grants ending on or before 31 March 2021 to request an extension of the grant's tenure period beyond the automatic one-year extension prescribed in the Tri-Agency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For most funding opportunities, the period for this initial extension will end on 31 March 2021. Given ongoing impacts of COVID, NSERC and SSHRC will allow, applications for a one-year extension to grants ending after 31 March 2021, regardless of whether they have received a previous time extension. For further information, please consult the [NSERC](#) and [SSHRC](#)'s websites.

[CIHR Pre-Announces: Mental Health and Substance Use Responses to COVID-19](#)

CIHR announced two anticipated competitions to continue to mobilize high quality science to fight COVID-19, and to mitigate the downstream impacts of public health countermeasures. These competitions will focus on building and synthesizing the evidence base to address gaps in the mental health and substance use response to COVID-19, and identify interventions. There will be a Knowledge Synthesis grant (+\$50,000) and an Operating Grant (\$TBA). It is expected to be launched by the end April with a May 4th deadline for application.

[NEW+RELEVANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES \(3/13 – 3/19\)](#)

- [Gynecologic Cancer Initiative – Miller Mindell Gynecologic Oncology Fellowship](#) – ongoing
- [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)
- [OVCARE – Carraresi Foundation Research Grants](#) – 4/12
- [OVCARE – Sumiko Koabayashi Marks Memorial Grants](#) – 4/12
- [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](#)

- [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?

UBC RESEARCH EXCELLENCE CLUSTERS

Congratulations to WHRI members **Dr. Liisa Galea, Dr. Patti Janssen, and Dr. Gavin Stuart** on their UBC Research Excellence Cluster funding for 2021-2022!

More here: <https://whri.org/ubc-announces-funding-for-research-excellence-clusters-in-2021-22/>

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CIHR FALL 2020 PROJECT Grant Competition

Congratulations to the WHRI staff and members who led, and supported the several successful grant applications from the Fall 2020 CIHR Project Grant Competition! Visit the full story here:

<https://whri.org/cihr-fall-2020-project-grant-competition-results/>

Don't see your project listed? Please email us at WHRI.Communications@cw.bc.ca with your details.

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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.

Staff Resources

PHSA Updates

Vaccine safety following reports from Europe

- Once a vaccine is approved and in use, vaccine safety is continuously monitored to identify rare side effects. Canada has one of the most rigorous regulatory systems to authorize new vaccines for use.
- B.C. also follows strict protocols to identify and address any safety risks associated with any vaccines used in our province. Our public health carefully monitor data from B.C. and around the world to evaluate whether vaccines are safe for use here.
- The data that is continually reviewed by public health can help us be confident that the vaccines we have here in Canada are safe, effective and will save lives.

- Serious side effects as a direct result of vaccination are extremely rare.
- Of more than 17 million doses of AstraZeneca received by people around the world, 37 cases of blood clots have been identified, which translates to 0.000218 per cent. Provincial Health Officer Dr. Henry said reiterated that any risk associated with contracting COVID-19 far outweighs any theoretical risk with the vaccines, and that the vaccines offered in Canada are safe and effective.
- The BCCDC website has information about the [vaccine approval process](#). Answers to other COVID-19 vaccine questions can be found in the [FAQs on POD](#). The same FAQs can be found in the [staff resources section](#) on phsa.ca.

Prioritization of vaccine within PHSA's workforce

- PHSA and the vaccine planning group continue to work with the regional health authorities to ensure we are following the prioritization framework and the Medical Health Officer (MHO)s' guidance regarding vaccination of all of our staff, medical staff and administrative teams, including the executive leadership team. In line with this, we can confirm our executive team members continue to be in compliance with the phases of B.C.'s COVID-19 immunization plan and with the specific guidance around timing.
- As we have shared openly at our PHSA and program town halls, there will be some leaders who receive the vaccine if and when they are eligible – for example, if they provide patient/client care or they are based at our clinical sites where there are patients/clients. This helps to ensure protection of the populations we serve.
- For staff in administrative, corporate or research roles who generally do not interact with patients/clients or are not based regularly at facilities where there are patients/clients on-site, please continue to assume that you will need to register to be immunized as part of your age-based cohorts.

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.

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.

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:
 - [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.