

COVID-19 UPDATE

Physician Coordination Centre Bulletin

April 16, 2020

Update on new and existing COVID-19 cases

- On April 15, the Ministry of Health confirmed 44 new cases of COVID-19 in B.C. for a total of 1561 cases in the province.
- Of this total, 59 patients are in intensive care or critical care units
- The total number of deaths as of April 15, 2020 was 72 deaths in the province, with 16 deaths in Fraser Health
- Fraser Health has 623 cases (April 15, 2020), of which 32 are in our ICU/HAU settings

Source: CEO Update April 15, 2020 & BCCDC

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

TOP QUESTIONS FROM PHYSICIANS

227 physicians participated on Monday, April 13 at the special town hall “Conversation with an Expert Panel”. Panelists included Drs. Neil McLean, Neil Barclay, John Diggle, Michael Paletta, Mark Ballard, Kevin Afra, Elizabeth Brodtkin and other senior leaders. Below are the top unanswered questions that due to time were left unanswered. Future bulletins will provide responses to the top remaining questions.

Q: Given stability of hospital caseload, could a small portion of elective or day surgeries resume (such as cancer surgery) with appropriate infection control precautions?

- We are currently doing urgent, emergent and oncologic surgeries. We have started developing strategies to re-introduce elective surgeries and await further provincial direction.

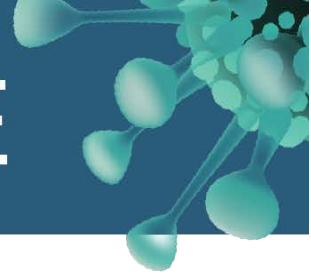
Q: Can we get the COVID infection again? Can we find out the level of our immunity by testing to prepare for possible re infection?

- Cases have been reported of patients having positive COVID-19 testing after two consecutive negative tests. It is unknown whether this reflects false negative testing, relapse, or reinfection. Preliminary evidence suggests an antibody response after COVID-19 infection. Whether these antibodies are protective, and for how long they last, remains unknown at present. This is an area of active investigation worldwide.

Q: What is the treatment guideline and medications for COVID +ve patients who live in cohorted facilities like Assisted Living or independent retirement homes?

- There are no proven therapies for the prevention or treatment of COVID-19. Management of ambulatory outpatients with mild disease is supportive (including patients in assisted living and retirement homes). Antibiotics are not routinely recommended. Acetaminophen can be used preferentially for symptomatic management. Routine corticosteroids should be avoided in COVID-19 unless other indications exist (e.g., COPD exacerbation).
- A PPO is in development for Long Term Care.

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PHYSICIAN RESOURCES

What we heard at the April 13 forum

COVID Patient Care/Outcomes

- On average, 90% of ventilated COVID patients in FHA are weaned off the vent and surviving
- ~8% of cases currently are health care workers (many are from community spread, not patient care exposure. In the past two weeks, very few if any HCW cases speaking to the efficacy of our PPE protocols)
- For detailed demographics of infected population visit [BCCDC COVID](#) page here.
- We are still preparing for a surge, though seeing a leveling off with critical care patients.

PPEs

- We have sufficient supply of PPE with donations being channeled through SafeCare BC.
- Masks have been provided to patients who have symptoms e.g. respiratory infection to protect other patients and staff. We have not insisted on masks for all patients and visitors (very few) to preserve the limited numbers for our staff. With additional supplies coming we will be revisiting this.
- All operating room staff have been asked to don N95. We are not testing all patients who are asymptomatic in accordance with provincial guidelines (as sensitivity of the test is low ~60% and thus could result in large numbers of false negative); avoid overwhelming system capacity
- A provincial group is looking at reusability and sterilization of N95 through widespread testing. Reuse will only be implemented as the last stage of the contingency plan.

COVID Testing

- The sensitivity of naso-pharyngeal swabs ranges from 60-90% - no gold standard at present
- Fraser Health has procured a new machine for the lab to allow in-house testing for COVID19 and other pathogens, improving our turnaround times. This will be operational ~by the end of April
- Generally a maximum of two NP swabs are sufficient in the setting of negative results.

