

May 12, 2020

COVID-19 Update:

We are in our tenth week of COVID-19 and the new 'norm'. There isn't a whole lot to report on yet, although with the talk to going to Phase 2 in this Province, and how it is going to look for us, I thought I should give a quick update.

The BCCEO Network has put together a working Reference Group to plan for the re-opening of services. This committee is made up of service providers and CLBC. Guidelines will be reviewed by the Public Health Office prior to final approval. They assure us that the process of re-opening will be done slowly and carefully. We have a teleconference next Wednesday, May 20th, where we will be updated with what the plan may look like. Once we have that information, we will share it with all stakeholders.

Shirley Brown, the Worker OSH Rep, and I, met with Dale Hills, from WorkSafe BC this morning to discuss and review what we have done in regards to worker safety. Mr. Hills completed his report and it has been forwarded to all programs to be posted so all staff can review. We have done a great job in prevention of the spread of this disease by following the guidelines set out by the BC Centre of Disease Control, and the Provincial Health Officer. One of the first tasks in early March, when we could see that this was a serious issue, was to develop a COVID-19 Exposure Control Plan. We will fine tune that now that we have a bit of breathing room, so it will be in line with the Island Health's Exposure Control Plan. This will assist in future outbreaks should the need arise.

The day programs are continuing to provide limited support to those in need. Residential programs continue to run as usual with the folks in each home, social distancing as a family unit. Ironwood is doing great, and have a greeter at the door from 6:30 am to 7 pm asking the pertinent questions Island Health has set out. Employment Services have started up in a very limited way, by providing shredding (they were getting backed up) with very limited workers in the building at one time. Children's Services are mainly working through teletherapy, and via telephone, but they are ramping up their services.

Sadly, we lost another one of our folks last week. Pam Jennings passed suddenly, which is very hard on everyone, as there isn't a chance for closure for anyone. I'm sure we will be having some sort of remembrance celebration for both Pam and Phil once we know what our new 'normal' will look like.

Thanks again to our amazing staff who have been the backbone to this organization through this crisis. You all deserve the recognition you are receiving, and don't forget, the 7 pm call out includes our gratitude to you also!!!

Stay Safe!

Adrienne Monks
Interim Executive Director