



## May 28 CLBC Teleconference for Individuals and Families

### Plain Language Summary

#### Who were the speakers on this call?

- Dr. Daniele Behn Smith, Deputy Provincial Health Officer
- David Galbraith, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- Ross Chilton, CEO, Community Living BC
- Jack Styan, VP Strategic Planning, Community Living BC

**\*Minister Simpson** was not able to make the call but wanted to thank the strong voice of self advocates and families in helping to strengthen the hospital “Family and Visitor” policy. [You can read more information here.](#)

#### Key messages from the speakers:

##### Dr. Behn Smith-

- Reminder of the 3 health goals during this pandemic:
  1. Protect those who are most at risk of getting very sick or dying from COVID-19- that is people who are over the age of 65 and who have other health conditions.
  2. Keep hospitals and the health care system running safely so it can help anyone who gets sick with COVID-19.
  3. Lessen the harm and negative experiences for people because of the things we need to do to keep people safe, like physical distancing.
- Good news! We are in the flat part of the curve. This means there are low numbers of new people getting the virus each day.

- Physical distancing (staying 2 metres apart from other people) is the biggest reason why B.C. has been so successful.
- Even though there are low numbers it is very important for everyone's health and safety to stay home if we feel sick, wash our hands often, clean regularly and stay physically distant from other people as much as possible.
- We know for some people things like physical distancing and hand washing can be very difficult.
- It's important to remember that even if some people can't follow the rules, if MOST people follow the rules, it will and has made a difference.
- Remember, not everyone is going to be able to move into the next phase in the same way. Certain groups of people are at more risk than others. It won't be fair. We must be kind and thoughtful.

### **Ross Chilton-**

- CLBC is working with service providers to move into this next stage of providing supports. This will happen with input from individuals and families. Everyone is different in how they are feeling and what makes sense for them.
- CLBC funds services for many people who are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. This means we need to work carefully and a bit slower than other parts of community that are re-opening.
- There will not be enough resources to provide 1:1 support in place of the services people had before. This means that for the next while many people won't get the same number of support hours as they did before.
- We need to focus on safety first- who needs support the most, who needs it a lot and who needs it somewhat.

### **Jack Styan-**

- The CLBC recovery planning for stage 2 is guided by the following principles:
  1. Protecting the health and safety of those we serve and the public.
  2. Everyone has a role in this- CLBC staff, service providers, individuals served, families, home share providers.
  3. How we plan and make decisions is evidence based- this means we do things that have already proven to work.
  4. Make use of technology and resources to provide support virtually (on-line).

5. Moving from one stage to another will depend on the changing risks of the virus. For example, we might be able to move from stage 2 to stage 3 quickly, or we might have to move from stage 2 back to stage 1. It all depends on the virus and the guidance we receive from our health experts.
- Older people we support and those who have health conditions will have to keep things the way they are right now because they are still at the most risk of getting sick.
  - Younger and physically healthy people we support will be able to safely increase activities and contact with other people.
  - We need to be creative and thoughtful about how we support people who have a difficult time with physical distancing and washing hands often.
  - CLBC is creating guidance for service providers around planning for this next stage of services.
  - Service providers will need to submit a plan to CLBC about their plans so everyone is comfortable about moving into the next stage of providing support.
  - By June 8 service providers will be submitting and putting plans into place.
  - Thank-you for everyone's patience as we move into this next stage as carefully and thoughtfully as possible.

**Question: We know services won't be the same as they were before. How will conversations about the 'new normal' include people and families?**

**Answer from Ross:** This work is about doing things *with* people, not *to* people. Service providers will work with individuals and families and their unique needs and circumstances as they move into this next stage of providing support.

CLBC and the Ministry also work with the Reimagining Community Inclusion Steering Committee that is made up of self advocates and families who give input and direction to this work.

**Question: What about visiting people in group homes? Will there be an order allowing families to visit their loved ones?**

**Answer from Ross:** Every group home is different so each conversation with families, staff and the people who live there will need to be different. For example- one group home may have both young people who live there as well as someone with serious health issues.

