



March 31, 2021

Dear Families,

Exciting times are here with COVID-19 vaccination programs underway across British Columbia. This past year has been a long and difficult journey for us all, and we are eager to provide you with a positive update on vaccinations for your loved ones in our care.

BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services staff and physicians have worked hard to maintain a safe environment for everyone during the pandemic while ensuring a quick and efficient roll out of COVID-19 vaccines. Our clients were part of phase 2 of the provincial COVID-19 vaccination program, which prioritizes vaccinating vulnerable populations living in congregated settings. For more information on B.C.'s COVID-19 immunization plan, visit the [website](#). We are pleased to inform you that we have completed our first round of client vaccines in all our programs across the province including the ten Provincial Correctional Centers in B.C., the Forensic Psychiatric Regional Clinics, the Forensic Psychiatric Hospital, Burnaby Centre for Mental Health and Addiction, Heartwood Centre for Women, the Forensic Community Transitional Care Program and Coast Mental Health Rehabilitation and Recovery Program.

Vaccines will continue to be offered to those who initially declined or are new patients /clients in our care. Although the vaccine is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged. Clients and patients can expect to receive their second dose four months after they have received their first COVID-19 vaccine. This in line with the provincial health officer's recommendation. If you complete the program before your second dose of the vaccine, you will get it from your regional health authority. A staff member will provide you with information about this before you leave. For more information about COVID-19 and vaccines for patients and clients at BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services visit our [website](#).

We know many of you are eager to visit your loved ones in person. Although the COVID-19 vaccine will help to keep your loved ones safe, we unfortunately cannot lift restrictions for non-essential visitors yet. However, they can continue to see one designated individual for in-person, on-site visits, and you can continue to visit virtually—iPads are available to clients for this purpose. It is difficult to say exactly when in-person non-essential visitation will resume, but we are working closely with the Ministry of Health and regional health authorities to reunite you with your loved one as soon as possible.



**BC MENTAL HEALTH  
& SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES**  
*Provincial Health Services Authority*

It has been a challenging year for everyone, but this vaccine is a reminder that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our Patient Experience and Community Engagement team at [engage\\_bcmhsus@phsa.ca](mailto:engage_bcmhsus@phsa.ca).

Warmly,

**Lynn Pelletier**

Vice President, Mental Health and Substance Use Services Provincial Health Services Authority