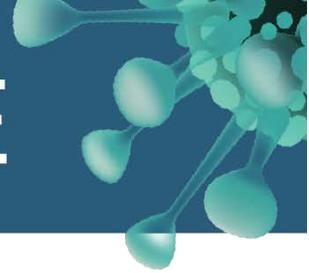


COVID-19 UPDATE



Physician Coordination Centre Bulletin

May 28, 2020

Update on new and existing COVID-19 cases

- On May 27th, the Ministry of Health confirmed 9 new cases of COVID-19 in B.C. for a total of 2550 cases in the province. Fraser Health has had 1267 cases.
- Of this total, 7 patients are in intensive care or critical care units.
- Total number of deaths as of May 27, 2020 was 162 deaths in B.C, with 69 deaths in Fraser Health.
- Fraser Health has 22 current hospitalized patients of which 2 are in our ICU/HAU settings.
- Fraser Health staff and medical staff that are currently COVID-19+ are 15.

Source: CEO Update May 27, 2020 & BCCDC

For detailed case counts please refer to the BCCDC COVID-19 [Dashboard](#) & Surveillance Reports on their [webpage](#)

CEO Town Hall with Physicians

JOIN US FOR A CONVERSATION WITH THE CEO AND MEDICAL EXPERTS

- Update from Fraser Health CEO, Dr. Victoria Lee followed by a moderated conversation and general Q&A using SLIDO (www.slido.com; event code #medstaff)
 - **SLIDO remains open.** Post your questions early [here](#) for our next conversation on June 8.
 - **Topic for June 8:** Public Health including contact tracing, preparation for a second wave and management of assessment clinics
 - **Upcoming Meetings** – June 8, June 22, July 20, Aug 24 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
 - Connect by Skype or t-con. Details in your email & text message invites. Or, request the physiciancoordinationcentre@fraserhealth.ca

TOP QUESTIONS FROM PHYSICIANS

On Monday, May 21st, 156 physicians joined Dr. Victoria Lee and Medical Experts at the weekly COVID-19 Town Hall. Panelists included Dr. Anson Koo, Dr. Sharon Vipler, Thomas Clyne-Salley and other senior leaders. Below are all the unanswered questions. Dr. Anson Koo, PMD/RDH MHSU, Dr. Elizabeth Brodtkin, EMD IPC, Dr. Sharon Vipler, PMD/RDH Addiction Medicine, Dr. Dave Konkin, RMD Surgery, Dr. Feisal Mohamedali, RMD Anesthesiology, Thomas Clyne-Salley, Leader Culture Transformation and Rita Ciconte Leader Health & Safety have provided the answers below.

Q: With COVID-19, what is the plan for admitted psychiatric patients when there are no IPU beds available?

- Rapid and efficient assessment, pulling from emergency, and discharge of patients is a priority of the MHSU program. Our hospital mental health beds are a regional resource, and we transfer patients across sites every day in order to facilitate access and flow and to decongest emergency departments. Our daily mental health access and flow meetings involve all hospital sites and place a focus on using all existing bed capacity across our region. An action plan has been implemented to decrease the number of ALC patients in hospital. MHSU Program Medical Directors and Executive Director review every ALC patient on a weekly basis to look at all options for discharge from hospital. Tertiary psychiatry beds, housing program beds and CRESST facilities in

COVID-19 UPDATE



New Westminster, Surrey and Abbotsford are protected to prioritize patients currently in hospital. Pre-COVID-19, our inpatient units were running at 110% of full census, we are now running at 93%. We will be adding 45 new regional mental health inpatient beds in the Royal Columbian Hospital Mental Health and Substance Use Wellness Centre to open July 2020.

Q: Has there been an increase in requests for psychiatric consultations or mental health services during the pandemic compared to the same time last year?

- We do not yet have complete data. In general, outpatient and community-based mental health programs have been seeing similar numbers of patients pre- and post-pandemic. Virtual care in these settings has been well received by patients and clinicians and allowed care to continue without interruption. In our hospital emergency departments, there was an initial decrease in psychiatric presentations, but in the last two weeks, emergency psychiatric presentations have returned to pre-COVID levels; degree of acuity of these patients has increased.