Everyone will need to work together to come up with a plan where everyone feels safe. Not everyone will agree all the time. Each circumstance will be different and need to be thought through carefully.

**Answer from Dr. Behn Smith:** Remember #1 importance is that visits **not** happen if ANYONE is feeling unwell.

Also, think about where and when visits happen and how to make visits safer. For example, outside is always safer. Have visits where it is possible to wash hands and keep physically distant as much as possible.

**Question: What does it mean to increase our bubbles?**

**Answer from Dr. Behn Smith:** Increasing your 'bubble' is about thinking about how many people you come into contact with each day.

Over the last couple of months most people in BC brought their contacts down to about 30% of what is normal for them. For example, if someone normally was in contact with 10 people each day, they reduced that down to 3 people.

This made a HUGE difference.

In order to keep the curve flat, we are saying people can increase their bubble to 60% of what is normal for them. For example, if you normally have contact with 10 different people everyday, you can now have contact with 6 different people everyday.

It's important to remember, it's not just about the number of contacts you have but how physically close are you to each other and for how long (shorter amount of time the safer).

If someone needs close physical support (touching) then they would try and have a smaller number of people they are in contact with each day.

If someone is able to maintain distance or physical barriers for most of the day, then it's safer to increase the number of people they are in contact with each day.

**Question: What is recommended if people travel in a car with staff?**

**Answer from Dr. Behn Smith:** If you are traveling in a vehicle, with people outside of your household, the recommendation is one person per row. For example- one person in the front driving and one person in the back. However, if more than one person needs to travel, and you are only in the car for 10 minutes, then the risk is low. Remember, the shorter the time in close contact, the better.

**Questions: Our daughter's day program has invited her back for 1 day per week. They have a health and safety plan that we are comfortable with. Do we have to wait for CLBC to approve a plan if we are comfortable?**

**Answer from Ross:** CLBC won't be approving the plans, but rather we will be reviewing them with the provider. The plan belongs to the service provider and is theirs to develop. But CLBC does need to review the plan so everyone is clear and on the same page before moving into this next stage.

**Question: Our daughter is 38 and doesn't understand what is going on and we are struggling at home because she isn't able to go to her program. What is the next step for those who are most vulnerable?**

**Answer from Ross:** I really do recognize how hard it is for people who struggle to understand and for parents to watch this struggle.

Service providers and families will need to work together to balance health and safety with the need to access community and services. For example, coming up with a plan that will keep physical contact with other people low. It's about balancing harm as best we can.

**Question: Will individuals continue to receive the bus pass amount on our PWD cheques? Also, the dentists have been closed. Can we combine our \$500 amount with next year's amount?**

**Answer from David Galbraith:** Starting June 1<sup>st</sup>, BC Transit will start charging fares again. The temporary \$52 transportation supplement on PWD cheques will not continue. It will automatically go back to the way it was before. Reminder that individuals can still choose to have the bus pass OR receive the \$52 supplement.

No, individuals accessing PWD will not be able to carry over the \$500 dentist amount into next year.

**Question: Will Employment Insurance (EI) be added to the earning exemption?**

**Answer from David Galbraith:** No, individuals do not have to claim EI as income on their PWD amount.

**Question: Will the PWD emergency funding be extended?**

**Answer from David Galbraith:** Individuals accessing PWD received \$300 extra on April, May and June cheques. Now that we are entering phase 2 of the pandemic, the Ministry is making decisions about what needs to happen next. Information about those decisions will be announced as soon as possible.

**Question: I had a job that I can't go back to. Many of us lost jobs. Will employment service providers be able to support me to do other things?**

**Answer from Ross:** This is an important issue to CLBC and the CLBC Board. We still don't know how many people lost their job for good, or whether they will be able to go back to work in the near future.

If you lost your job or are not able to return to work for a long time, employment service providers, including Work BC, will support you to find a new job.

*Another teleconference will be scheduled again soon. [Click here](#) to subscribe to CLBC updates and information.*

