

# News

We welcome news items of less than 300 words; we may edit them for clarity and length. News items should be emailed to [journal@doctorsofbc.ca](mailto:journal@doctorsofbc.ca) and must include your mailing address, telephone number, and email address. All writers should disclose any competing interests.

## Medical student support for isolated BC residents

The Rural & Isolated Support Endeavour (RISE) is a student-run phone support program of the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada's Student Committee with the goal of emotionally supporting clients who live in rural areas across Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative partners medical students with clients in rural communities to provide emotional support and companionship via weekly phone/video-call check-ins

To participate, clients may either ask a health care provider for a referral or self-refer by emailing [rise.srpc@gmail.com](mailto:rise.srpc@gmail.com). Referring health care professionals are asked to complete a Health Care Professional Referral Form, available at <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=k4Q9PgRss0Oo4FCyzB1I46LKDEK477NHvi6B76jhP9dUMU9EOUEyN1ZUSDM2VzVSWUpPN0hOQzU0RS4u>. Once completed, the submitted form will be available to a volunteer communication and matching lead, who will then match a volunteer with a client. Clients will also be asked to complete a client intake form. Clients must be over 18 years of age to participate.

More information is available in a physician handout, online at <https://bit.ly/33V3qg6>. RISE is modeled after the Student-Senior Isolation Prevention Partnership with permission.

## Patient resource for returning to work

BC Family Doctors has created a resource that provides guidance for patients who have questions about the safety of returning to work. The straightforward decision map helps individuals identify when they should call their employer, when to call WorkSafeBC, and when to call their family doctor with questions and

concerns. Access the resource on the BC Family Doctors website at <https://bcfamilydocs.ca/return-to-work-questions>.

## Royal Columbian's new mental health, substance use centre

The new Royal Columbian Hospital Mental Health and Substance Use Wellness Centre increases access to culturally safe mental health and addictions care. The nearly 37 000-square-metre facility includes 75 inpatient beds along with outpatient services, including a mood disorder clinic, expanded clinics for adolescent psychiatry, reproductive psychiatry and psychiatric urgent referral, group therapy, and neuropsychology clinics.

To support people living with substance use challenges, the centre will provide expanded addiction services through a new addictions medicine and substance use clinic. It will also be the new regional site for access to neurostimulation in an electroconvulsive therapy clinic. The centre is the first in the Fraser Health region to offer a specialized unit for seniors dealing with acute depression, anxiety, or psychosis.

The centre was built using a patient-centred design with input from patients, families, psychiatrists, and clinicians to create an inviting, spacious, therapeutic sanctuary featuring plenty of windows and natural light where patients can feel safe, respected, and supported in their recovery. To further support a diverse and culturally safe environment, First Nations artwork will help create a calming and welcoming environment.

Inpatient units include spaces for patients to be social, spaces to spend time alone, a lounge for visiting with family, friends, and other patients, a secure outdoor patio, and an exercise room. All patient rooms are private spaces with en suite bathrooms.

For more information, visit [www.fraserhealth.ca/Service-Directory/Locations/New-Westminster/mental-health-and-substance-use-wellness-centre-royal-columbian-hospital](http://www.fraserhealth.ca/Service-Directory/Locations/New-Westminster/mental-health-and-substance-use-wellness-centre-royal-columbian-hospital).

## Stabilization care proposed for youth following an overdose

The BC government has introduced amendments to the Mental Health Act to improve the care and safety of youth under the age of 19 who are experiencing severe problematic substance use by providing short-term involuntary emergency stabilization care following an overdose.

Based on the advice of the BC Children's Hospital and other child and youth advocates, the changes will enable hospitals to keep youth safe immediately following an overdose and are designed to prioritize the best interest of youth and facilitate better connections to voluntary culturally safe care.

Youth living with severe problematic substance use who are admitted to a hospital following a life-threatening overdose can be admitted for stabilization care for up to 48 hours or until their decision-making capacity is restored, for a maximum of 7 days. This short-term emergency care will be provided at hospitals throughout the province where there is an existing designated psychiatric unit or observation unit. Following the period of stabilization care, youth will be connected to supports and services in the community. For more information, visit <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020MMHA0032-001139>.

## New nurse-practitioner primary care clinics

Residents of Nanaimo and Surrey now have access to primary care clinics led by nurse practitioners. The Province launched Nanaimo's Nexus Primary Care Clinic and Surrey's Axis Primary Care Clinic, in collaboration with the nurses and nurse practitioners along with local health authorities and other partners, to provide team-based primary care services to residents.

Nurse practitioners can work on their own, or with physicians and other health

professionals, to provide care across a person's lifespan. This includes diagnosing and treating illnesses, ordering and interpreting tests, prescribing medications, and performing medical procedures.

The Nanaimo clinic started opening gradually in June 2020, with two full-time nurse practitioners. By mid-September the clinic will have four more nurse practitioners, two registered nurses, a social worker, and mental health clinicians to provide team-based care. Patients can register to be attached to the Surrey clinic as of 10 August; it opens on 8 September. When fully staffed, 10 full-time equivalent health care staff will work at the Surrey clinic, including nurse practitioners, registered nurses, social workers, and mental health clinicians.

## New 24/7 addiction medicine clinician support line

A new resource is available for physicians who face challenges treating patients with addictions. The 24/7 Addiction Medicine Clinician Support line, supported by the BC Centre on Substance Use, provides telephone consultation to physicians and other health care providers involved in addiction and substance use care and treatment. Callers are connected with an addiction medicine specialist who can consult and support in screening, assessment, and management of substance use and substance use disorders. Support line staff can be reached at 778 945-7619. For more information, visit [www.bccsu.ca/24-7](http://www.bccsu.ca/24-7).

## Seeking Canadian health care workers for study on moral distress during COVID-19 pandemic

A team from Lawson Health Research Institute is seeking 500 Canadian health care workers to participate in a study on moral distress and psychological well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants will complete online surveys once every 3 months for a total of 18 months. The goal is to better understand the pandemic's impact on health care workers in order to minimize moral distress and support well-being during future pandemic events.

Moral distress is a form of psychological distress that occurs following an event that conflicts with a person's moral values or standards. Through previous research with military populations, moral distress has been linked to an increased risk of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression.

Participating health care workers will answer questions about moral-ethical dilemmas and symptoms of depression, PTSD, general anxiety, and burnout.

The team hopes that results can be used to cultivate wellness at the outset of future pandemics. This might include guiding emergency preparedness policies and moral-ethical decision-making training modules. They hope that by tracking psychological outcomes over time, they can identify early warning signs of distress that can be targeted with early interventions.

The researchers will also ask questions that explore how the pandemic is affecting health care delivery, such as increased reliance on virtual care appointments, and whether health care workers are satisfied with these changes.

This project is in partnership with the Centre of Excellence on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Related Mental Health Conditions. Learn more about the study and access the survey at <https://participaid.co/studies/bYE4Ob>.

## Health Worker Data Alliance: Monitoring the health of health care workers during COVID-19

The Health Worker Data Alliance (HWDA) is a new organization using a free, anonymous survey to collect unbiased data on the PPE needs, physical health, mental health, and risk factors facing the health care workforce to better direct administrators and officials in providing resources to front-line workers. Health workers are 3 times more likely to contract COVID-19, and at present, there is a lack of data across institutions to understand the need and make informed decisions to support the physical and mental well-being of health care workers. By partnering with the HWDA, organizations and institutions can gain access to aggregated



## COVID-19 test, video for children

BC Children's Hospital has created a video to show to children before they undergo a test for COVID-19. It is designed to help them know what to expect and reduce anxiety. The video is included in the BCCDC's COVID-19: Pediatric Testing Guidelines for BC, available at [www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_PediatricTestingGuidelines.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_PediatricTestingGuidelines.pdf). The video also shows health care providers across BC how to test children with the hold and distraction methods, and more. For more information, visit [www.bcchildrens.ca/about/news-stories/stories/helping-children-through-a-covid-19-test](http://www.bcchildrens.ca/about/news-stories/stories/helping-children-through-a-covid-19-test).

data and weekly feedback from the front lines, allowing them to evaluate the response and adapt in real time.

For more information about the alliance, visit [www.healthworkerdata.org](http://www.healthworkerdata.org). If you are a health care worker, take the survey to help examine the emotional, physical, and occupational experiences of health workers as they contend with the challenges of COVID-19 at <https://survey.healthworkerdata.org> and spread the word. If you are a health care administrator, policymaker, or other stakeholder, register to participate at [www.healthworkerdata.org/join](http://www.healthworkerdata.org/join).