



SEMIAHMOO
HOUSE
SOCIETY

PENINSULA
ESTATES HOUSING
SOCIETY

THE
SEMIAHMOO
FOUNDATION

May 29, 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 29th Update

CLBC Teleconference

On Tuesday this week, Community Living British Columbia (CLBC), the funder of our services for people with developmental disabilities hosted a teleconference for BC's service providers. The information presented at the teleconference reinforced to me that Semiahmoo House Society is on the right track with our re-activation plans. CLBC will be releasing guidelines about re-opening very soon and I am confident that our plans fit those guidelines, as they are based on the sources for our plans: Dr. Henry and WorkSafe BC (and, or course, the SHS-specific 5 COVID-19 Response Principles found at the end of this document). [Dr. Danièle Behn Smith](#) reinforced the need to limit the number of contacts with other people everyone has during re-opening, an idea that has been part of our planning from day one of this crisis.

If you would like to listen to the teleconference, it can be found here: <https://www.communitylivingbc.ca/for-service-providers/information-about-the-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-clbc-funded-service-providers/teleconference-calls-service-providers/> .

Service Re-Activation

Semiahmoo House Society (SHS) entered Phase Two of our re-activation this week (explanation of our phased re-activation can be found in the May 15 COVID-19 letter found on our [COVID-19 Information Page](#)) with safety precaution in place in our buildings and for staff interactions with each other and with the people they support. As discussed in the CLBC teleconference mentioned above, services are not presently able to return to the levels they were at before COVID-19, and the "new normal" will be different than the way things were done pre-COVID-19. SHS is beginning our re-activation with short direct support activities and events. As we move to Phases Three and Four later in the summer (hopefully), we will be able to provide more hours of support to people because one staff will be able to support multiple people in those phases. I appreciate your flexibility as we work our way through our re-activation phases to a more robust support in terms of activities and hours.

Last week I shared some information about how we are ensuring that our buildings are safe. I've added an additional vehicle safety document at the end of this letter. You will notice in that we are recommending that people travelling in a vehicle together (from different households) wear cloth masks (with some exceptions based on a person's needs). The statement in parenthesis is an important one. We know that there are people we support and some staff members who are unable to safely wear a mask—this could be because they have asthma, because they can't stop touching the mask, or a variety of other reasons—and we will

continue to support people by working with them to ensure that they are as safe as possible, even if they cannot follow all of the safety protocols we lay out. Dr. Danièle Behn Smith talked about this in the CLBC teleconference—we need to ensure that we are doing as much as we possibly can for the safety of all, and if almost everyone follows these guidelines, we will be ok. My expectation is that staff members will be supporting people to take as much ownership of their own safety as they can. If people we support are endangering themselves in public situations by doing things that are endangering others (such as getting too close, touching, or holding people they don't know), we will, of course, figure out a way to support that person in spaces and at times when that is less likely to occur. Our flexibility is very important at this time to ensure that we are able to support people outside their homes.

Of course, as I wrote last week, if you are not ready to come back to direct support in the same physical space and want to wait a bit longer, that is absolutely ok and will not work against you when you decide you are ready to return.

We have over 100 people we support enrolled in SHS's Online Campus, and I have received some very positive feedback from those who are participating. If you need support enrolling in the Online Campus, please contact your direct support worker or the relevant person listed at the end of this letter. I have also heard that some people who receive the PWD benefit have used the extra \$300 a month to purchase a device that they can use for the Online Campus. Please let us know if this is something that you are thinking of doing this and we can support you in finding a quality device that will work well with the Online Campus and with other online connections you would benefit from at this time.

Pandemic Learning Project

UNITI and SHS are participating in a project that will help us and others be better prepared for future emergencies by learning about what people have been doing during the pandemic. The project involves collecting stories from people from across Metro Vancouver with all different kinds of experiences, especially people with disabilities, their families, home share providers, and the people who work with and support them. Please check out our project page and click on the link at the bottom if you have a story or stories to share. If you need someone to help you with doing this, contact Lynne Ford at l.ford@shsbc.ca or 604-536-1242 ext. 258. The more stories that are told by people in the disability community, the better. The project page is here: <https://uniti4all.com/pandemic-learning/>

Harmony Apartment Project

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, UNITI has continued to work on our next housing project, [a 91-home rental apartment modeled on the inclusive and affordable Chorus Apartments](#), which we completed in 2016. This article in the Peace Arch News explains a bit more about the project. If you want to support this much needed project, please take a moment to sign [a petition that the Peninsula Homelessness to Housing Task Force created in favour of Harmony](#) (you do not need to make a donation on the Change.org petition website as that donation does not go to SHS or PH2H, it goes to Change.org to help spread the petition more widely, something that is not that important as we want the signatories to come from the local community).

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/>



VEHICLE SAFETY GUIDELINES



1

PRE VISIT CHECKLIST

Ask Covid-19 questions prior to each visit/meeting, and record in Sharvision in the Covid-19 Safety Checklist



2

WEAR A MASK

Wearing a mask (with some exceptions based on a person's needs)



3

SOCIAL DISTANCING

One person per each vehicle row sitting diagonally



4

SANITIZE VEHICLE

Ensure cleaning of the vehicle after each trip - Wipe seats, seatbelts, door handles, and steering wheel (cleaning supplies will be provided)



5

OPEN WINDOWS

When possible open windows. This will ensure that natural air flow is occurring.