Q: Any suggestions to primary care physicians in the community to help care for psychiatric patients to prevent Emergency department visits or admissions?

- The full spectrum of Fraser Health mental health and substance use services are available to primary care colleagues and patients in the community. Referrals are made to local mental health teams with request for psychiatric consultation. The use of virtual care in our community based and outpatient programs has increased capacity and decreased wait lists. Residents of Surrey and Delta can access the Psychiatric Urgent Care Response Centre located on the campus of Surrey Memorial Hospital and is available on a walk-in basis. Patients struggling with substance use issues can be referred to the Substance Use Services Access Team (SUSAT) as a gateway into individualized substance use services. Children and youth ages 6 to 18 can access mental health crisis support through our START program which can be accessed either by professional referral or self referral. Click [here](#) and then going to the COVID-19 update section for a comprehensive list of free mental health resources for the public. These have been vetted by the MHSU program. Of note, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is in the process of significantly expanding virtual counselling services.

Q: What is available for outpatient accessible care for people with alcohol use disorder?

- The addiction medicine department at Fraser Health has been working towards rolling out an outpatient service that would help provide care for individuals with alcohol use disorder. The current plan is to expand the services at Creekside Rapid Access Addiction Clinic to include care for individuals with alcohol use disorder. We expect to be able to accept patients by this summer.

Q: Why do we use the term most vulnerable?

- The word vulnerable was chosen at a provincial level. In this particular case, the word was meant not so much to refer to the patients but more so in reference to the fact that these patient populations were thought to be at higher vulnerability in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, given lack of housing or other resources or supports required to safely shelter in place.

Q: The recent outbreak at Abbotsford Regional Hospital created distress for physicians and staff. Can you share how physicians and staff were informed and what actions have been taken to prevent additional outbreaks?

- When the first COVID-19 case was identified at Abbotsford Regional Hospital, immediate action was taken to implement enhanced infection and prevention measures.

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- As with all cases, contact tracing was done and those staff and physicians who were identified as close contacts to the case were notified and advised precautions and testing required where needed.
- Abbotsford Hospital's executive director communicated information about the outbreak with staff and physicians by email.
- You may have heard concerns expressed in the media about transmission occurring due to lack of available PPE at the site. There is no evidence of any PPE breach during patient care that has led to this outbreak. All staff were wearing appropriate PPE and taking all appropriate precautions while in care areas.
- Preliminary results of our investigation show that vigilance is required in non-patient care areas. Enhanced strategies have been implemented to reduce risks in these areas.

Q: Has the province considered funding operating rooms (OR) to run 24/7 to deal with the elective surgical list?

- There is a mandate from the province to consider expansion of the current OR hours. This may include extended hours or weekends. With limited anesthesiologists limits running all ORs during the day. Studies have shown that the incidence of errors exponentially increases as you get into the most unsociable hours of the night. Running elective cases at this time of the night could unnecessarily increase the risk to elective patients (where the risk/benefit ratio does not favour proceeding with surgery.) Surgeries have a cascading effect throughout our health care system. Patients need to be assessed and optimized for surgery, they have to be admitted and prepped in surgical daycare, need to be recovered in PACU and need ward beds for their post-op care. We just do not have the resources or infrastructure to run our ORs 24/7.

Q: Can you share easy to access and free online mental health resources specific to physicians and direct care providers?

- Access resources for physicians and staff on the Fraser Health website at fraserhealth.ca/yourhealthmatters
- Digital mental health program to manage COVID-19 stress and anxiety: Sign up on the [Starling Minds](https://www.starlingminds.com/) registration page using access code: FHAWELLNESS
- [Careforcaregivers.ca](https://www.careforcaregivers.ca/) (peer support, webinars, online mental health resources)

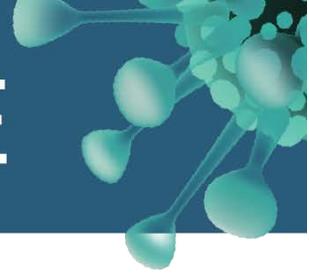
Q: With the re-opening plan, what is the approach for residents in long-term care, residential care and receiving home care?

