



## September 17, 2020, CLBC Teleconference for Individuals and Families Plain Language Summary

### Who were the speakers on this call?

- Honorable Shane Simpson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- David Galbraith, Deputy Minister, Minister of Social Development Poverty Reduction
- Dr. Daniele Behn Smith, Deputy Provincial Health Officer
- Michael Prince, CLBC Board Chair
- Ross Chilton, CEO Community Living BC

### Opening messages from Shane Simpson:

- The [BC Economic Recovery Plan](#) was just released and includes funding for CLBC funded employment specialists to help people get their jobs back.

### Opening messages from Dr. Behn Smith:

- There has been a gradual increase of COVID cases over the last weeks.
- We are working hard to put things in place so that we can safely manage these increases as we go into winter and flu season.
- Even though we are seeing more cases of COVID, there are some important things to keep in mind:
  - The weekly positive cases are higher, but that is partly because now we have better testing ability than we did back in March.
  - There are more younger people who are getting COVID who don't get as sick and who can manage and get better at home.
  - Many of the positive cases are coming from our ability to do contact tracing.

- Many of these positive cases are of people who have low symptoms and are not very sick.
- Our 3 overarching health goals are the same:
  1. Protect those most vulnerable
  2. Make sure our health system has what it needs to respond to COVID
  3. Balance the harm of the public health measures with other harms like mental health.

**Opening remarks from CLBC CEO, Ross Chilton:**

- CLBC is actively working with service providers to get back to as much individual service as possible.
- We are doing our best to balance out the harms of isolation and mental health with the risk of getting COVID.
- We are currently working with our community partners on a survey to find out how family caregivers are doing and how we as a sector can be there for families and their loved ones as we go into the winter months of COVID.

***Question- I am confused about why we are opening things like schools when the numbers are going up. How come kids can go back to school, but I can't go back to my day program?***

**Answer from Dr. Behn Smith:**

- We opened schools because we have learned important things about kids and COVID including:
  - Kids do not get COVID as often as adults.
  - Only about 1% of positive COVID tests are kids.
  - The risk of kids spreading COVID is low.
  - School closures were really hard on kids and families especially those who rely on school for food and safety.
- Also, there are many layers of protection in place at schools now that will help decrease the risk of COVID

**Answer from Ross:**

- There is a much greater risk of people we support getting COVID compared to the risk of kids getting COVID.
- It would be irresponsible for CLBC to reopen day programs because we would likely see an increase of the number of people we support getting COVID.

***Question- My daughter who thrives well in the community and lives in a two-person home used to come visit us with a support worker every Sunday for dinner. Since COVID (6 months) she has not been home and has not been allowed to ride in my car. Do we have to wait for a vaccine for capable individuals to resume their physically and emotionally healthy life routines in the community?***

**Answer from Dr. Behn Smith:**

- There is no black and white answer.
- Decisions for individual situations need to be made with your doctor or health care team.
- We need to weigh the pros and cons and that all depends on individual situations.
- We need to think about creative and innovative ways to layer in protection. For example- visit outside, wear masks in a car and sit as far apart as possible, make sure inside space is well ventilated.

**Answer from Ross:**

- Our service providers have to consider the physical and emotional well-being of all the people they support, as well as their staff.
- It's important for families and service providers to talk about what IS possible, rather than what is not possible.

***Question- Will there be guidance/tools from the PHO around mental health and 'COVID health'- how to balance the risks? Will CLBC provide guidance to service providers about how/when the risk to one's mental health needs to be prioritized over the risk of getting COVID-19?***

**Answer from Dr. Behn Smith:**

There mental health resources, including how to minimize the risks of public health measures, on the following websites:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [BC Government website](#)
- [Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions](#)
- [First Nations Health Authority](#)

**Answer from Ross:**

- At CLBC, together with our service providers and families, we support 23,000 different situations.
- We are very mindful to promote both physical and mental health.
- We have to work together and trust that our service providers are working hard to find that right balance for each individual and family they support.

