

# COVID-19: BRI FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated: April 5, 2021

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**. If you have any additional questions, please speak to your lab manager or to Mani Kang, director of research operations, at [mkang@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:mkang@hollandbloorview.ca). For hospital-related COVID19 updates, please refer to the weekly all-staff covid19 bulletin.

***Ontario implements province-wide stay-at-home order effective Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 12:01 a.m. as it declares its third state of emergency since the beginning of the pandemic.***

## **1. Will on-site research studies still continue during the province's stay-at-home order?**

**At this point, there is no change to our practices on how we handle on-site research activities. It is strongly recommended to save on-site presence only for essential work. If you can work from home, you should.**

As such, we request you continue to follow [current guidelines](#) on PPE, participant registration and personnel scheduling. For those you working in multiple institutions, other institutions may have different positions for on-site research activities; please consult with those representatives directly.

A few reminders:

- Please remember to register your participant visits via the [portal](#) and ask families to complete their [self-service screening](#) 24-hours prior to their appointment time.
- Please remember to use the correct levels of PPE i.e., level 2 mask + shield or goggles for all research visits. If you are working behind Plexiglas, you must wear a clear mask at minimum.
- If you are working on-site in a shared office, please keep your mask on throughout your workday.
- Always wipe down your workstations, any common touch areas, shared supplies or equipment before and after use.
- The Azrieli Gift to recover childhood disability research still remains available and is taking applications on a rolling basis. If you have incurred or are anticipating incurring incremental expenses due to pandemic related modifications to your studies, please use this opportunity to ask for funding. **Note, you also can use this funding to recover expenses for enhanced transportation, reasonable caregiver costs or other incremental expenses to accommodate families during this difficult time. REB amendments may be required.**
  - Applications can be found here:
    - Student and Trainee Application:  
<https://redcap.hollandbloorview.ca/surveys/?s=T7HNTRJ33F>

- Scientist Application: <https://redcap.hollandbloorview.ca/surveys/?s=W838CWNYCD>

## **2. Will I still be able to come onsite to conduct research/work at BRI during my scheduled shifts?**

Yes, you can. You would still follow all IPAC protocols – screening, masking, social distancing, washing hands regularly – to keep yourself and everyone else safe at the hospital.

## **3. I don't feel comfortable coming into work now in light of the high cases of transmission in Toronto. Am I able to continue to work remotely?**

Holland Bloorview's Thrive Together people strategy supports its employees to work remotely during the pandemic if they are able to and if they have approval from their operations manager. See the hospital's [Working Remotely guideline](#) for more details.

## **4. I am a scientist and am working with other researchers and/or graduate students from U of T. I see that they have suspended all non-COVID face-to-face research based on this [memo](#) posted on their website. What does this mean for me?**

The University of Toronto recognizes that there are several projects involving university faculty members and students, and where the REB of record and physical location is at a TAHSN hospital. As research is under the hospital's auspices, decisions whether or not to continue with the in-person research is therefore under an individual researcher's discretion.

This decision has no impact on the research conduct by affiliated faculty and graduate students at hospitals including Holland Bloorview; therefore, it remains an individual decision.

### ***Vaccination roll-out***

#### **I am a researcher and would like to be vaccinated. Where do I go?**

All BRI staff should have received an invite from Michael Garron Hospital for an appointment to vaccinate. We encourage all of you to take advantage of this opportunity and get inoculated, whether at Michael Garron or another hospital or in the community. Please be sure to email your vaccine documentation to [occupationalhealth@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:occupationalhealth@hollandbloorview.ca) when you receive your COVID19 vaccine.

### ***BRI Recovery Process***

#### **1. What phase is the BRI in during its recovery process?**

- Due to the renovation of the research institute, the BRI is currently in a modified Phase 2 of its recovery process with a maximum number of staff onsite as per the amount of desks available.
  - During Phase 2, research that needs access to on-site equipment as well as studies that require in-person contact with research participants have resumed.

- Select inpatient studies put on pause prior to the pandemic are continuing 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.
- Please refer to the [Guidelines](#) for BRI Personnel Recovery on the COVID-19 staff resources [web page](#) for more details on the Phase 2 process.
- Information about caregivers will now be requested through our Participant Registration system.
- For staff who are returning to the BRI for the first time since the pandemic was declared in March 2020, 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](mailto:covid19@hollandbloorview.ca)

## **2. How have the screening procedures changed?**

- We are now screening to ask if our clients or visitors have been outside of Canada in the last 14 days; it is no longer the province. Please see the updated pre-screening process map in Appendix A in the Guidelines for BRI Personnel Recovery. However, travel ahead of the April break (April 12 to 16) is strongly advised against travelling to another province at this time.

## **3. Where can I order more PPE?**

- Please order PPE items e.g. goggles, shields via an email to #Stores at least 1-2 days in advance. Include the name and number of items required, as well as the account # to be charged. All orders placed must be picked up from Stores. For urgent requests, staff can come down with an account #.

## **4. What types of masks should I wear when I can't maintain a two-metre distance while interacting with my clients?**

- You will be given two choices for masks when interacting with clients: 1) Level 3 Primagard mask + shield or goggles OR 2) Level 2 Primagard mask with a visor, with no need for shield or goggles.
- PPE reminders: eye protection should be worn by clinical and research staff when working within two metres of clients. This includes when speaking to a client, moving (i.e. pushing a wheelchair) or going for a walk with a client.

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

- The BRI is 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.

6. **I am a staff member and currently working from home. Can I continue to do so for the near 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.
  - I would recommend speaking to your manager to work out a schedule that meet your needs as well as the organization's.

### ***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 [researchethicsboard@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:researchethicsboard@hollandbloorview.ca)

### ***COVID-19 Related Funding Opportunities***

**2. 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, Manager, Grants, Contracts & Awards 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](mailto:meghann.proulx@hollandbloorview.ca) for more details.

### ***Work Arrangements (updated March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021)***

**3. Am I able to work at the hospital?**

BRI is in a modified Phase 2 of its recovery process. 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 [main entrance](#).

**4. 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.

**5. How can I hold meetings remotely?**

- a. BRI has expanded our Zoom licenses to handle the increased demand. The recording option may be used. There is also a live transcription option now.
- b. If you are using Zoom for data collection, please inform your participants to only use their first name when joining the session.

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

If you have other questions/concerns, please contact Mani Kang, Director of Research Operations, at [mkang@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:mkang@hollandbloorview.ca)

For Holland Bloorview's latest updates on COVID-19, visit: [www.hollandbloorview.ca](http://www.hollandbloorview.ca)