

# PHSA Medical Staff

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*\*denotes readers will need to be on-site or access the PHSA network remotely to view these pages.*

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### Updates and Reminders:

#### 1. Important Update: H5 Avian Influenza Preparedness and Respiratory Season Reminder

Earlier this month, Canada's first case of H5 avian influenza, commonly known as avian flu or bird flu, was identified in the Fraser Valley. A teen has tested positive and is currently being cared for at BC Children's Hospital.

While H5 primarily affects birds and non-human mammals, it has, in rare cases, infected humans through close contact with infected animals. Symptoms may range from mild respiratory issues to severe

conditions such as pneumonia. Children, particularly those with underlying health conditions, may be more vulnerable to complications.

There have been no further cases identified at this time. [Learn more from Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry.](#)

The BC Centre for Disease Control provides a [comprehensive overview of avian influenza](#), including public resources and links for additional information. This is a valuable resource to share with families seeking background information.

Keep yourself safe during viral respiratory season by reviewing the respiratory season reminders.

## 2. Respiratory Season Reminders

As we enter the viral respiratory illness season, medical staff are reminded to follow key precautions and guidance designed to protect staff, patients and families from preventable infectious diseases.

Make it a priority to:

- Follow infection prevention and control measures for your site and continue to make [point-of-care risk assessments](#) a routine practice.
- Stay home when sick and only return to work once you are well enough to do so
  - Refer to the provincial [Return to Work Guidance](#) for further details on exposure management for health-care workers with viral respiratory illnesses, or connect with your leader.
- Medical staff are encouraged to get immunized.
  - You can sign up for influenza and COVID vaccines through the [GetVaccinated platform](#).
  - Staff can attend any regular PHSA immunization clinic to receive their influenza vaccine. [View the schedule and book your appointment](#) using the Janeapp.
  - Peer immunizers are also available to provide vaccines to their colleagues at select sites across PHSA. Check with your leader for availability.
  - Use the [provincial self-reporting site](#) to self-report your influenza protection choice. Make sure you are logged into a health authority networked computer to access the self-reporting site.
- Practice consistent hand hygiene.

For additional guidance on the upcoming cold and flu season, please check the [Viral Respiratory Infection page on POD\\*](#).

## 3. Privacy, Confidentiality, Social Media, and Media Response Guidelines

This is a reminder of the key responsibilities regarding patient privacy, confidentiality, appropriate use of social media, and responding to media inquiries. Adherence to these guidelines is essential for upholding the professional standards and trust essential to our work.

### Privacy and Confidentiality

- Access to patient information should be strictly limited to what is necessary to perform specific duties. Patient information should only be shared with authorized personnel directly involved in care.

- Discussion of patient information in public areas or with anyone not involved in the patient’s care is strictly prohibited, as it compromises both privacy and trust.
- Further details are available in the PHSA privacy guidelines:
  - [Privacy and Security Policy](#)

### **Social Media Use**

- Social media platforms are valuable communication tools, but sharing any information related to patients, even without identifiers, can lead to privacy breaches and reputational risks.
- Work-related information should not be shared on personal social media accounts, as actions on social media reflect directly on professional standing and the organization’s reputation.
- Please refer to PHSA’s personal use of social media guideline here:
  - [Personal Use of Social Media](#)

### **Responding to Media Inquiries**

- Staff are reminded that any media inquiries should be redirected to the Communications & Engagement Department, as they are equipped to provide appropriate responses on behalf of the organization. If during regular business hours, please refer the media outlet/reporter to the communications team for your program or to the PHSA after hours line outside of core business hours.
- PHSA’s after-hours line (778-867-7472 – phone only; no text) has two primary functions:
  - To provide access for journalists and government communications to reach the PHSA communications team after hours (until 10 pm daily and on weekends 7 am – 10 pm)
  - To provide 24-hour access for PHSA staff in urgent or emergent situations with our programs and services.

For additional guidance on confidentiality for regulated health professionals, please refer to your College’s privacy and confidentiality practice standards.

Adherence to these guidelines is essential for maintaining professionalism and trust, protecting patient privacy, and upholding our organization’s standards. Thank you for your attention to these critical policies.

## **4. Dr. Eric Webber Named Interim CMO at BC Children’s Hospital and BC Women’s Hospital + Health Centre**

As Dr. Jana Davidson’s term as Chief Medical Officer (CMO) at C&W concludes in December 2024, recruitment for her successor is well underway, with a permanent CMO anticipated by summer 2025.

Dr. Eric Webber will step into the Interim CMO role starting January 1, 2025, with a transition period beginning December 1, 2024. Dr. Webber, a pediatric general surgeon at BC Children’s Hospital since 1997, brings extensive leadership experience, including roles as division head of Pediatric General Surgery and chair of PHSA’s Health Authority Medical Advisory Committee (HAMAC).

Heartfelt thanks are extended to Dr. Davidson for her exceptional leadership, care, and dedication over the past five years.

**In the News:**

## 5. CST Cerner: Advancing Quality and Safety in Electronic Health Records

PHSA has recently launched EHR Quality and Safety, a new program within Medical Informatics focused on enhancing the quality and safety of Electronic Health Record (EHR) use. This program, launched in partnership with PDHIS and the Integrated Quality and Safety Portfolio, leads by example, emphasizing proactive monitoring of CST Cerner functionalities that directly impact patient care and preventing unintended safety events through agile system improvements.

