



November 17, 2020

Dear families,

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be an ever-evolving situation, and we are committed to communicating with you through this difficult time. As anticipated, the arrival of autumn has brought with it an increase COVID-19 cases, and keeping your loved ones safe is vital. In this letter, you will find updates on how we are responding.

We continue to be vigilant with hand hygiene, physical distancing, and cleaning. Additionally, staff and physicians are required to stay home if they experience even mild symptoms. I shared these and several other practices with you in a letter earlier this year, which you can find [on our website](#).

While most cases have arisen from social gatherings in people's homes, the Provincial Health Services Authority has introduced new policies and safety measures in all its health facilities, including ours, to help keep our patients and clients safe. We are taking these additional safety procedures, related to mask-wearing, screening, client outings and travel, to protect your loved ones:

- Staff, physicians, patients and visitors are all screened for COVID-19 when they enter one of our facilities.
- All staff and physicians now wear medical-grade masks for the duration of their shifts in our health care facilities.
- While patients or clients in most facilities also need to wear masks, clients and patients in BCMHSUS programs are exempt given the stress or trauma that masking may cause them due to their illnesses and other challenges.
- While our clients and patients are not required to wear masks, we do make safe and effective masks available to those who ask for one.
- Most client community outings have been temporarily reduced in length to limit the risk of transmission.

At this time, the Forensic Psychiatric Hospital, the Burnaby Centre for Mental Health and Addiction and the Heartwood Centre for Women are continuing to limit clients to one essential visitor each to reduce the risk. However, clients have access to iPads so they may visit virtually with other loved ones. We are also continuing to increase access to virtual care.

Please get in touch with the BCMHSUS Patient Experience and Community Engagement team if you have any questions, concerns or other thoughts at [engage\\_bcmhsus@phsa.ca](mailto:engage_bcmhsus@phsa.ca).

For other up-to-date information on COVID-19, visit [phsa.ca](http://phsa.ca).

You play an important role in your loved one's care and safety. Thank you all for your continued commitment to working with us to keep your loved one healthy and well. Together, we will continue to deliver the highest quality of care.

Warmly,

**Lynn Pelletier**  
Vice President, Mental Health and Substance Use Services Provincial Health  
Services Authority