



SEMIAHMOO
HOUSE
SOCIETY

PENINSULA
ESTATES HOUSING
SOCIETY

THE
SEMIAHMOO
FOUNDATION

April 16, 2020

Re: COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Semiahmoo House Society Community,

I am addressing this letter to the whole Semiahmoo House Society community: people we support, the families of people we support, home share providers, and all our staff members. For the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be working together, with as few boundaries as possible to ensure that everyone is supported and safe.

I am sure that many of us are feeling a bit like we are stuck in the Bill Murray movie “Groundhog Day,” where the lead character, Phil, gets up every morning to be forced to live the same day over and over again. We want to move forward, we want to get on with doing things, but we cannot: forced to stay at home day after beautifully sunny day. This can be boring, frustrating, even very scary, depending on one’s situation. And, I am sorry to say, today’s letter will contain the same message you have heard from me for weeks now: we need to continue to stay home and hold the line.

During yesterday’s provincial Ministry of Health COVID-19 update, I was heartened to hear Minister Adrian Dix specifically address the concerns of people who have disabilities in his presentation. He acknowledged the worry that many people with disabilities have that they will be treated differently than others if they get sick and stated that the provincial government will work to ensure that this does not happen. During the same update, Dr. Bonnie Henry stated that “we are in the midst of it still...we are not at the point yet that we can let up, and I know that is very challenging to people.” And so, we will continue to hold the line.

At some point, when it is safe, we will need to re-activate and start moving forward and one of the items that SHS leadership has been discussing during our daily 8 a.m. meetings, is what that re-activation will look like. As Dr. Henry said yesterday, “normal is going to look quite a different for some time,” and this includes how we will be re-activating our services. Our return to the new normal will not include large gatherings of people in one location, but we will begin to provide in-person service as it gets safer (and I know that staff members are very much looking forward to working directly with people again). It’s likely that our re-activation will include more individual one-to-one or very small group support with a continuing component of online connections. It will likely be a fairly long time before we will be able to gather large groups of people in one location, which means we will need to be creative in ensuring that people are being supported in person in a way that meets their needs. Once it is clearer when our re-activation will begin, we will be asking you (people we support, families, home share providers, staff members) for your input about our services. We do have some time for consultation, and will use that time to ensure we are able to re-activate our services in the best possible manner. Hopefully, like Phil in Groundhog Day, we will learn and be better for it when the days start moving forward again.

Today’s update will focus on some of the work that Self-Advocates have been doing to support their community during this crisis. The operational update is much the same as last week’s and can be found on the [Uniti4All COVID-19 webpage](https://uniti4all.com/covid-19-information/) < <https://uniti4all.com/covid-19-information/> >.

April 16 Update

Self-Advocate Work

Semiahmoo House Society and The Semiahmoo Foundation has been supporting self-advocates to have a voice during the COVID-19 pandemic. I wanted to share with you some of the advocacy work that two self-advocate groups that we are associated with have been doing.

- 1) Provincial Self-Advocate Leadership Network (SALN) have been creating news releases and sending them to provincial and federal leaders. They received a response from Dr. Behn Smith, which was nice. I've attached these documents to this email. SALN will be creating podcasts and videos about COVID-19 in the next two weeks. SALN are also looking for plain language documents about COVID-19 that have been created by service providers that they can collect and share with others. Nolda, Jill and Charmly have been supporting SALN during this time. SALN news releases can be found on the [Uniti4All COVID-19 webpage](https://uniti4all.com/covid-19-information/) < <https://uniti4all.com/covid-19-information/> >
- 2) The Self-Advocates of Semiahmoo (SAS) have created five public awareness videos about COVID 19 (I think I have sent these to you before, but wanted to share all this in one email). Here are the five videos:
 - a. [Coronavirus: Stay Home \(Krista\)](#)
 - b. [Coronavirus: We're In This Together](#)
 - c. [Coronavirus Affects Us All](#)
 - d. [Coronavirus: Stay Home \(Manjeet\)](#)
 - e. [Coronavirus: Fair Treatment](#)

The following updates have not changed substantially from last week:

Personal COVID-19 Emergency Plans

The purpose of these documents is to identify areas where support is needed if people get sick or injured during this crisis. It is not critical for Community Service participants to send a copy of the document to SHS—the document is for your use and you should share it (or not) with the people who need to see it. If you identify areas where additional support may be needed, please contact us and we can assist you in figuring out those areas. People supported in home share and staffed residential settings (group homes and Chorus) are asked to return their forms to SHS.

