

**Subject:** COVID-19 Updates - January 29, 2021  
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**From:** Ernie Baatz  
**To:** Ernie Baatz  
**Attachments:** image001.jpg, image002.png, image003.png, image004.jpg, image005.jpg, image006.jpg, image007.jpg, image008.jpg

## **Joint statement on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates**

The government and the Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry are asking us to continue to follow the public safety guidelines as carefully as possible. There are a number of reasons we are still at high risk of catching COVID-19:

- There are still 500 people per day testing positive for COVID-19.
- Vaccines will not be available to protect everyone until the end of the summer.
- There are new variants of the virus causing infections around the world and these variants seem to be far more infectious.
- Winter is a time when respiratory diseases are typically more common because we spend more time inside.

Please continue to follow all the basic safeguards that required to keep people safe and healthy:

- **Stay home if you sick – Call 811 for further directions.**
- **Wash your hands regularly**
- **Keep your distance – at least two metres or six feet from people outside your bubble**
- **Wear a mask on transit, in stores, in all indoor public spaces.**
- **Keep your social bubble small – But stay connected with friends and family. Phone, video chat, go for a walk outside – it is so important to keep in touch.**

In Dr. Bonnie Henry's words:

“The ongoing risks and challenges that have come with this pandemic have put a strain on all of us. While much focus is on our physical health, it is equally important to take care of our mental and emotional well-being. In particular, let's ensure we connect our friends and family – young and old – who may be struggling, to let them know they are not alone and support is available.

“We thank everyone for your sustained effort and commitment, despite how tired you may be. Take heart in knowing the small actions we take – sending a card to a friend, following the directional arrows in your grocery store – have a big impact and, without a doubt, will help stop the spread of COVID-19.” More information in the [BC Government Press](#)

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## Update on Vaccinations

BC has been providing regular updates to the Immunization Plan so checking [the BC Immunization website](#) is the best way to get up-to-date information. My short summary version of the plan would be:

- Phase 1 – finishing in January 2021 – Staff and Residents of Long Term Care homes and Assisted Living Facilities
- Phase 2 – February and March 2021 – BC residents over 80 years old, Indigenous seniors over 65 years old, Health Care Workers and residents and staff of congregate care facilities.
- Phase 3 – April through June 2021 - General Population – BC residents between 60 and 80 years old.
- Phase 4 – July through September 2021 – General Population – BC residents age 18 – 60 years old.

For Phases 1 and 2, the Health Authorities are organizing the vaccinations.

For Phases 3 and 4, people will be able to register for vaccination clinics, beginning in March 2021.

Health Authorities will be establishing vaccination clinics in community centres, school gymnasiums and arenas.

For people we support, most will access the vaccinations based on their age along with the general population guidelines. There is a planning for people who are “Clinically Extremely Vulnerable” which includes “Adults with very significant developmental disabilities that increase risk” . As more vaccines become available, they hope to be able to schedule additional groups for vaccination.

There are a couple of articles below in the CLBC Update for Individuals and Families that also answer questions about vaccines.

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## Pay during Testing and Isolation – For Employees

Staying home if you are sick or have been directed to isolate is very important safety step. We want to make sure employees don't lose paid hours though, so we will pay for scheduled shifts that employees must cancel because they have symptoms or have been directed to isolate while waiting for test results or because Health has directed the employee to isolate and monitor for symptoms.

If you have symptoms, call your manager and HR to let them know you cannot work and your manager will confirm pay for shifts with HR.

This is a short term response to ensure we are doing everything we can to keep our teams safe and healthy. It applies to all staff – full-time, part-time and casual staff. We will pay for up to one week of shifts and will provide this benefit until March 31, 2021. Let us know if you have questions.

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## BC Recovery Benefit – For all BC Residents!

The BC Recovery Benefit (the benefit) is a one-time direct deposit payment for eligible families, single parents or individuals. Benefit eligibility is based on net income from your 2019 tax return. **You must apply to receive the benefit.**

Generally, the benefit is available to people:

- Who are [residents of B.C. on December 18, 2020](#)
- Who are at least 19 years old on December 18, 2020, [or meet specific eligibility criteria](#)
- Who filed a 2019 Canadian personal income tax return, [or meet specific eligibility criteria](#)
- Who have a valid social insurance number, individual tax number or temporary tax number

### Online applications

Applying online is the fastest way to get your payment.

Take your time when applying. Errors or incomplete information can cause long delays in processing your application.

**This process takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.**

[Submit your application](#)

You can use your desktop, tablet or smart phone. Your personal information is protected and secure.

After submitting, we'll email you a **confirmation number**.

### Phone applications

You can apply by phone with the help of our agents. Translation services are available to help you.

**We anticipate high call volumes and strongly recommend applying online if you can.**

[Dial 1-833-882-0020](#)

Our agents will complete the application with you and give you a **Case ID** number when you're done.

