

Forwarded on behalf of Dr. Janet Kow, PHC Senior Medical Director Acute Care and Amanda Harvey, Corporate Director and St. Paul's Site Co-Lead.

*Please share with staff, medical staff, researchers and volunteers and post for those who do not have access to email.*



**March 19, 2020 – 7:00 PM**

***"We need to plank the curve, not just flatten it." - Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's Chief Medical Officer, March 19***

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#### **BREAKING NEWS**

- On Thursday, the Ministry of Health confirmed 40 new cases of COVID-19 in B.C. for a total of 271 cases in the province.
- There was also one additional death related to the Lynn Valley Care Centre, bringing the total number of fatalities in B.C. to eight.
- The individuals are in the Vancouver Coastal, Fraser, Island and Interior health regions, and were confirmed positive based on B.C. Centre for Disease Control testing. Of these cases, 17 are in hospital (including nine in ICU) and the rest are self-isolating at home.
- Three of these cases are inpatients at St. Paul's Hospital and one receives outpatient dialysis at the site.
- We encourage the practice of social distancing at the workplace, staying approximately 6 feet away from others whenever possible.
- As of March 16, British Columbia's health authorities moved all hospitals in the province to Outbreak Response Phase 2. This means hospitals will undertake only urgent and emergency procedures and will postpone all non-urgent scheduled surgeries. Hospitals will review operating-room capacity daily to prioritize urgent and emergency cases.
- For the latest Canadian updates, visit the **Public Health Agency of Canada** website.
- For the latest global case counts, please see the WHO situation reports, **available here**.

The Province has created 1 888 COVID-19 to connect British Columbians needing non-medical information about COVID-19. This includes the latest information on travel

recommendations and social distancing, as well as access to support and resources from the provincial and federal governments. 1 888 COVID-19 is available seven days a week, from 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. in 110 languages. The 811 number is also in place for medical-related COVID-19 questions.

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**VIDEO MESSAGE FROM DR. JANET KOW, PHC SENIOR MEDICAL DIRECTOR ACUTE CARE: FLATTEN THE PPE Usage CURVE!**



[Please click here](#) to watch the video above from Dr. Janet Kow on how to flatten the curve of PPE usage.

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**Physicians as Essential Health Care Providers**

Pursuant to this directive, Health Authorities have been directed to determine which staff are essential to patient care. Determinations are to be made on a case-by-case basis. Health Authority VPs of HR are developing principles to aid decision making with respect to whether particular physicians and/or Health Care Workers (HCWs) are essential for the delivery of patient care. The following are the draft principles:

- The worker provides direct patient care and without the worker, safe direct patient care delivery and/or worker safety would be compromised (e.g. nurse, physician, care aides, etc.);

- The worker provides clinical support to direct patient care workers and without the worker, safe direct patient care delivery and/or worker safety would be compromised (e.g. laboratory technicians, pathologists, pharmacists, etc.);
  - The worker provides non-clinical support to direct patient care workers and without the worker, safe direct patient care delivery and/or worker safety would be compromised (e.g. housekeeping, supply delivery, security, etc.);
  - The worker provides administrative support to direct patient care workers and without the worker, their duties would fall to the direct patient care worker taking them away from providing direct safe patient care delivery and/or worker safety would be compromised (e.g. patient registration clerks, staffing clerks, etc.); and
  - The worker provides critical environmental support services that support the delivery of direct patient care providers (e.g. physical plant engineers; information technology workers, etc.).
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### Working remotely

Providence and IMITS are working on establishing the infrastructure needed to provision our staff for remote access through Citrix and remote desktops. In the meantime, a guide will be coming shortly that will help you determine:

- What you require to work from home
  - If you already have what you need
  - Options to support you to work from home until the remote solutions are in place
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### Virtual Health Update

**As of yesterday, March 18th, we have started provisioning physicians with some of the ~1,000 Zoom licenses we have.** Physicians can [request a license using this simple survey](#). It is important to follow this process as we need to know which email to affiliate the account with. We are working with Medical Affairs to identify which clinics are a priority and supporting them to get up and running. **Visit [this COVID-19 webpage](#) for info on the process to request and use Zoom accounts.**

**We are requesting all video visits to be done on personal devices with personal data plans** while Providence's bandwidth is being challenged during this pandemic. Once a physician has a license, they will be able to use Zoom on their home computer. Clerical staff will be able to use Zoom's web browser version on hospital computers using Providence bandwidth because they are only using the scheduling component, not the video component which is what uses bandwidth.

**We are currently working on purchasing "hotspots"** which would support virtual visits without using the hospital's internet.

**To help clerical staff start booking patients for virtual visits we'll have 3 FTEs who can provide education.** Documents we'll provide to clerks will include information for patients. We

plan on using a “train the trainer” approach for clerical staff and hope to develop champions in each clinic.

**ACTION ITEM FOR PCMs:** [Please have 1-2 clerical staff in your outpatient clinics request a Zoom license using this survey form.](#) We will then provision a license and connect with them for training. Patient visits will need to be registered in Cerner using the current “telehealth” option.

Contact [virtualvisits@providencehealth.bc.ca](mailto:virtualvisits@providencehealth.bc.ca) for support and questions.

### Resources to Help You Use Virtual Health

[Virtual Health webpage on the COVID-19 site for staff and medical staff](#)

[Patient and Care Team Digital Communication Policy](#)

[Using the Digital Communications Policy](#)

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### BC Schools officially closed

Since Tuesday’s announcement from Premier John Horgan to suspend all B.C. elementary and secondary schools until further notice to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, work is ongoing to address daycare and childcare needs for families with parents who provide crucial essential services including health care. We are working with key partners to develop a plan and more information on what this means for PHC staff will be forthcoming.