The Personal COVID-19 Emergency Plan documents have been uploaded to the [Uniti4All COVID-19 Information Page](#).

Guidance Counselor

Shab Khan, Registered Family Counsellor, MPCC, RPC, will be providing support to people connected to Semiahmoo House Society during the COVID-19 pandemic. The counselling is meant for people SHS supports, including people already on the Guidance Counselor's active list, people on her wait list, family members, and home share providers. Priority will be given to the people in the most critical situations (environmental, health, or emotional). The support given will be virtual—through phone, email, or secure online platforms. Contact information below:

Guidance Counselor contact information:

Shab Khan, Registered Family Counsellor, M.P.C.C., R.P.C.
Telephone: 604-536-1242 Extension: 276
Email: s.khan@shsbc.ca

Peninsula Child Care (PCC)

PCC re-opened this week for children of staff members who are doing essential work and for the children of health care workers/first responders in South Surrey. Staff members and community health care workers or first responders who need childcare should contact Liz Deschenes (contact information at the end of this letter).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

If someone we support in home share or residential services does get ill with COVID-19, we have N-95 masks, face shields, and other PPE to distribute to people we support, home share providers, and staff members who are at risk. Due to limited supplies, these PPE are reserved for cases of confirmed COVID-19 infection (by Fraser Health) in staffed residential settings (group homes and Chorus) and home share homes only.

Online Support

We are supporting daily (Mon-Fri) coffeehouse meetings through Rec & Leisure Services. These meetings are open to all and are a chance to catch up with each other and see some friendly faces. If you are interested in joining those calls, please contact Anita Bhatti (contact information at end of letter).

If you are using any online social sites or games with your family and friends that you recommend we look into, please send them to the staff members connected to the service you use at the end of this letter.

We will begin to roll out our Online Campus next week. This Campus will feature ways to connect and learn from staff members and experts. More to come on this.

WISE Employment Solutions

The WISE team is figuring out how to do the discovery process with job-seekers online. More information about this will follow next week.

Rec & Leisure

We have cancelled all May and June Rec & Leisure events. Participants will receive refunds for those sessions.

Provincial Financial Support and Resources People with Disabilities

More information on this benefit and others can be found [here](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/on-assistance/covid) < <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/on-assistance/covid> >.

Additional Support

If you need additional support, please contact the relevant person listed below.

SHS Staff Member	Service/Program
Lise Boughen Director of Inclusive Living l.boughen@shsbc.ca 604 536 1242 ext. 227	Staffed Residential (Group Homes) Chorus Apartment Supports
Gale Cooper Manager, Community Support Network g.cooper@shsbc.ca 604 536 1242 ext. 231	Home Share Providers
Liz Deschenes Community Services Director e.deschenes@shsbc.ca 604-536-1242 ext. 234	Peninsula Child Care Acquired Brain Injury Services
Brianna Hopaluk Community Services Manager b.hopaluk@shsbc.ca 604 536 1242 ext. 232	South Campus (formerly PD)
Teresa Randle Transitions Services Supervisor t.randle@shsbc.ca 604 536 1242 ext. 311	North Campus (formerly Transitions) Focus Group Encore
Anita Bhatti Recreation and Leisure Services Program Coordinator a.bhatti@shsbc.ca 604-536-1242 ext. 255	Rec & Leisure Services
Kristyl Downing Program Coordinator—ABIS k.downing@shsbc.ca 604-592-1006 ext. 230	Acquired Brain Injury Services
Seema Tripathi Employment and Innovative Services Director s.tripathi@shsbc.ca 778 888 5916	WISE Employment Solutions Culinary Arts Program (CULA) SPARK tidyAlot

Sincerely,



Doug Tennant

CEO, Semiahmoo House Society

Resources

While there is much media coverage of the COVID-19 virus it is important to be sure the information is reputable and up to date. Here are five sites that will keep you informed (google the name if this is not an electronic letter):

- [Public Health Authority of Canada](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [BC Ministry of Health](#)
- [Government of Canada Travel Advisories](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)

SHS's communications about COVID-19 and our response can be found here:

<https://unit4all.com/covid-19-information/>