- Home health providers will do virtual visits wherever possible. Home care nurses will facilitate video conferencing with GP MRPs when visiting frail seniors in their homes for ongoing care planning. PPE will be used when in-person visits are required
- In LTC, extensive guidelines are being developed in consultation with the MHO regarding a hybrid model of virtual and on-site visits. The current recommendation is virtual visits with on-site visits only if necessary.

Q: What wellness supports are being planned for physicians for COVID-19 recovery phase and beyond?

- Supports include virtual drop in-sessions, online mental health programs, streaming video modules on managing stress and anxiety, online relaxation exercises, psychological first aid tools & counselling support. Also dedicated training for physician wellness advocates in each community to provide one-on-one support to their peers. Learn more at medicalstaff.fraserhealth.ca/covid-19 or fraserhealth.ca/yourhealthmatters and on the <https://www.fraserhealth.ca/employees/clinical-resources/coronavirus-information/well-being-and-psychological-supports>

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Q: Can you share an update on providing masks for all patients ?

- The issue of provision of masks to all patients, including those in emergency waiting rooms, has been escalated to the Province via the Provincial Supply Chain Logistics Committee which is chaired by the Deputy Minister of Health. We are awaiting formal communication from the province at this time. The current recommendation is that masks may be provided to patients during times where patient volumes are high and the waiting room space is too small to maintain physical distancing (six feet separation.)
- **Q: Can you share what is being done to monitor physical distancing, preventative and other safety measure in all areas of hospitals?** Fraser Health is currently working on the COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Plan which will include completing visual inspections of each department using an Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) recovery checklist to identify compliance levels with recommended IPC and health and safety exposure control measures and any gaps that need to be addressed. This includes considerations on the use of engineering controls, establishing clear physical distancing indicators, guidance on maximum occupancy (e.g. elevators, staff only spaces, waiting rooms etc.), provision of education and training, and ensuring processes are in place for provision of PPE where applicable. Completion of the inspections will be in the next couple of weeks.

Q: Will restrictions on N95 mask use be lifted allowing care providers to determine the level of protection needs based on the individual patient?

- The focus throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic has been to reinforce use of the right PPE at the right time, including use of N95 respirators. When providing care to a patient that is ill with an airborne infection or performing an AGP then an N95 respirator for which you have been fit-tested in the last two years should be worn. If a direct care provider believes they have underlying conditions that need to be accommodated this should be discussed with their supervisor, manager or medical director.

Q: Do you see a time where the emphasis will shift to masking patients rather than director care providers?

- The implementation of extended use of eye protection and procedure masks was done to protect staff from patients as well as others in their work environment (including co-workers) when physical distancing cannot be sustained throughout their work shift and also to help sustain PPE supplies. This practice was a directive from the Ministry and it will remain in place until rescinded by the Ministry. There is also a role for masking patients, particularly in the emergency department, and a request to supply all emergency patients with masks has been escalated to the Provincial Supply Chain Logistics Committee.

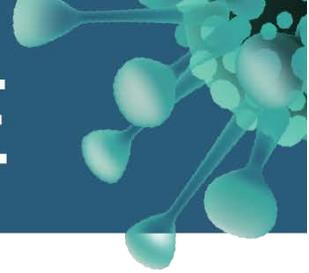
PHYSICIAN RESOURCES

What We Heard At The May 25 Forum

Substance Use

- Substance Use Access Team has increased their times and availability. Launched rapid response addiction services and answering DoFP addiction medicine questions. Also use of virtual options have expanded in-reach; patients are now connected virtually to physicians at clinics.
- Royal Columbian Hospital and Surrey Memorial Hospital are the only two hospitals that have a full complement addiction team (a new team). In a few weeks there will be a provincial 24/7 addiction medicine telephone support line modelled on RACE available to all providers. Stay tuned for virtual in-reach consults.

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Patient Safety & Experience

- EDs are highlighting preventable admissions, opportunities for patients to be treated in the community to prevent admissions and connecting patients to community partners when patients are discharged. Also now using dashboards and predictive analytics to be more proactive
- Work is going on provincially to address changes in ambulatory, long-term care etc. Information will be shared.

