

COVID-19: BRI FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated: September 18, 2020

This FAQ has been created to answer frequently asked questions about COVID-19 as it relates specifically to the Bloorview Research Institute. We will update this document regularly based on new questions that may arise. The new/updated sections are highlighted.

BRI Recovery Process

1. What does the BRI re-opening process look like?

- The BRI started Phase 2 of its recovery plans on July 27 with a gradual increase of onsite staff to 50 per cent by Aug 17 and onwards.
 - During Phase 2, research that needs access to on-site equipment as well as studies that require in-person contact with research participants will start
 - Select inpatient studies e put on pause prior to the pandemic can resume with approval by a BRI committee
 - Research that have been running during Phase 1 will continue. This includes:
 - Research that does not occur in clinical areas
 - Regulated clinical trials, COVID-19 related research and research that requires onsite equipment
- To ensure the institute does not exceed these numbers, managers (scientists and lab managers) as well as onsite staff will use the a scheduling app, When I Work.
- Please refer to the Guidelines for BRI Personnel Recovery (July 22) on the COVID-19 staff resources [web page](#) for more details on the Phase 2 process.
- Information sheets will be sent out to leaders as well as staff to help guide them through this process.
- Information about caregivers will now be requested through our Participant Registration system.
- For staff who are returning to to the BRI for the first time since the pandemic was declared in March, please read the recovery section on the COVID-19 resources for staff [web page](#) for the latest details on screening, masking and maintain social distancing measures. Staff can also send any general questions to covid19@hollandbloorview.ca

- If there is an opening available for either Plexiglas 1 or 2, your meeting invite will be accepted automatically. Your meeting acceptance notice will contain a code to open the wall-mounted lock box next to Room 4W380 where the Plexiglas is stored. Inside the lock box, you will find the key to enter the room.
- After retrieving the Plexiglas you have reserved, please close and lock the door. **Please remember to return the key to the lock box.**
- If you accidentally send a request to a slot that is already taken up, your meeting invite will be declined automatically.
- You also need to disinfect the Plexiglas before and after using it as long as it can be done safely. Please remember to return the Plexiglas to 4W380 and lock the door afterwards.

6. Where can I find wipes to disinfect my workstation?

- Wipes are now also available in the 4W Mail Room.

Research Visits

1. I'm a researcher who would like to start home-based research visits with my study participants. Is this allowed now?

- Yes, starting on Monday, August 24th, the BRI will be piloting a program where researchers can start going into the community to conduct research visits in a study participant's home.
- Out of an abundance of caution, however, our research institute is still operating under a



virtual-first principle. This means we prefer researchers to continue to conduct virtual research visits, followed by on-site hospital research visits. The third option is home-based research visits.

- All home-based research visits need to be approved in advance by Mani Kang, director of research operations.
- Please visit our [Home-Visit Research Guidelines](#) on how to conduct these visits safely.

When I Work App

1. Why is the BRI using this app?

- This app will help with scheduling and tracking the number of staff onsite to ensure we don't go over maximum threshold of staff allowed onsite at all times.
- The app can be downloaded from the App Store and is compatible via web, iOS and Android.

2. Will it track my movements at the BRI?

- No, it is only tracking when a staff or trainee member has entered and left the building. It will not track where a staff member is while they are onsite.

3. Who needs to download this app on their phone?

- Leadership groups (scientist and lab managers who will have staff and trainees scheduled to be onsite) have been set up with accounts and will receive training.
- Staff and trainees who are required to be onsite will also be set up with accounts so that they can take, swap and cancel shifts. These staff members will have to sign in and sign off at the end of each shift.

4. I have some privacy concerns about my employer knowing where I am while at work. Is this really necessary?

- The application is used to track when staff are arriving at the hospital and when they leave after signing off.
- Please be re-assured that this information is not being collected for payroll and human resources purposes.
- The information collected through this app is no more extensive than what would be normally collected, the only difference being we are now logging your entry and exit times and collecting this information in a more streamlined way.

2. I am a staff member and currently working from home. Can I continue to do so for the foreseeable future? With school and camp closures, I have limited daycare options now for my kids.