Call us Monday to Friday, 7:30 am to 5:00 pm, excluding statutory holidays.

For your banking information, you can get it off a cheque (see below), or from bank website, or by calling your bank.

**TAXPAYER NAME**  
STREET ADDRESS  
ANYTOWN, B.C. V8W 9V1  
TEL: (123) 555-5555

DATE

PAY TO THE ORDER OF

\$  /100 DOLLARS

ANYTOWN BANKING SERVICES 456 COMMUNITY SQUARE ANYTOWN, B.C. V8W 8V2

MEMO

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● Branch (Transit) Number ● Institution Number ● Account Number

## Temporary Pandemic Pay – For Employees

We are relieved to have finally received the funding for Temporary Pandemic Pay and paid it out to eligible employees on January 28, 2021. Temporary Pandemic Pay was a joint Federal / Provincial government announcement for essential workers in Provincially funded services. Government announced a \$4/hour payment for all hours worked in front-line services between March 15, 2020 and July 4, 2020. For people on salary and our salaried caregivers, the hours were calculated based on full-time status.

More information on the Temporary Pandemic Pay is available here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/temporary-pandemic-pay>

Let us know if you have any questions.

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## Working from Home – For Employees

For those of you who were able to work from home in the past year, you can claim some expenses as a deduction on your income tax return. There is a temporary flat rate method for 2020 to reduce the forms needed to make this claim.

### Revenue Canada has a New temporary flat rate method

The new **temporary flat rate method** simplifies your claim for home office expenses. You are eligible to use this new method if you worked more than

50% of the time from home for a period of at least four consecutive weeks in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. You can claim \$2 for each day you worked from home during that period plus any additional days you worked at home in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The maximum you can claim using the new temporary flat rate method is \$400 (200 working days) per individual.

Each individual working from home who meets the [eligibility criteria](#) can use the temporary flat rate method to calculate their deduction for home office expenses. This means multiple people working from the same home can each make a claim.

This method can only be used for the 2020 tax year.

### **Simplified process for the temporary flat rate method**

You do not have to: calculate the size of your work space, keep supporting documents or get Form T2200 completed and signed by your employer.

### **What counts as a work day**

- days you worked full-time hours from home
- days you worked part-time hours from home

### **What days do not count**

- days off
- vacation days
- sick leave days
- other leave or absence

### **Expenses that are covered by the \$2 a day flat rate**

The temporary flat rate method is used to claim home office expenses. You cannot claim any other [employment expenses](#) (line 22900) if you are using the flat rate method

Read more here:

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## CLBC Update for Individuals & Families



Welcome to the January 29 edition of CLBC's Update for Individuals and Families. As a reminder, you can find all Updates (including past editions) [posted on our website here](#). You can also check out CLBC's [Facebook page here](#) and [Twitter page here](#). If you know of anyone who would like to receive future Updates, please share [the link to our sign up page](#) with them. If you have a specific question, or feedback about this update, you can send an email to [CLBCInfo@gov.bc.ca](mailto:CLBCInfo@gov.bc.ca).

### [CLBC and Government News](#)

#### **B.C.'s COVID Immunization Plan**

Earlier this month, the Province of B.C. announced its COVID-19 Immunization Plan, which will happen in four phases. Eligibility for all phases is based on the age you are turning in 2021 and [you can find more details here](#).

Phase 2 (February to March) includes individuals supported by CLBC who live in group homes. Phase 3 (April to June) includes adults with significant developmental disabilities who are clinically very vulnerable. More details about this will be coming soon.

It's important to understand the timeline for each phase may change due to vaccine availability. It is expected that all people in B.C. recommended to receive the vaccine will have the opportunity to get it in 2021. You will not miss your chance to get the vaccine when a new phase starts. Once you become eligible, you are always eligible.

More details about how and where you can receive the vaccine when it's your turn will be coming soon. You can also read more about B.C.'s COVID-19 immunization plan on [the BC Centre for Disease Control website here](#).



## New funding helps people CLBC serves get back to work

In Fall 2020, CLBC conducted a survey which over half of our 100 employment service providers completed. Results of the survey indicated that 47 per cent of people these agencies are serving who were employed before COVID-19 have lost their jobs.

On January 18, the Province announced \$9.7 million of COVID-19 recovery funding over two years to support people who have lost work during the pandemic to get back to work. This grant funding is available to employment service providers to support people to reconnect to their previous jobs or find new employment.

The grants are being administered by Inclusion BC and employment service providers can apply for first year funding from January 25 through February 15, 2021. [Click here to read the provincial news release](#) and you can also [find answers to frequently asked questions here](#).

Additionally, \$300,000 in funding will be used to help individuals improve their digital literacy skills. This will help them enhance their employment prospects,



work more from home and benefit from more virtual social connections.



