

# 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.

## Resources to support transgender patients

Trans Care BC has created resources to help family physicians provide care to transgender and gender-diverse patients. Online education, medical forms, clinical resources, and patient materials are available at [www.phsa.ca/trans-carebc/health-professionals](http://www.phsa.ca/trans-carebc/health-professionals). The Trans Care BC care coordination team (for patients and providers) is accessible at 1 866 999-1514 or [transcareteam@phsa.ca](mailto:transcareteam@phsa.ca).

## 2020 Joule Innovation Grant winners from BC

Joule (a subsidiary of the CMA) selected 12 recipients for its 2020 Innovation Grants. The recipients are CMA members from across Canada and will share \$500 000 in funding to develop or expand their projects. For more information on the grant program and all of this year's recipients, visit <https://joulecm.ca/innovate/grants>.



**Dr Melissa Lem** is a Vancouver family physician and a clinical assistant professor in the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Medicine. She is also director of the BC Parks Foundation's Parks Prescriptions (PaRx) program, Canada's first national, evidence-based nature prescription program. The program is driven

## Income replacement benefits due to COVID-19



Doctors of BC members have been heavily impacted by the global pandemic caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, working on the front line to help the public while dealing with the prospect of getting sick themselves. There are several options available to physicians (and MOAs) who are seeking an income replacement benefit during a period of illness resulting from COVID-19.

Physicians enrolled in the government-funded physicians' disability insurance (PDI) can access sickness benefits under regular disability certificate provisions, but can also access income benefits if quarantining due to an exposure, whether exposed to the virus inside or outside their occupation. There is a maximum of 14 days

available under quarantine claims for PDI (nontaxable). For physicians with Disability INCOMEprotect or Professional Expense Insurance, benefits are available after completing the elimination period (continuous period of sickness required) for those with a positive or presumptive positive test for COVID-19. If these options do not apply and physicians are quarantining due to an occupational exposure, the negotiated quarantine income replacement (QIR) benefit is available. The QIR will pay for a maximum of 2 weeks in the amount of \$3050 (taxable). This benefit is available multiple times if a physician faces new exposures and has to quarantine.

MOAs may have some disability insurance if enrolled in the Doctors of BC Health Benefits Trust Fund Plan, which can pay benefits after 17 weeks of continuous illness following a positive COVID-19 test. MOAs may also qualify for the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit for periods of self-isolation or employment insurance sickness benefits for up to 15 weeks at 55% of earnings up to a maximum of \$573 a week following a positive test or forced quarantine following an exposure.

Physicians are encouraged to review their coverage options every 3 to 5 years or upon a life event to ensure they are equipped with the right insurance for their needs. For more information on available benefits or to speak with a licensed insurance advisor about options, contact the Insurance Department at [insurance@doctorsofbc.ca](mailto:insurance@doctorsofbc.ca) or 604 638-2904.

—**Sam Morris, Insurance Administration Manager, Members' Products and Services, Doctors of BC**

by health care professionals who want to improve their patients' health by connecting them to nature.

Dr Lem has been awarded a \$50 000 grant, in the Sustainable Health Care category, which will allow her to scale PaRx across Canada, build the web application, develop and implement a climate points system for a related app, and create a CME-accredited online module to train prescribers to effectively prescribe nature. A key feature of the program is an app that will incentivize and track time spent in nature, and pair patients with nature experiences with the aim of reducing their stress, anxiety, and depression, and engage them in preventing and mitigating the effects of climate change. Health care providers who register with PaRx will be able to prescribe nature-based activities like planting trees, growing food, or taking part in watershed restoration projects with the aim of improving their patients' mental health.

Dr Lem is also president-elect of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, a widely published writer, and an experienced media personality. She has been researching, writing, and speaking about the connection between nature and health for more than a decade.

For more information about PaRx, visit [www.parkprescriptions.ca](http://www.parkprescriptions.ca).



**Dr Abhi Cherukupalli** is a family medicine resident at the University of British Columbia who is passionate about global health and medical innovation. He started the medical device

company Tractus Medical, and designed a device for the treatment of wrist fractures. The device offers consistent fixed traction throughout the treatment and casting process, and can improve the speed and accuracy of the treatment and increase the flow of patients in the emergency department. It can be operated by a single physician when a patient presents with a broken wrist, rather than multiple physicians having to work simultaneously to pull on the wrist and put the broken bones back into place.