- Yes, you can for now as long as you have your manager's approval, but as we start to ramp up our recovery process to re-open BRI, more staff will be returning to work onsite.
- I would recommend speaking to your manager to work out a schedule that meet your needs as well as the organization's.

Economic Aid for Medical Research Sector – Update (updated Sept. 18)

Federal Subsidy Update (CRCEF)

The funding formula to determine how funds will flow to each research institute have been determined. Our total allocation of the overall subsidy provided to the TAHSN research hospitals are not yet finalized.

Tri-Council Funded Personnel Subsidy

CIHR has provided unconfirmed information that another \$291M will flow through the tri-agencies to support staff, trainees, and post-docs that are paid from tri-council grants or awards.

Specifically for CIHR:

- \$8.2M for award extensions of trainees that hold eligible scholarships e.g. CGS, Banting, Vanier and are not receiving other supplements e.g. CERB, CESB.
- \$80M to provide support for approximately 5,000 to 6,000 active CIHR grants; specifically to support staff wages as long as they are not benefitting from other programs e.g. CERB, EI, and redeployment. Approximate amount per project may be based on "wage" expenses.
- There are no timelines available at this point.

1. Can you provide an overview of the federal government's economic aid package?

- Total announcement for medical research institutes across Canada is \$450 million and is an extension of the federal government's wage support subsidy.
- The funding package will be retroactively effective to approximately mid-March 2020. The wage supports will up to a maximum of 75% of an individual's salary during the funding period with a maximum of \$847/week for up to 12 weeks of salary support (consecutive or broken up over the eligibility period) per individual, incurred within the eligibility period between March 15 and August 29, 2020.

2. How much is Holland Bloorview's allocation of the total aid? (Updated Sept. 18)

- We are pleased to confirm that Holland Bloorview has been approved to receive \$456,874 to cover eligible wages.

3. When can Holland Bloorview expect the cash inflow from the federal economic aid? (Updated Sept. 18)

- We have received funds for Stage 1, and are waiting for the cash disbursement for Stage 2 that is expected in a few weeks.
- Each lab will receive notification on the amounts they are to receive.
- Funds will be deposited into the respective cost centres that originally incurred the costs.
- Eligibility for Stage 3 funding is still yet to be determined.

4. How will determinations about which employees' wages are supported be made?

- Eligible expenditure guidelines have been established by the federal government and can be viewed on the CRCEF website. The institutions will determine based on the eligibility guidelines provided by the federal government on research staff that are eligible for the wage subsidy.
- As always, we are committed to providing you with complete and reliable information in a timely manner. We are certain the information provided above will evolve in the coming weeks, and further details will be provided.

Research Studies (Updated June 12)

1. How can I get approval to do my research activities remotely?

- a. The Holland Bloorview Research Ethics Board (REB) has developed an expedited amendment process for those seeking approval to reduce and/or replace in-person participant interactions. Please see the [REB website](#) for more information or contact Marie Steele, Research Ethics Manager, at msteele@hollandbloorview.ca

2. I am an investigator. Can I ask REB to review my study now so that when pandemic restrictions on research are lifted, I can start the recruitment process immediately?

- a. Yes you can. Please submit your study to REB so they can be reviewed online. Please appreciate that the review process may take some time. We also don't know at this point when you can start actively recruiting.

3. Will BRI consider permitting any new non-COVID related studies to be conducted virtually while we wait for in-person studies to re-start?

- a. Yes. We will consider those. Any studies that can be conducted virtually can be submitted to REB's [electronic platform](#) for approval.
- b. New studies will take about two weeks to be approved by REB.

COVID-19 Related Funding Opportunities

4. I'm interested in any research funding related to COVID-19. Can you help me find these grants?

- a. Here are links to COVID-19 related funding from the tri-councils:
 - i. [CIHR Updates](#)
 - ii. [NSERC Updates](#)
 - iii. [SSHRC \(including NFRF updates\)](#)
- b. Meghann Proulx, Grants, Contracts & Awards Officer, sends out a list of the latest COVID-related funding opportunities every Wednesday. If you have any questions, please email her at meghann.proulx@hollandbloorview.ca for more details.