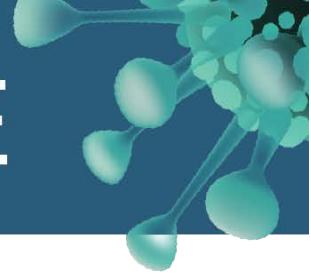
CEO Updates

- You are encouraged to check your Fraser Health emails for [daily CEO Updates](#) (note: Intranet link) for specific data on COVID-19 and responses to top questions including:
 - Provincial state of emergency extended to end of day April 28, 2020.
 - Provincial decision not to share community-specific data to protect privacy and ensure there is no false sense of security, as this virus is not limited to just a few communities.
 - Medical staff exposed or confirmed COVID-19 positive should link with [Doctors of BC](#) regarding Physician Disability Insurance Plan.
 - Information on reprocessing of N95 respirators is updated and [available here](#).
 - Supporting Corrections Canada to prevent further transmission of COVID-19 at Mission Institution including a Mobile Medical Unit and a designated, secure site in Abbotsford Regional Hospital for those who have tested positive from Mission Institution.
 - Announcement of \$5 million new funding to expand existing mental health programs.

Medical Staff Presidents Council Open Letter

- [Letter](#) expressing confidence & support on actions taken by Drs. Lee and Henry during the pandemic.

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COVID Testing

- There are no changes to testing guidelines since our last bulletin. The most recent testing guidelines (April 8) can be found by [clicking here](#).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Infection Control Practices

- Common Questions & Answers about PPE can be found by [clicking here](#)
- [View the Fraser Health COVID-19 Q&As for additional information on PPE](#)

Managing COVID Patients

- [Click here](#) for guidance on antimicrobial & immunomodulatory therapy in patients with COVID-19.
- New version of the COVID-19 PPO is now on WebImformPrint and can be viewed [here](#).
- Guidelines for managing patients in the community can be found [here](#).

Text Messaging Updates

- Receive COVID-19 updates via text messaging. Sign up [here](#) using keyword 'COVID'.

IMIT Resources

- A dedicated [mailbox](#) has been set up to support physicians with non-urgent inquiries related to any IT issues, including but not limited to email support, remote access & Meditech.

Rehabilitation for COVID-19 patients

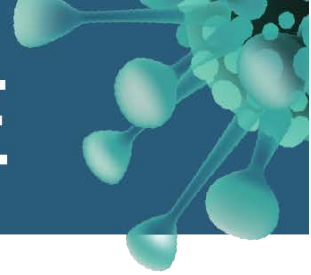
- View a recently published [guide](#) to help COVID19 discharged patients and caregivers with rehabilitation-reconditioning and strengthening-at home.
- Additionally, the Rehabilitation Network has posted a number of resources on their [intranet page](#).

Supporting Advance Care Planning (ACP) and serious illness conversations

- Resources are available to support clinicians to start or continue ACP conversations specific to COVID-19. Visit the [Medical Staff COVID web page](#), then on Clinical Resources & Forms section.

WELLNESS & SUPPORT

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Medical Staff Psychological and Well Being Supports available

- [Supports](#) vary from in-person to telephone conversations and group sessions. These include emotional support, mental health and well being, stress and anxiety management and self-care tools.
- Peer support for Fraser Health physicians using Zoom (Tuesday noon and Thursdays 6 pm) to support ourselves and each other during this crisis facilitated by Dr. Elizabeth Froese and others. [Download the Calendar on your Smartphone or Tablet](#) by clicking save.

UBC Sauder Zoom Presentation ‘Leading in Crisis in Healthcare’

- UBC Sauder is hosting complimentary sessions for physicians by Drs. Daniel Skarlicki and Doug Cochrane on April 16 and 21 – see [calendar](#) for registration details.

HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

Medical Staff Availability for COVID

- We launched the new online [Thrive Physician Availability Tool](#) for physicians to share their schedule and current availability on a rolling 14 day cycle. See [video](#).
- An invite for Thrive was sent to your preferred email from BC COVID-19 CCRM Support (April 9).
- Sharing your availability does not imply that you will be required to work.

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](#)

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

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