It can also offer a more effective treatment that does not require surgery, decreasing a patient's involvement with the health care system.

Dr Cherukupalli was awarded a \$10 000 grant in the Emerging Physician Innovators category. The funds will help him and his team incorporate Tractus Medical, fund prototype development and manufacturing costs of the device, apply for a provisional patent, and apply for Health Canada approval to start clinical trials.

For more information about Tractus Medical, visit <https://ca.linkedin.com/company/tractus-medical>.



**Dr Gregory Schmidt** completed his general internal medicine fellowship at the University of British Columbia. He spent 2 years designing health care systems with Indiana University and AMPATH (Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare) in rural Kenya. There he helped lead the redesign of Open MRS, the largest open-source electronic health record system used in low- and middle-income countries.

Dr Schmidt won a \$50 000 grant for his work with Bodo Health, a software startup and a virtual clinic that offers in-home speech, language, and voice services. In 8 months, Bodo Health moved from concept and research to a fully functional beta-clinic operating on its own telehealth and electronic medical record, and it is now expanding its services to four provinces.

Every year, more than 60 000 Canadians have a stroke, and stroke patients require a dedicated set of telehealth technologies for their assessment and rehabilitation. The grant, awarded in the Access to Care category, will allow Bodo Health to build tools for virtual post-stroke and neuro-rehab speech services. It will also allow Dr Schmidt and his multidisciplinary team to research, design, prototype, test, and build an integrated online stroke speech-language system; design digital tools and resources to help with face-to-face teletherapy appointments;

and hire a senior researcher to study Bodo's care model for its effectiveness, cost, and safety.

For more information about Bodo Health, visit [www.bodohealth.com](http://www.bodohealth.com).

## Are you receiving your Business Cost Premium payments?

Doctors of BC is encouraging eligible community-based doctors to confirm they are receiving the Business Cost Premium (BCP). Effective April 2020, the BCP provides a percentage premium on MSP fees for in-person consultation, visit, counseling, and complete examination services to help cover the rising rent, lease, or ownership costs of a community-based office.

### Register now

Eligible BC doctors who have not yet registered for the BCP are encouraged to do so. Doctors who meet the following criteria are eligible:

- You are responsible for some or all of the rent, lease, or ownership costs of a community-based office, either directly or indirectly.
- Your community-based office is in an eligible geographical location (e.g., Metro Vancouver, Greater Victoria). Rural Retention Program (RRP) communities are not eligible; however, the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues is working on how it may direct funds to address this issue in rural areas.
- You are entitled to receive and retain payment for the eligible fees directly from MSP (i.e., payments assigned to health authorities are not eligible for the premium).

One month after its launch, the BCP was expanded to include telehealth (phone and video) fee items for consultation, visit, counseling, and complete examination services. This temporary measure ensures that eligible physicians can continue to access the premium during the pandemic, given these services would have normally been provided in person in physicians' offices.

You may register at any time. Visit [www.doctorsofbc.ca/business-cost-premium](http://www.doctorsofbc.ca/business-cost-premium) for information and the application for registration.

**If you are registered but not receiving payment**

BC doctors who have registered for the BCP but are unsure if they are receiving payment are asked to double check their remittance statement. For doctors who have registered for the BCP, the payment will be listed in the adjustment area of the remittance statement [see Figure].

The most common reason for not receiving payment after registration is missing information on the billing claim: specifically, the BCP facility number assigned to the physician's community-based office. It is essential that the BCP facility number be included on each submitted billing claim for the Teleplan system to apply the correct percentage premium for each location. Please note that inclusion of

PERSONAL HEALTH BU REP	DATA SEQUENCE CENTER NUMBER	PLAN REF BU	REC CD	DTE OF SERV YEAR MN DD TO	NO BC FEE SYS ITEM	PAID AMOUNT	EXP CD 1 2 3 4	PRACT REF P	ENS IN CLR CD	AD1 AMOUNT CD	AD2 AMOUNT CD	AD3 AMOUNT CD
PRACITISHER NAME		PRACT X000		BILLED SERVICES 115		PAID AMOUNT \$15,367.08						
				AMOUNT TO BE ADJUSTED THIS PAYMENT		ADJUSTMENT MADE THIS PAYMENT				TOTAL ADJUSTMENT OUTSTANDING		TOTAL AMOUNT TO BE ADJUSTED
				ADJUSTMENT CODE -BP - BUSINESS COST PREMIUM						4254.82		
				NET TOTAL BLD:		15,367.08 PD:				14,944.22		

**FIGURE.** Sample remittance statement; adjustment area is circled, showing the BCP payment.

the facility number on billing claims may not be automated with some billing software.

