

Weekly WHRI Community Update – March 5, 2021

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

Dear WHRI community,

I have been thinking a lot over the past year about our role as researchers in correcting misinformation, in particular in the women's health space. In my own program of research, myths, stereotypes, and outright misinformation pervade media messages about sexual health, despite an abundance of research to the contrary. Our team was fortunate to receive funding from the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research to lead a social media campaign with the specific aim of "debunking" widespread misinformation on women's sexuality\*. My preoccupation with debunking health myths was articulated potently by our WHRI symposium keynote speaker, Dr. Timothy Caulfield, who emphasized a call to action for the research community to play its part in identifying and challenging health-related half truths. I might argue that this effort is especially pertinent and needed in the domain of women's health, where untruths are prevalent and negatively impact behaviour.

As a community, we are excited about the Public Health Office news that more COVID-19 vaccines are scheduled to arrive in British Columbia, and we have seen the first wave of some researchers onsite at the WHRI receive their vaccine. With this excitement, however, has also been an increase in misinformation being perpetuated about the vaccine safety. I urge all of us to direct people to the excellent information on the [BCCDC website on the BC COVID-19 Immunization program](#) and specifically to the [Frequently Asked Questions page](#). One of the best ways that we can debunk vaccine misinformation and instill vaccine confidence is through sharing science.

As we look forward to International Women's Day on Monday, March 8, we invite all of you to share in the celebration and sharing of women's health evidence with people you know. This year, the theme is #ChooseToChallenge; I encourage all of us to challenge the status quo of online misinformation.

Sincerely,

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

\*For those of you interested in reading the full report, link is here: <https://med-fom-brotto.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2021/02/DebunkingDesire-Social-Media-Campaign-Report.pdf>

## Updates from February 27<sup>th</sup> to March 5<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

#### [NSERC Deadline for applications to Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering program](#)

The Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering (CWSE) program aims to increase the participation and retention of women in science and engineering and to provide role models for women active in, and considering, careers in these fields. The CWSE program is regional with one chair for the British Columbia/Yukon region. The CWSE program is a 5-year program. Candidates already holding a faculty appointment must either hold a current NSERC Discovery Grant or be awarded one prior to taking up the Chair. Applications are due by March 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### [CIHR Announces Emerging COVID-19 Research Gaps and Priorities Funding Opportunity](#)

As the pandemic has evolved, so have the research needs of decision makers. There are important research gaps in Canada's response that have become evident. The Government of Canada will launch several funding opportunities under the "Emerging COVID-19 Research Gaps and Priorities" banner to address the identified research gaps in Canada. As priority gap areas are identified, additional funding opportunities will be launched. The purpose of this and upcoming funding opportunities is to provide rapid funding for projects which respond to identified gaps in COVID-19 research areas. Clinical trial or a randomized control trials can apply up to \$1,000,000 over one year, while all other types of research is \$500,000 over one year. The deadline for the Letter of Intent is March 15.

### NEW+RELEVANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES (2/27 – 3/5)

- 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)
- Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians – [2021 Grant Competition](#) – Full(3/17)
- Brain & Behavior Research Foundation – [Young Investigator Grant](#) – Full(3/25)

- US Department of Defense – [FY21 Ovarian Cancer Research Program \(various\)](#) – Pre(4/1), Full (7/8)
- Canada Research Chairs – [Canada Research Chair \(Tier 1 & 2\)](#) – UBC(4/30), Full(5/24)
- 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 – [Operating Grant: Network for Emerging Variants Research](#) – Full(3/8)
- 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)
- 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?

#### Calling Trainees! Join us March 12<sup>th</sup>, 12-1 pm for a Networking & Mentorship Event

The event, called “Hopes, Dreams, and Nightmares” is a “speed dating” style event will include two break-out sessions with mentors covering the select topics. These include: Research pathways for clinician-scientists, Interesting Journeys – non-Traditional paths to Research Careers, Health research needs all of us, Careers Outside Academia, Leadership: What is it and how to do it well, Frustrations, Fears, and Failures, The Nightmare Room, Indigenous, Black, and other trainees of Colour: racism, sexism, and other -isms in academia

For more information and to register, see the eventbrite page: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/hopes-dreams-and-nightmares-a-mentorship-networking-event-for-trainees-tickets-143403859805>

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#### International Women’s Day

Help us celebrate **International Women's Day** on March 8th with our partner, the [BC Women’s Health Foundation](#), who have compiled a list of ways you can #ChooseToChallenge through:

- Events: Attend [“Healthy Women, Healthy Companies”](#) featuring WHRI member Cindy Barha
- [Spend with Impact](#) by shopping local retailers who give back to women’s health
- Amplify and Build Awareness on Social Media using their [#ChooseToChallenge Toolkit!](#)

### PHSA Updates

#### Questions for our interim CEO? Share your ideas to guide communication

- New ideas and insights come from all levels within an organization—we want to hear from you!
- As shared in today's all-staff message, [answering a quick survey by March 12, 2021](#) 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!

#### Thank you for participating in the inaugural Black History Month at PHSA

- During the month of February, we recognized the importance of cultural diversity among our staff, physicians and patients through education, discussion and creativity.
- Across PHSA, a staff-led committee organized three moderated conversations, which had 260 attendees in total.
- BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services staff at Forensic Psychiatric Hospital hosted over 20 activities, including African/Caribbean-influenced meals and exercise/dance classes, a Black History Month poster competition, and a series of lunchtime workshops. The recordings from these workshops are available on the following topics:
  - [Resilience in the face of COVID](#)
  - [Discussion on religion, culture, diversity and family in the Black community](#)
- Staff at the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) focused on significant Black Canadians in history who have contributed to medicine and also hosted a virtual lecture by Dr. Ubaka Ogbogu.
- **We want to acknowledge that the wonderful work that took place during Black History Month should not only happen in February. This is the beginning of a dialogue and an effort that can continue throughout the year.**
- Visit the [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) page for more resources related to Black history as well as information about PHSA's anti-racism efforts.

#### 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:
  - Expense and petty cash claims: March 5 at 4 p.m.
  - 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.

### **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](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.