## **CLBC pauses invoicing on Direct Funding (DF) contracts to support families to use respite flexibly**

CLBC has put a pause on asking people with Direct Funding (DF) agreements to pay back funding they have not yet used until after June 30, 2021. This step allows individuals and families who receive DF funds to use this funding flexibly through June 30, 2021 to help off-set the impacts of COVID-19. [Find more information and resources related to flexible use of respite here](#). If individuals and families have questions about flexibility to use their DF funding or invoicing for DF agreements, they can contact their local CLBC liaison analyst. [Contact information for CLBC offices can be found here](#).

## **Plain language teleconference summary and audio recording now available**

On January 18, a teleconference for individuals and families took place with Dr. Daniele Behn Smith, Deputy Provincial Health Officer, Nicholas Simons, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Michael Prince, CLBC Board Chair and Ross Chilton, CLBC CEO. The call shared the latest health information and guidance on COVID-19.

You can read a [plain language summary of the teleconference call here](#). This summary, as well as the audio recording of the call, [are also posted to the CLBC website here](#).

The next monthly teleconference for individuals and families is scheduled for Tuesday, February 16, from 1:00 p.m to 2:00 p.m. An invitation to this call will be sent out by email in the near future and [shared on the teleconference webpage here](#).

## **Immunize BC explains herd immunity**

“Herd immunity” is a term that is being used a lot. Here is an explanation from [Immunize BC](#) about what it means:

The more people in a community who are vaccinated, the harder it is for a disease to spread. If a person infected with a disease comes in contact only with people who are immunized (who have been vaccinated), the disease will have little opportunity to spread. The type of protection created when most people are vaccinated is called “herd immunity.” It means that many of us are protecting each other, and especially the most vulnerable among us, such as:

- Babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated.
- People who cannot receive certain vaccines for medical reasons.
- People who may not adequately respond to immunization.

You can also [click here to watch a helpful video about herd immunity](#).

## Plain language information to support decisions about vaccines

It is important to support individuals to make decisions about the vaccine in the same way we do for other health decisions. Some people have substitute decision makers. Most people will be making their own decision with support from someone they trust. Many people have appointed someone to support their decision making using a Representation Agreement. You can [learn more about Representation Agreements here](#).



Plain  
Language

To help with decision making around the vaccine you can [visit the Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities \(HCARDD\) website here](#) for plain language information about COVID-19 and the vaccine, including these two resources:

- [Things to know about the COVID vaccine](#)
- [What happens when I get the COVID vaccine](#)

## First Nations Health Authority resources

The [First Nations Health Authority \(FNHA\) website](#) helps to answer questions about what to do if you test positive for COVID-19 and what supports are available.

You can also [find a helpful fact sheet from FNHA about COVID-19 vaccination here](#).

As a reminder, the [First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day](#), is available between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., seven days a week, for medical advice as well as further support and information. Call 1-855-344-3800 for support and updated information about vaccinations.

## Indigenous Peoples, stigma and COVID-19

“*Healing in Pandemic Times: Indigenous Peoples, Stigma and COVID-19*” is an animated video that addresses the ongoing issues of stigmatization experienced by Indigenous Peoples in the health care system. This video is presented by Indigenous Health, Northern Health and the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health and is intended for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences. The video features animation by Joanne Gervais and music by Renae Morriveau and M’Girl and [you can click here to watch it.](#)

## Staying connected and supported

### Webinar answers questions about the COVID vaccine

To help address concerns and answer questions about the COVID vaccine, the [Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities Program](#) and [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health](#) recently hosted a webinar with Dr. William Sullivan from Surrey Place in Ontario.

Answering your  
Questions about  
the COVID Vaccine  
with  
Dr William Sullivan



[You can watch a recording of the webinar here.](#)

For more accessible tools and resources for people with developmental disabilities and their caregivers, including mental health self help booklets and COVID-19 information sheets, [visit the H-CARDD website here.](#)

### Seasonal Affective Disorder and the winter blues

As days get shorter, darker, and colder, it’s quite common to notice a shift in mood. In Canada, about five per cent of the population is affected by Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which can involve changes in energy, appetite and overall mood.

What’s more common in Canada is sometimes known as the “winter blues” which can be understood as a milder form of SAD. In fact, as many as 15 per cent of people experience the winter blues in Canada.