Doctors who still have concerns about their BCP payment are encouraged to phone Health Insurance BC (HIBC) for assistance. HIBC administers the BCP on behalf of the Medical Services Plan and offers dedicated phone

support: Vancouver: 604 456-6950; elsewhere in BC: 1 866 456-6950. Upon request, HIBC can also provide approval for doctors to resubmit eligible claims to receive retroactive BCP payment.

If you have questions about the information in this story, email [economics@doctorsofbc.ca](mailto:economics@doctorsofbc.ca).



**Vaccine toolkit for physicians**

Doctors of BC has developed an information toolkit to support doctors and their teams in conversations with patients about COVID-19 vaccines. The toolkit includes:

- Scripts for voicemails and websites.
- Documents for patients on vaccine effectiveness and safety (available for downloading and printing).
- Office posters.
- Links to share with patients.

The toolkit is available at [www.doctorsofbc.ca/covid-19-vaccine-office-toolkit](http://www.doctorsofbc.ca/covid-19-vaccine-office-toolkit). It will be updated regularly as new products become available. If you have suggestions for further developments, email [covid19@doctorsofbc.ca](mailto:covid19@doctorsofbc.ca).

**For patients with concussions: MyGuide from Vancouver Coastal Health**

The online resource MyGuide: Concussion is designed to help adults manage and recover from concussions. The guide was developed by a team of experienced clinicians and content experts, and includes content on:

- Concussion symptoms
- Concussion recovery basics
- Returning to activities
- Concussion self-management
- Navigating the health care system
- Participating in research

The MyGuide Concussion website helps users design a customized guide for their recovery and to track their progress. For more information, visit <https://concussion.vch.ca>.



## New episode of DocTalks: Physician burnout during COVID-19

Reports of physician burnout are increasing as BC doctors work to meet the unprecedented demands generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. But what does burnout look like? How do you recognize the early warning signs so you can take steps to prevent it? And where do doctors go for help?

In the latest episode of DocTalks, psychiatrist Dr Jennifer Russel and family doctor Dr Lawrence Yang share their perspectives about how burnout affects doctors, how to recognize it, and what steps to take to minimize the impact. From deploying personal coping strategies to implementing leadership and QI methodology and advocating for system-wide enhancements, they share the methods they've adopted—in their personal and professional lives—to stay well, and discuss what supports are available for doctors. DocTalks is available for download on all podcast platforms, and on the Doctors of BC website at [www.doctorsofbc.ca/tags/doctalks](http://www.doctorsofbc.ca/tags/doctalks).



**NEW EPISODE**

**Burnout and COVID-19:  
Warning signs and when to act**

with guests  
Dr Jennifer Russel and Dr Lawrence Yang





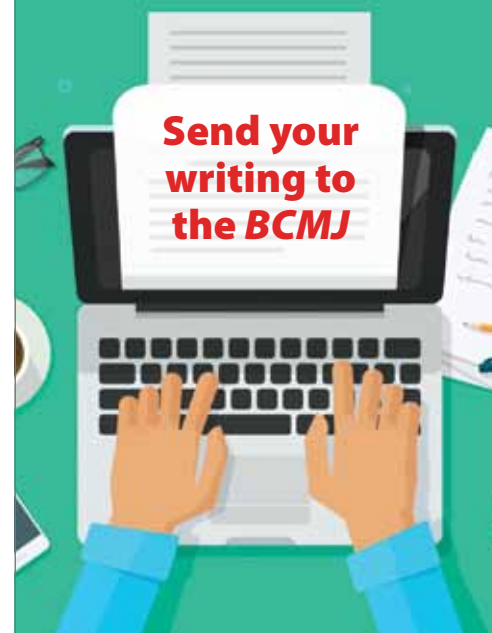
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