



March 26th CLBC Teleconference for Individuals and Families

Plain Language Summary of Questions and Answers

Who were the presenters answering questions on this call?

- Minister Shane Simpson, Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- Dr. Daniele Behn Smith, Deputy Provincial Health Officer
- Ross Chilton, CEO, Community Living BC

Question- What do I do if I feel sick and I can't get through to the 811 number?

Answer:

- If you feel VERY sick, for example you are having trouble breathing, then call 911 for emergency help.
- If you have mild symptoms, for example, you have a fever and a cough, but you can breathe ok, then stay home and self isolate.
- Self Isolate means stay home and keep yourself away from other people in your house (at least 2 meters or a person length apart) so you don't spread the virus to anyone else.
- Do NOT go to the hospital unless you feel very sick and need help right away.

- You can also visit <https://bc.thrive.health/> to complete a COVID-19 Self Assessment
- The Self Assessment tool will ask you questions about how you are feeling and give you advice on what to do.
- You can also download the new [COVID-19 Support App](#) to receive the latest updates, trusted resources, and alerts. The Self-Assessment Tool is built in to this App.

Question- What is being done to reduce the risk of infection for people living in staffed residential homes?

Answer:

- Staff are following the advice and direction of the Provincial Health Office about how to keep people and homes safe and healthy. This means they are:
 - Not coming to work if they feel sick or have any symptoms
 - Supporting people in their home
 - Limiting social contact to only the people who live and work in the home
 - Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, door handles, light switches

- Handwashing
- Not touching mouth and eyes
- Some of these things can be harder for people supported by CLBC and so more information and guidance is being created and will be published on the CLBC website soon.

Question- Will the Minister increase disability PWD benefits during this crisis?

Answer:

- The provincial and federal governments are working together to make sure people get the extra money they need to be safe and healthy during this time. For example: money for food, rent or medical supplies.
- There will be more information about how to apply for this extra money from the Ministry soon.
- If you need emergency money right now to pay for important things like food, rent or medicine then you can apply for the [Crisis or Hardship Supplements](#).

Question- Why has CLBC directed service providers to deploy staff to family homes if someone is staying at home during this emergency? Doesn't that increase the risk of getting COVID-19 for the individual, their family and service provider staff?

Answer:

- If people can be at home and are safe without staff coming in to help, then this is the best option.
- Service providers are doing their best to stay in close touch with the people they support even if it is not in person. For example: by text or video chat or phone calls.
- Some people and families still need support staff even if they are staying home.
- Staff can come into homes if they are immediately washing hands, don't have any symptoms, and aren't coughing or sneezing. If they do all these things, then the chance of spreading the virus is very low.

Question- I work and receive PWD. I have now lost my job and will be applying for EI. Will I still get my full amount of PWD when I receive EI benefits?

Answer:

- The Ministry is working closely with the federal government to make sure people can apply for the extra money they need without ending up with less.
- There will be more information soon about how people can access help from the federal government, as well as the get the help from the Ministry they need.

Question- Can family members with IF (Individualized Funding) payments pay themselves to provide supports when support workers have resigned – and new ones cannot be found – because of COVID-19?

Answer:

- Individualized Funding gives families the option to use CLBC funding to hire staff for their family member.
- CLBC hopes most families can still use their IF to hire staff, but also knows this might not be possible during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Families can work with their CLBC Analyst to use their IF funding in a way that keeps everyone safe and supported. In some situations, this may involve paying families the IF until the COVID-19 crisis is over.
- CLBC is working with the Family Support Institute to help families find support workers.
- Check out [Support Worker Central](#) in the days to come.

Question- Who can help me if I get sick and need more support at home? Who can help me if my staff get sick and can't come to my house?

Answer:

- Call 911 if you have a medical emergency, for example if you are having trouble breathing
- Call 811 (711 for hearing impaired) if you are sick and think you have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Self isolate (stay at home and 2 meters away from people in your home) as much as possible to keep others safe from getting the virus.
- Home is the safest place to be. CLBC and service agencies will work to make sure you get the help you need to be supported in your home.
- Contact your service provider or [your local CLBC office](#) if you need new or more support in your home to be safe.
- All 37 CLBC offices are open. Some staff may be working from home, but CLBC is there to help with planning and getting the support you need during this time.

Question- Will service provider staff be deemed essential services?

Answer:

- Yes, disability support services have been announced as an essential service
- This means CLBC and service agencies will work to make sure you get the support you need to be supported in your home even when other services are closed because of the COVID-19 virus.

Question- Some people need to get out of the house as part of their behaviour support plans. If there is a lock-down, can individuals still be taken out for a drive? Will we need special permission?

Answer:

- Lock downs are NOT something the government supports to help with this crisis.
- Yes, people can still go outside and/or for a drive, as long as they are physically distant from other people and not sick or having symptoms like coughing.
- Physical distancing means keeping your body 2 meters away from other people and not stopping to visit with friends or neighbours.
- It is good for everyone's mental health to spend time outside. Choose locations or times when not likely to run into other people.
- Remember- physical exercise NOT socialize.

Question- Can I apply to the government for extra money to shop for things I need during COVID? Will there be extra funding to help pay for rent?

Answer:

- The Ministry announced support to help people with rent and not losing their homes during this crisis.
- Details about how to apply for money to help with rent is still being worked out.
- The Ministry is working hard to make an easy process for people to apply for the extra money they need to pay for things like rent and food.
- If you need emergency money right now, then you can apply for the Crisis or Hardship Supplements.
- The Ministry offices and contact centre are open and staff are doing what they can to help people apply for what they need and get their PWD cheques without coming into the office.

Question- Will families lose individualized funding if they cannot find support workers during this emergency? Will CLBC allow families to roll IF funds over until next year?

Answer:

- No, families will not lose funding if they cannot find support workers during this crisis.
- Yes, families will be able to work with CLBC to roll their IF funding over to next year if they have money left over.

Question- When is it safe for a caregiver who has symptoms to go back to caring for someone?

Answer:

- The COVID-19 virus is very contagious. This means it's very easy for someone who has the virus to make other people sick by spreading germs through coughing and sneezing.
- As soon as someone starts to feel sick, they can spread the virus to someone else.
- Caregivers who have been sick should NOT come to work until they are feeling better AND 10 days have passed from the first day they first started feeling sick.
- If 10 days have passed from the first day they first started feeling sick, but they still have a mild cough, then they are no longer contagious and can go back to work.

Question- Isolation can be difficult for individuals with complex needs and put additional pressures on families. Will additional supports be provided to help the individual and families and caregivers cope?

Answer:

- Service providers and support workers are working hard to support people safely so they don't feel isolated and alone. For example: by video chat or texting or phone calls.
- CLBC and the Ministry are working together to provide extra support to individuals and families during this difficult time.
- More information about how to ask for more support will be announced as soon as possible.

Question- What is CLBC doing to make sure caregivers have equipment like gloves and masks to help protect their health and the health of individuals?

Answer:

- There is a limited supply of medical equipment and supplies like masks and gloves and hand sanitizer.
- The government is working on a process to get medical supplies out to the people who need them in the fairest way possible.

CLBC is committed to having another teleconference call for individuals and families in the coming weeks. Visit the CLBC website for more information and updates [here](#).