



SEMAIHM
MOO
HOUSE
SOCIETY

PENINSULA
ESTATES HOUSING
SOCIETY

THE
SEMAIHM
MOO
FOUNDATION

August 7, 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.

August 7th Update

Making Sure Everyone Is Informed

These news letters are intended for the whole SHS community. While we are able to send these letters directly to some people we support, many people do not have email addresses or need assistance in reading and/or comprehending these letters. If you are a family member, home share provider, or supporter of someone who uses SHS's services, please do share the information in these letters with them, in a way that makes the most sense to you and them. Thank you.

Community Services—Pods

It seems I jumped the gun somewhat a couple of weeks ago with my announcement about Community Services creating "pods" of up to eight people (staff and people supported) that would allow for a gradual increase in direct support time while at the same time limiting the number of contacts people would have with others. Our pod system actually began late this week with communication from direct support staff members to people we support and their families and home share providers. Because the pods will enable people to be supported in small groups, we will be able to offer a gradual increase in hours, for those who want them. The pod system is also designed for flexibility, so please let your direct support worker know your preferred times for being supported.

People who presently only feel comfortable being supported in a one-to-one manner will continue to be supported in this manner, but it will be more difficult to increase the support hours if this is the case. It was interesting to see Dr. Henry announce last week that the BC School system is also using a "Pandemic Pod" system as their strategy for safely starting schools in September. Dr. Henry said that "The principle behind these learning groups is to create groups of students and staff who will remain together throughout the school year or term and who primarily interact only with each other." Dr. Henry also said that this means that if there is an outbreak of COVID-19, transmission will be limited, which is the theory behind the Community Services pod system as well. Kudos to Community Services staff members for developing this strategy last week.

Home Share Funding

Emergency Home Share Funding has arrived and is being distributed via direct deposit to home share providers. Thank you for your patience, and if you are a home share provider who has not received your emergency funding by Tuesday, please let Gale know.

Self Advocate Leadership Network and Self-Advocates of Semiahmoo

UNITI partners Semiahmoo House Society and The Semiahmoo Foundation has been supporting self-advocates to have a voice during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the Self Advocate Leadership Network (SALN) and the Self-Advocates of Semiahmoo (SAS) have been helping BCers and others get through the pandemic with informative news releases, videos, and podcasts. They have also created plain language resources that are very helpful in explaining COVID-19 related issues and advice. All of these great resources can be found on the new [SALNBC.com website](https://www.salnbc.com).

\$600 PWD Benefit

Just wanted to pass this along as well: federal legislation was passed on July 17th to give Canadian adults, youths and children with disabilities a one-time benefit of \$600 to help cover extra COVID19 costs. The new benefit will go to people who receive the Disability Tax Credit, CPP disability payments and/or supports from Veterans Affairs Canada. If you receive the PWD benefit, you should also receive the extra \$600.

Included in the new, revised disability benefit legislation:

- 1-time federal \$600 benefit
- Expanded eligibility covers 1.7 million Canadians
- 60 days to apply for Disability Tax Credit (DTC) if not already approved
- **No need to apply** for the 1-time benefit if you already have the DTC, CPP or Veterans disability. You will receive it automatically in the coming weeks.

[Read the Government News Release](#) for more information.

Important and Ongoing Information

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 new [SALNBC.com website](https://www.salnbc.com).

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/>