Work Arrangements (updated June 12)

5. Am I able to work at the hospital?

- a. **Staff** – starting on July 27, the BRI is moving to Phase 2 where there will be a gradual increase of staff returning onsite to 70% by mid-August. To protect our on-site BRI staff, the hospital has implemented active screening measures to ensure no one at risk is entering the building. Please note that all staff must enter the building through the [Bloorview School entrance](#) for screening until further notice.
- b. **Research Students and Trainees** – During Phase 1 of the recovery process, the TLI has begun to re-integrate clinical learners in a gradual and flexible manner. The TLI is collaborating with clinical programs and has welcomed 15 learners back. (Please refer to the recovery bulletin sent out on June 12 for more details on the TLI's Phase 1 recovery plans.) Trainees will still continue to work remotely.

6. How can I get access to hospital systems to work from home?

- a. Hospital IS is providing remote access to Citrix or VPN for scientists and research staff to work remotely. Please appreciate that it will take some time to scale up remote access for a larger volume of users.
- b. VPN access to BRI Network: Users with BRI credentials have been notified about obtaining VPN access to the BRI network drives. If you have not received a notification, please contact [Ka Lun Tam](#) by email.

Note: Those with Holland Bloorview laptops may be required to come on-site to install VPN. Those with personal devices only will be provided Citrix access remotely.

7. How can I hold meetings remotely?

- a. BRI has expanded our Zoom licenses to handle the increased demand. The recording option may be used; however, it is essential to record to your local hard drive on Holland Bloorview-sanctioned machines for immediate transfer to hospital servers. Do NOT save your recordings to the cloud option provided by Zoom.
- b. To increase Zoom meeting security, BRI has disabled the one-click join feature. This update will require attendees to enter the meeting password to join the Zoom conference. Please remember to communicate the password to meeting attendees when sending out your Zoom meeting link.
- c. If you are using Zoom for data collection, please inform your participants to only use their first name when joining the session.
- d. The chat feature on the BRI Zoom accounts has been disabled.

Further questions with regards to Zoom can be directed to [Wei Su](#)

Hospital's Upgrade to Microsoft Office 2016

1. I heard that IS is upgrading our computer systems to Microsoft Office 2016. How does this impact me if I have MS Office 2010?

- The hospital has migrated to MS Office 2016 because MS Office 2010 is no longer supported.
- MS Office 2016 comes Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Outlook.
- Changes to the upgrade include: removal of Access and Visio.
 - If you still need Access or Visio, please contact the Help Desk as it can be reinstated for a fee.
- It also does not come with OneDrive or Teams as this is not supported by the hospital's license.
- This upgrade will occur automatically for those who are on VPN, while others will be upgraded once they are back onsite.

If you have other questions/concerns, please contact Mani Kang, Director of Research Operations, at mkang@hollandbloorview.ca

For Holland Bloorview's latest updates on COVID-19, visit: www.hollandbloorview.ca

General information on the COVID-19

What is a coronavirus/ novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are known to cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). A novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans.

What are the symptoms of someone infected with a coronavirus?

Common signs include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties. Most cases are mild. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and in rare cases death.

Can coronaviruses be transmitted from person to person?

Yes, some coronaviruses can be transmitted from person to person, usually after close contact (two meters) with an infected person. Transmission occurs through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes.

Is there a vaccine available for this infection?

At this time there isn't a vaccine available for the COVID-19.

What is a pandemic? Are we in one?

A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease impacting populations over a large geographic area. It occurs when a new virus emerges and spreads around the world, and most people do not have immunity. The World Health Organization and local health officials consider a number of factors and have not declared the current coronavirus situation a pandemic.

As of March 11, the World Health Organization has declared the COVID-19 situation a global pandemic.

Are there reliable places I can get more information?

Yes, you can get more information at any of these sites:

- [Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
- [Ontario Hospital Association](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)
- [Centres for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

What's the difference between seasonal coronaviruses and Covid-19?

The seasonal coronavirus is NOT the same as the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. Seasonal coronaviruses are common and are typically associated with mild illnesses (including the common cold), and can spread easily between people. Common symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. There are strains of coronaviruses that have caused more severe illness in humans in the past, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and now, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). COVID-19 is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough