



SEMAIHM  
MOO  
HOUSE  
SOCIETY

PENINSULA  
ESTATES HOUSING  
SOCIETY

THE  
SEMAIHM  
MOO  
FOUNDATION

October 8, 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.*

### **October 9<sup>th</sup> Update**

It's been a few weeks since my last update, which is a good thing, as it means we have continued to cope as best we can with the threat of COVID-19. As the weather gets colder and wetter, our services will necessarily need to spend more time indoors. As I have written before, we have acquired more space in townhouses that UNITI partner Peninsula Estates Housing Society owns (which are slated for demolition when just before we begin construction of [Harmony Apartments](#), hopefully in the late spring). In Community Services, we are also aspiring to use our indoor spaces throughout the day and week, including evening and weekends. If you are a Community Services participant and would like to be supported during times outside our traditional services, please do let your direct support worker know.

Similar to SHS, HandyDART adapted their services quite drastically in March and have been gradually welcoming passengers back in the late summer and early fall. I have attached some HandyDart information, including their safety protocols, to the email accompanying this letter. More people we support have been using HandyDART to get to our buildings, and that form of transit seems to be working well, albeit with fewer passengers.

In my communications with other service providers throughout BC, I have heard quite a few stories about people with disabilities not being allowed to bring an essential supporter into hospital with them. SHS has also experienced this on occasion since the tragic death of Ariis Knight. The Family Support Institute of BC (FSI) has created an excellent [Toolkit for Adults with Disabilities and Families](#) in BC to address the inconsistent application of the visitor policy for hospitals. This toolkit is meant to be used by people with disabilities and their families if they go to hospital and should ensure that essential supporters are allowed in with them. I have attached a PDF of this toolkit to the email accompanying this letter.

On September 21 at the SHS AGM (via Zoom), Board Chair Bea Hadikin shared her thoughts on the work that SHS and UNITI are doing during these difficult times. Here's a [link to her report](#). We are in this together and our Board is very aware of the work being done by front-line staff, home share providers, and families to keep people safe and connected during these times.

I wish all of you a restful and safe Thanksgiving with your loved ones, whether it is in person or virtually.

## **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 <a href="mailto:l.boughen@shsbc.ca">l.boughen@shsbc.ca</a> 604 536 1242 ext. 227	Staffed Residential (Group Homes) Chorus Apartment Supports
Gale Cooper Manager, Community Support Network <a href="mailto:g.cooper@shsbc.ca">g.cooper@shsbc.ca</a> 604 536 1242 ext. 231	Home Share Providers
Liz Deschenes Community Services Director <a href="mailto:e.deschenes@shsbc.ca">e.deschenes@shsbc.ca</a> 604-536-1242 ext. 234	Peninsula Child Care Acquired Brain Injury Services
Brianna Hopaluk Community Services Manager <a href="mailto:b.hopaluk@shsbc.ca">b.hopaluk@shsbc.ca</a> 604 536 1242 ext. 232	South Campus (formerly PD)
Teresa Randle Transitions Services Supervisor <a href="mailto:t.randle@shsbc.ca">t.randle@shsbc.ca</a> 604 536 1242 ext. 311	North Campus (formerly Transitions) Focus Group Encore
Anita Bhatti Recreation and Leisure Services Program Coordinator <a href="mailto:a.bhatti@shsbc.ca">a.bhatti@shsbc.ca</a> 604-536-1242 ext. 255	Rec & Leisure Services
Kristyl Downing Program Coordinator—ABIS <a href="mailto:k.downing@shsbc.ca">k.downing@shsbc.ca</a> 604-592-1006 ext. 230	Acquired Brain Injury Services
Seema Tripathi Employment and Innovative Services Director <a href="mailto:s.tripathi@shsbc.ca">s.tripathi@shsbc.ca</a> 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/>