While winter is unavoidable in Canada, there are some lifestyle changes you can make that can help you battle the winter blues and SAD. Some of these strategies include:

- Getting some daylight
- Exercising regularly
- Eating a well-balanced diet

[Click here for more information and tips on steps you can take.](#)

## **Mental health resources for co-existing problems**

A co-existing problem occurs when people have a mental health problem and, at the same time, use substances in ways that could result in significant harm. [Learn more about co-existing problems here.](#)

If you know someone who is experiencing a co-existing problem, or if you are concerned about yourself, don't be afraid to reach out. One way is to talk to a healthcare professional you feel comfortable confiding in. An assessment of your symptoms may be helpful. In addition to talking to a healthcare professional, consult the resources below for more information:

- **Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Service** – call toll free at 1-800-663-1441. In Greater Vancouver, call 604-660-9382.
- **Local Crisis Lines** - Crisis lines aren't only for people in crisis. You can call for information on local services or if you just need someone to talk to. If you are in distress, call 310-6789 (do not add 604, 778 or 250 before the number) 24 hours a day to connect to a B.C. crisis line without a wait or busy signal.

## **Updated Support and Connection Toolkit highlights resources and activities**

In each edition of this Update, we share an updated version of the Support and Connection Toolkit which gathers links to resources and activities into one document for easy access. [See the most updated toolkit here.](#)

## **Self Advocate Corner**

### **Self advocates leading connection in 2021**

Last month, five self advocacy groups from around B.C. were selected to receive a grant from CLBC to help people with diverse abilities stay strong and connected during COVID-19.

Congratulations to Self Advocates of the Rockies (Cranbrook), the BC Self Advocate Leadership Network (Lower Mainland/Vancouver Island), Olivia Douglas Community Society (New Westminster), Speaking Up for Self Advocacy Awareness (Kamloops) and TALK North West (Kitimat/Terrace).

For the next eight months these self advocacy leaders will organize online events, programs, workshops and other safe activities and connection opportunities for people with diverse abilities across B.C.

Make sure to visit the new [Calendar for Connection](#) where these events and activities will be posted. Please share with others who are looking to make friends, have fun, and learn new things.

## **BC People First Annual Conference 2021 – Rights and Wellness**

Join BC People First (BCPF) on February 25 and 26 for their 2021 annual conference, which focuses on the theme of Rights and Wellness. The conference is virtual this year and will feature a series of online Zoom workshops by self advocates for self advocates in British Columbia.

BCPF gets lots of questions about the rights people have, how to use technology, how to run a self advocate group, advocacy help and more. The goal of the conference is to answer people's questions and help people learn as much as they can. All the presentations are taught by self advocates with expert experience and amazing skills to share.

Tickets are free for all self advocates and people with disabilities in the province. [Here is the online registration page.](#) You only need to register once to get access to all the workshops and presentations. Attendees can attend one, a few, or all of the presentations.



## Self Advocates of the Rockies launch connection activities

Check out these upcoming activities hosted by Self Advocates of the Rockies for opportunities to connect virtually with others:

- **Gaia TV Series with Kimberly** – Watch different educational series and documentaries on Gaia, which is a streaming service, then join a conversation about them. Topics will include science, history, spirituality and health.

Every Monday from February 1 until August 30, 2021 from 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Pacific Time (7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Mountain Time)

Email [k.earl@realmbc.ca](mailto:k.earl@realmbc.ca) to register.

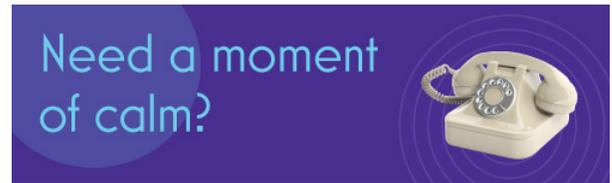
- **National Pizza Day Celebration** – Join DJFunTown (Duane Johnson) and Right-On Photography (Jonathan Righton) on Tuesday, February 9 from 10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Pacific Time (11:30 a.m. – 12:00 pm Mountain Time) as they share fun and historic facts about National Pizza Day.

There will be an online celebration on “Google Meet” at the following link: [meet.google.com/tsn-gxuj-uuz](https://meet.google.com/tsn-gxuj-uuz). Have your pizza of any kind on that day to celebrate altogether.

## Stories of hope and encouragement

## Try the new Be Calm hotline

Need a bit more calm in your day? City of Victoria's Artist-in-Residence Kathryn Calder invites you to call the new 1-877-2BE-CALM (1-877-223-2256) toll free hotline to hear uplifting sounds of Canadian music, nature, poetry, children's laughter, meditations and Indigenous stories and songs.



Call the hotline or visit [victoria.ca/becalm](https://victoria.ca/becalm) to learn more, including how to submit a recording of your child's laughter to be considered for future phone line audio selections.

## “Wear a Mask” song by the Stone Poets

Since March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, live concerts have been cancelled. After months of social isolating and listening to health department regulations, the band Stone Poets grew weary of watching social media and news channels showing stories of people still not wearing masks to help reduce the spread of the corona virus. They decided to release “Wear a Mask” to use their platform to help spread awareness. Let's support each other and "break on through to the other side" of this pandemic. "It's such a simple task ... please wear a mask."

[You can click here to listen to the song.](#)