Wellness and Recovery

- Establishment of a recovery and reconciliation center to evolve well-being supports for all at Fraser Health to transition from a response to a recovery phase and build resilience to deal with future pandemics

PPE

- Ministry of Health (MOH) just approved to provide masks to all patients in the emergency; awaiting formal directives from MOH to implement

Mental Health

- Virtual care uptake has been seen across MHSU practices by- both physicians and patients. The next frontier is the introduction of digital interventions e.g. apps for anxiety, suicide prevention, risk management etc.

CEO Updates

- Check your Fraser Health emails for [daily CEO Updates](#) (note: intranet link) for specific data, comments and responses to questions on COVID-19. Recent highlights include:
 - Now in [phase 2 of BC's Restart Plan](#), let's ensure we continue to be vigilant, methodical and patient.
 - New story platform *Humans of Fraser Health: COVID-19 edition* found at fraserhealth.ca/ourstories has been created to share your contributions and learn about your colleagues contributions.
 - No evidence of PPE breach in Abbotsford Regional Hospital outbreak.
 - Provincial government updates on child care, school education and BC Transit are [here](#).
 - New MOH policy on visitors and essential visits. [See here](#).

Surgical Renewal Plan

- Surgical renewal commenced May 19th, 2020.
- [Virtual pre-admission for surgery to keep you safe at home – May 11, 2020](#)
- [Additional elective surgery information can be found here.](#)

PPE Supplies for Community Physicians

- Connect with the Division of Family Practice in your region to place orders for PPE. For care providers who are not supported through their Division or are unsure where to go, contact the PPE Community Support Desk at PPECommunitysupport@fraserhealth.ca or call 604-561-2037. [View more details.](#)

Information Technology Resources

- Visit [Medical Staff COVID-19 website](#) section on 'IMIT resources' for more.

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We Want Your Feedback



Survey Coming Soon

- Your Opinion Matters. Look out for our survey coming soon in a bulletin to see what you like and what you don't

CARING FOR SELF - WELLNESS & SUPPORT

Medical Staff Psychological and Well Being Supports available

- Visit [Medical Staff COVID-19 website](#) section on 'Wellness, Support and Coaching' for information on wellness training opportunities, available supports and resources, anxiety reduction tools, resiliency framework and more.

Physician Coaching Service (30 or 60 minute virtual sessions - no charge)

- Certified coaches provide 1-1 coaching to support decision-making and urgent action
 - Medical Leaders – contact physiciancoordinationcentre@fraserhealth.ca
 - Physicians, retired physicians, residents, medical students – contact Physician Health Program 604-398-4300 or info@physicianhealth.com
 - Article from a group of physician coaches: [Thriving while surviving – why we need more healthcare coaching support during the COVID-19 crisis.](#)

REMINDER ABOUT MEDIA

If you receive a media inquiry or see media at any of our locations please contact the Fraser Health media line at 604-613-0794 or by email at media@fraserhealth.ca.

Physician Coordination Centre

physiciancoordinationcentre@fraserhealth.ca

Previous Bulletins:	March 31, 2020	April 3, 2020	April 8, 2020	April 16, 2020
	April 21, 2020	April 24, 2020	April 30, 2020	May 7, 2020
	May 14, 2020	May 21, 2020		

The information in this bulletin pertains to physicians and medical staff and is a summary of updates and new resources on COVID-19. Please continue to visit the [Fraser Health Medical Staff web page](#) for additional up-to-date information and resources.

For Physician Coordination Centre membership see [here](#).

Dr. Kevin Afra, Elizabeth Armstrong, Dr. Neil Barclay, Dr. Peter Barnsdale, Dr. Ralph Belle, Dr. Elizabeth Brodtkin, Rita Ciconte, Dr. John Diggle, Dr. Raymond Dong, Dr. Joshua Greggain, Dr. Roland Guasparini, Dr. John Hamilton, Dr. Rob McDermid, Dr. Sarah Ostler, Dr. Connie Ruffo, Dr. Akbar Mithani, Dr. Pam Thornton, Dr. Michael Yatscoff, Jag Sandhu, Kavita Sarwal, Jemimah Membreve, Tomi Daramola

Dr. Dayan Muthayan
Co-Chair, Physician Coordination Centre
dayan.muthayan@fraserhealth.ca | 604-217-6107

Dr. Amyeen Hassanali
Co-Chair, Physician Coordination Centre
amyeen.hassanali@fraserhealth.ca | 604-644-5564