



SEMIAHMOO
HOUSE
SOCIETY

PENINSULA
ESTATES HOUSING
SOCIETY

THE
SEMIAHMOO
FOUNDATION

June 19, 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.

June 19th Update

Community Services Survey

Last week Community Services surveyed families and supporters of people enrolled in SHS's community inclusion services with the following four questions:

- 1) What are some things you have done to get through this pandemic as a family/household unit?
- 2) What are you worried about? How can we help alleviate these worries for you?
- 3) What are your hopes for Semiahmoo House Society Community Services?
- 4) How do you feel about the communication you have received from Semiahmoo House Society? Too much info? Not enough info? Would you like more details?

As of today, 44 people had completed the survey and a summary of the survey responses is also attached to the email accompanying this letter. One of the questions/concerns that was identified in the survey and that has also been brought to my attention in other ways is the lack of concrete details about the future and what SHS's services will look like over the next year and beyond. I'll try to address this concern to the best of my ability at this time.

At SHS's we have tried to tie our phases of reactivation to the phases that BC is using to re-open the province. This means that we will, to the best of our ability, try to adjust our services to emulate what is being recommended to the citizens of BC. This also means that we are unable to give precise dates for when our phases will shift forward or backward—we are relying on the Provincial Health Office (PHO) to make that assessment for us. We are currently in Phase Two of our reactivation, which means limited one-to-one direct in-person support for those that want it. Phase Three will see a move towards small groups getting together (with social distancing and other safety protocols being followed), and with the ability for staff members to support more than one person at a time, more hours will be available for support. Phase Four will see a set schedule of in-person activities that people will be able to choose from, with more hours being available due to staff member's ability to work with slightly larger groups of people (as defined by the PHO). So, in Phase Four, it will be possible to create a set 5-day-a-week schedule but with fewer hours each day than before COVID-19 (likely will be 3 to 4 hours a day). On a positive note, people will be able to choose different times of the day, and even the weekends, for their schedule.

The dilemma we face is that many family members and home share providers need to go back to work but health protocols will not allow SHS to host large groups of people which is the only way that we could support everyone from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. five days a week as we did before COVID-19 hit. So we cannot go back to the way things were before COVID-19 and need to continue to try to support people to the best of our ability given our present situation. Please do contact the relevant person listed at the end of this letter if you are in desperate need for additional support—we do realize that everyone has their own unique situation and that ‘fair’ does not necessarily mean that everyone gets the same thing as each person’s needs are different.

It is likely that [BC’s Phase Three will begin next week](#), which means SHS’s Phase Three will follow shortly thereafter.

SHS’s Community Services Phase Three Overview:

- Direct one to one support can remain as per preference and need
- Increase staff/person ratio to two to one for those with shared connections and/or similar interests and where social distancing can be maintained
 - Groups of people will remain consistent
- Combine two small groups in a shared space where social distancing can be maintained
 - Groups of people will remain consistent
- Support hours will be flexible based on preference, staff and space availability
- Safety protocols will be in place and must be followed
- Tracking and reporting systems will be developed
- On-line Campus option remains in place

More information about BC’s phased re-opening can be found [here](#). No date is yet given for when Phase Four will begin as that will depend on what happens with COVID-19 over the summer and into the fall.

SHS Online Campus

Over 100 people are participating in classes and sessions with the Online Campus. If you need assistance in registering or getting set up for the Online Campus, please contact the relevant person at the end of this letter. I realize that the Online Campus does not replace in-person contact. If you (or the family member/person you support) are interested in seeing people you used to see before COVID-19, please contact the relevant supervisor at the end of this letter and we will strive to put you in touch with those people/families/home share providers so you can connect directly with them.

Inclusive Living Services

SHS group homes had been limiting access to staff members, health care professionals and emergency maintenance (for the homes) during Phase One. Now that we are in Phase Two, we are open to outside visits with all health protocols, including the donning of PPE in order. Casual employees are also being approved to work in two group homes, which will be a welcome relief for everyone who has been going above and beyond in supporting people in their homes. We have screening protocols in place for staff members and visitors to group homes to keep everyone safe.

We are eagerly awaiting CLBC’s response to SHS’s emergency funding request for home share providers and will distribute the funding as soon as we get it.

Important and Ongoing Information

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/>

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/> >

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.

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/>