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### Supply donations

We are grateful for any and all supply donations made to Providence Health Care during this trying time. Your willingness to share any and all PPE supplies showcase how Providence staff continue to step up to the challenges before us.

We’d like to first remind everyone that currently our supplies are stable and while on site working to follow all current PPE guidelines to help us flatten the PPE curve. Donations, however, are still welcome. If you would like to donate supplies please email [SPHSiteAdmin@providencehealth.bc.ca](mailto:SPHSiteAdmin@providencehealth.bc.ca) with the following information:

1. Your name
  2. Your contact information (email address & phone number)
  3. Potential supplies available (e.g. masks, gloves, etc.)
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### Bring your scrubs back!

It's scrubs amnesty week! Search under your beds, in long lost closets and bring back any work scrubs you may have.

No questions asked. Drop them in any blue laundry bin. We'll do the rest.

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## Fake memo: use of ibuprofen (Advil)

A memo has been circulating on social media branded with the logos of PHSA, VCH and PHC, claiming to cite advice from BCCDC regarding the use of ibuprofen/Advil in relation to COVID-19.

- This is not an authentic memo and it was not issued by BCCDC or any of the health authorities.
- The information about ibuprofen is new and there is currently no clear evidence.
- In the meantime, since there are alternatives to manage fever, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), those can be used.

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## Federal Announcements RE: COVID-19

On March 18, 2020, the Prime Minister announced a new set of economic measures to help stabilize the economy during this challenging period with regards to COVID-19. These measures, delivered as part of the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, will provide up to \$27 billion in direct support to Canadian workers and businesses. This is what we know so far:

### Temporary income support for workers:

For Canadians without paid sick leave but are sick, quarantined or forced to stay home to care for children, the Government is:

- Waiving the one-week waiting period for those individuals in imposed quarantine that claim Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits. This temporary measure will be in effect as of March 15, 2020.
- Waiving the requirement to provide a medical certificate to access EI sickness benefits.
- Introducing the Emergency Care Benefit providing up to \$900 bi-weekly, for up to 15 weeks. This flat-payment Benefit would be administered through the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and provide income support to: Workers, including the self-employed, who are quarantined or sick with COVID-19 but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits.

### Childcare benefits:

- The Canadian Government has agreed to temporarily boost Canada Child Benefit payments. The Government is proposing to increase the maximum annual Canada Child Benefit (CCB) payment amounts, only for the 2019-20 benefit year, by \$300 per child. The overall increase for families receiving CCB will be approximately \$550 on average; these families will receive an extra \$300 per child as part of their May payment.

### Flexibility for taxpayers:

- Extend the tax filing deadline for individuals to June 1, and allow all taxpayers to defer, until after August 31, 2020, the payment of any income tax amounts that become owing.

### Increased flexibility to lenders to defer mortgage payments:

- The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and other mortgage insurers offer tools to lenders that can assist homeowners who may be experiencing financial

difficulty. These include payment deferral, loan re-amortization, capitalization of outstanding interest arrears and other eligible expenses, and special payment arrangements.

- The Government, through CMHC, is providing increased flexibility for homeowners facing financial difficulties to defer mortgage payments on homeowner CMHC-insured mortgage loans. CMHC will permit lenders to allow payment deferral beginning immediately.

#### Student loans:

- Placing a six-month interest-free moratorium on the repayment of Canada Student Loans for all individuals currently in the process of repaying these loans.

#### Low income families:

- Provide additional assistance to individuals and families with low and modest incomes with a special top-up payment under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) credit.

#### At the Canadian border:

- The Prime Minister and the U.S. President have agreed that both countries will temporarily restrict all non-essential travel across the Canadian border. Essential travel will continue to ensure the flow of supply chains in both countries.

Please note information regarding COVID-19 is changing quickly. For the most up to date information, please visit the [Government of Canada COVID-19 website](#).

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### **Looking for a way to help? Donate blood today!**

As we see businesses and services shut down to help stem the rising tide of COVID-19 cases, there are some things we can't shut down: Blood Services is one of those things. Our patients haven't stopped needing essential blood services.

Unfortunately, as our families and communities retreat into smaller social pods and withdraw from public activities for their safety, blood services is seeing a spike in appointment cancellations meaning a drop in donations.

Simultaneously, many of our community members are feeling powerless in the face of this crisis and want to know, "what can I do to contribute without putting myself and others at risk?" Donating blood is a vital way we can all help.

Donors can be assured that they will stay safe and healthy while helping to keep someone else alive thanks to [Blood Services'](#) stringent infection-control protocols and a by-appointment system for donation.

We all want to feel some sense of control in the face of uncertainty, and that there is something meaningful we can do. Let others know this is something vital they can do.

For more information about Blood Services COVID 19 safety protocols or to book a donation appointment visit: <https://blood.ca/covid19>

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## Questions or Concerns?

If you have questions or concerns, please email [COVID-19@providencehealth.bc.ca](mailto:COVID-19@providencehealth.bc.ca).

## Information and resource links:

PHC has a website for staff, medical staff, and researchers to address concerns, questions, protocols and guidelines around sick-leave and compensation-in-lieu for COVID-19. [Click here](#) to view the website. This website will be updated daily and is accessible from work and home on your mobile or desktop devices. **THIS SHOULD BE YOUR SOURCE OF TRUTH FOR INFORMATION.**