**Question- *What would cause us to go into a lock down? A second wave?***

**Answer from Dr. Behn Smith:**

- Even with an increase in number of people getting COVID, we are putting things in place so we will not have to go ‘backwards’ in terms of opening our community. Some of those things include:
  - Test and catch positive cases as early as possible so people with COVID can self isolate immediately and not spread the virus.
  - Continue to do contact tracing so that anyone who was in direct contact with someone who has COVID will be contacted by health officials and told to self isolate and prevent further spread of the virus.
  - Make sure anyone who has been out of the country self isolates for 14 days.
- Remember- you only need to self isolate if:
  - #1- you have COVID symptoms or have tested positive for COVID, or
  - #2- you have been contacted by a public health officer asking you to self isolate
  - #3- you have been out of the country.

**Question- *Should individuals get flu shots?***

**Answer from Dr. Behn Smith:**

- Yes, get a flu shot.
- The more we can decrease the amount of flu going around the better.

**Answer from Ross:**

- Reminder- as we enter flu season we may see an increase of staff staying home just to make sure they do not have COVID symptoms.
- We need to be patient and stay on the cautious side.

**Question- *How should my son create his 'bubble' now so that he doesn't become isolated and alone as we go into the winter months? Can CLBC help my son do this, and if not, who can?***

**Answer from Dr. Behn Smith:**

- Science tells us that if we increase our bubble more than 6 people, our risk of getting COVID goes up.
- Think about the risk of getting COVID as being a dial or spectrum. Where you are on that dial depends on:
  - Your personal health circumstances
  - Your age
  - How many contacts you have outside your household
  - How physically close you are to people outside your household
  - How long you are in contact with people outside your household
- Then think through all the ways to keep social connection, but at the same time layering in protection like:
  - physical barriers,
  - meeting outside
  - keeping the number people in your bubble low. We are recommending 6 people.

**Answer from Ross:**

- It's important to learn how to manage your bubble so you don't become isolated AND so you don't increase your risk of getting COVID.

- Pay attention to the numbers in the news.
- If the numbers are going up, have a conversation with your family or support staff about your activities and the amount of people in your social bubble.
- If there is no agency involved, then we at CLBC are happy to help with these important conversations.

**Question- *Will the government make it mandatory to wear a mask in crowds or indoor spaces?***

**Answer from Dr. Behn Smith:**

- No, Dr. Henry will not make it mandatory to wear a mask.
- We know that wearing non-medical masks can help reduce the spread of COVID when physical distancing is not possible, but we also recognize that not all people are able to wear masks.

**Question- *I am confused about CERB and PWD. I think I am getting both right now. Will I have to pay it back? What if I already spent the money on food or rent?***

**Answer from Minister Simpson:**

- If you qualified for and are getting the CERB, then, no, you do not have to pay it back.
- You can receive the CERB and PWD at the same time.
- The money you receive from CERB will not be clawed back from your PWD benefits.

**Question- *Many of us are poor and the extra \$300 means a lot especially when groceries cost more and life is more expensive with COVID. Will this keep going after December? What other financial support will be available?***

**Answer from Minister Simpson:**

- The extra \$300 will be in place until December 2020.
- We have heard it has made a difference and that's why we extended it.
- The Government will continue to monitor all the benefits put in place and will review and make decisions going forward.

**Question- Do you have information about the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB)?**

**Answer from David Galbraith:**

- The [Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit](#) is a federal government benefit that will provide \$500 per week for up to 26 weeks per household, for eligible Canadians unable to work because they must care for:
  - a child under age 12 due to the closures of schools or daycares because of COVID-19.
  - a family member with a disability or a dependent because their day program or care facility is closed due to COVID-19.
  - a child, a family member with a disability, or a dependent who is not attending school, daycare, or other care facilities under the advice of a medical professional due to being at high-risk if they contract COVID-19.

**Question- My daughter needs a new walker badly. She is at risk of falling. The wait time for the assessment to be approved for this equipment is taking even longer now because of COVID. How can accommodations be made so our family members can access the health care they are eligible for?**

**Answer from David Galbraith:**

- Our Ministry is working hard at getting approvals for equipment through in a timely way.
- If you are experiencing difficulty the person to contact is Dana Jensen-  
[Dana.Jensen@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Dana.Jensen@gov.bc.ca)

**The next teleconference for individuals and families is scheduled for October 15<sup>th</sup>.**

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If you have an unanswered question, please send to [CLBCInfo@gov.bc.ca](mailto:CLBCInfo@gov.bc.ca)

Thank-you!