



SEMIAHMOO
HOUSE
SOCIETY

PENINSULA
ESTATES HOUSING
SOCIETY

THE
SEMIAHMOO
FOUNDATION

May 22, 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.

May 22nd Update

Last week, I communicated [SHS's Re-Activation Plans](#). That information can be found here. If you have any questions about re-activation in the services you use, please contact the relevant person listed at the end of this letter. Today I wanted to share a bit of information about how SHS will be ensuring that our buildings and worksites are safe while we slowly and safely start having more in-person activities for both staff members and the people we support.

As with all of our COVID-19 Response planning, the safety plans for our facilities are based on the advice of Dr. Henry and SHS's 5 COVID-19 Response Principles (listed at the end of this document). For worksites, we are also following the rules that have been developed by WorkSafeBC. We've created our worksite safety plans using the following six categories:

1. Preparing the Building
2. Preparing People
3. Access around the Building
4. Social Distancing
5. Cleaning the Building
6. Communication

I've attached an overview of the worksite safety plan, "Ready, Set, Go!", that Community Services has created. This is a straightforward document with guidelines that staff members will be following while at work. This document is backed up by a more thorough summary of SHS policies that apply to the safe re-opening of our services and a very comprehensive Exposure Control Plan that all staff members are expected to read and practice.

One safety area that we have spent a lot of time thinking about is the use of masks. We do have medical grade masks ready to go for staff members performing personal care with a person they support and for emergencies that might occur that require these masks and other equipment. I also want to address the use of cloth masks that recently have been recommended by federal health authorities to be worn when one cannot stay two metres away from other people who are not part of one's "family." All SHS staff members will have cloth masks that they will wear when they are supporting people in close proximity. SHS staff members also have the option to wear these masks at other times if they feel more comfortable doing so. From our

communications with people we support and their families, I would estimate that about 85% of the people we support are knowledgeable about mask wearing. If people we support want to wear a mask, SHS workers will support them to do so. I also realize that for some people it is very difficult or unhealthy to wear a mask. In these cases, we will still be supporting them to stay safe in other ways. At the end of the day, what all other British Columbians are being told about mask-wearing is something that SHS will support for our staff members and the people we support. If a person who is using our services needs a cloth mask, please let their direct support worker know and we will get one for them (and thank you again to Tanya, Leona, Cyndi, and Joan for making masks!).

Ariis Knight



As you know, Ariis Knight passed away in hospital without her loved ones by her side. SHS support workers were also not allowed in to the hospital to support her while she was there. I am pleased to let you know that BC's Health Minister, Adrian Dix, announced this week that provincial policy has been changed to allow designated support people to accompany people with disabilities in hospital if they need emotional, communication, or decision-making support. This positive change is a legacy that Ariis leaves us all. Many people in the disability rights movement, including myself, are referring to this change as "Ariis's Law." I have included a PDF of the [revised policy](#) as an attachment to this communication.

SHS's Crisis Response Team will continue to meet on a daily basis during Phase Two of our re-activation and we will continue to communicate with our community.

I wish you all a healthy and safe weekend.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Knight".

Doug

Important and Ongoing Information

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](#).

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. The Provincial Self-Advocate Leadership Network (SALN) have been creating news releases and sending them to provincial and federal leaders, and the Self-Advocates of Semiahmoo (SAS) have created five public awareness videos about COVID 19. SALN news releases and SAS videos can be found on the [Uniti4All COVID-19 webpage](https://uniti4all.com/covid-19-information/) < <https://uniti4all.com/covid-19-information/> >

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

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.

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

Semiahmoo House Society's COVID-19 Principles

- 1) All our decisions will be made with the safety of the people we support and our staff members being our first priority
- 2) We will support people with disabilities to have the same right to safety as all other citizens in BC
- 3) We are person-centred and will adapt our services to support people in the way that is best for them, given safety and resource realities
- 4) We are open-minded and will revise our plans when new information suggests this
- 5) We will be responsible with taxpayer funds and will use alternate resources when necessary in our response

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](#)
- [CLBC COVID-19 Information Page](#)

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

<https://uniti4all.com/covid-19-information/>