The need for this program became clear after recent issues with failed distribution of clinical documentation to community providers. These issues, caused by mismatches between the note signatory and document placement location, prompted a swift response from a multi-disciplinary team at PHSA, including members of Health Information Management, Quality and Risk, Clinical Informatics, and executive medical leads. The team worked swiftly to resolve the backlog while evaluating each case in collaboration with providers to ensure no patient harm occurred due to delayed documentation.

This proactive approach sets a new standard for tracking and addressing potential risks, marking a significant advancement in EHR-related quality and safety across our three partner health authorities — Vancouver Coastal Health, Providence Health Care, and PHSA.

## 6. The Impact of Nurse Practitioners

National Nurse Practitioner Week took place November 10-16, and provided an opportunity to recognize the incredible contributions of nurse practitioners across PHSA. Their expertise, compassion, and leadership are integral to delivering high-quality, patient-centered care. Nurse practitioners are valued members of medical staff and play a vital role in enhancing patient outcomes.

Thank you to nurse practitioners for your ongoing dedication and commitment to excellence. Read more about the innovative teams of nurse practitioners making an impact in patient care across the province on [POD\\*](#) and the feature of NP [Dr. Stan Marchuk\\*](#) at BC Cancer-Vancouver and [Shona Jurak\\*](#) BC Cancer-Victoria.

Congratulations to nurse practitioners at PHSA who have received recent awards recognizing their contributions to patient care and the NP profession.

- Dr. Minna Miller, NP with the BC Children's asthma program, received [the NP Provincial and Territorial award of excellence](#) from the Nurse Practitioner Association of Canada
- Dr. Rachel Ollivier, NP and clinical scientist at the Heart Health and Access Clinic at BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre, was recognized by WXN as one of [Canada's Most Powerful Women](#) (Top 100 Awards)

## 7. Congratulations to Dr. Vijay Seethapathy, New President Elect of the Canadian Psychiatric Association

Please join us in congratulating BCMHSUS chief medical officer Dr. Vijay Seethapathy, who has accepted the position of president elect with the Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA) for 2024/25, and CPA President for 2025/26. Dr. Seethapathy accepted the role at the CPA Annual Conference in Montreal last week.

In his acceptance speech, Dr. Seethapathy emphasized the important role of psychiatry in responding to the drug overdose crisis, and the importance of improving access to psychiatric services: “Access, access, access. If you have timely access, and quality access, then things can get better and be saved much earlier on up-stream. It is about advocating for the right resources, the right human resources, and the right system to support psychiatrists in their work.”

Congratulations!

## 8. Seeking Peer Support Physician for OSWELL

Join OSWELL in promoting a culture of safety and support for all medical staff at PHSA.

The newly developed [Office for Medical Staff Safety and Wellbeing](#) (OSWELL) at PHSA invites qualified candidates to apply for the role of peer support physician. The peer support physician will provide psychological and procedural support to medical staff and residents facing complaints or critical patient safety event reviews (CPSER). This role emphasizes structured peer support, distinct from counseling, mentoring, or informal peer relationships, focusing specifically on emotional support and assistance in navigating the relevant processes for medical staff. In this role, you'll proactively reach out to affected medical staff, offering a compassionate, confidential listening ear and connecting them with additional resources as needed.

If you are a physician with a commitment to creating a safe, respectful work environment and can offer psychologically safe support, you are encouraged to apply. Interested applicants are asked to submit a resume and covering letter to [oswell@phsa.ca](mailto:oswell@phsa.ca) by **November 30, 2024**. [Learn more here](#).

## 9. 2024 Employee Long Service Milestone Lists Are Now Available for Your Review

In recognition of your dedicated service, PHSA would like to celebrate salaried medical staff who have reached a milestone in 2024. These individuals will be celebrated in 2025 and we will be honoring those staff who have achieved 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, and 50 years of service.

Eligible recipient lists are now [available for review on POD](#)\*. These lists are generated directly from PeopleSoft and the information provided is based on PHSA hire dates with no breaks in service. Casuals who have worked at least 400 hours from September 1, 2023- August 31, 2024 will be included on the list.

Your dedication matters, and we want to ensure no milestone goes uncelebrated. If you believe your name has been missed, please contact [employeerecognition@phsa.ca](mailto:employeerecognition@phsa.ca) before the deadline of December 20, 2024.

Don't miss out on your well-deserved recognition—[review the lists now](#)\*!

## 10. [Joint] MD Undergraduate Admissions: Interviewers Needed

The MD Undergraduate Program Admissions Office invites you to [participate in the 2025 admission interviews](#) for the MD Undergraduate Program.

Your participation in this important process is integral to selecting the next class of UBC medical students.

All admissions interviews and training sessions will be held in a virtual format. Apply to become an interviewer by **Thursday, October 31**.

### **2025 Multiple-Mini Interviews (MMI)**

Invited program applicants will meet 10 different interviewers in a video-chat environment.

- The MMI dates are **February 1, 2 and 8, 2025**.
- Interviewers must attend a virtual training session on **January 29 or 30**.

Learn more in the [Prospective MMI Interviewer Information Package \(PDF\)](#).

### **2025 Northern & Rural Panel Interviews (NRPI)**

The NRPI provides invited applicants with the opportunity to speak to their suitability for the northern and rural seats in the MD Undergraduate Program.

Clinicians, faculty, community members and medical students living in northern and rural regions of British Columbia can apply to be an interviewer.

- The NRPI date is **February 9, 2025**.
- Interviewers must attend a virtual training session on **February 6**.

Learn more in the [Prospective NRPI Interviewer Information Package \(PDF\)](#).

### **How to apply**

- When completing the interviewer application, please indicate your interest in participating in the MMI, the NRPI or both.
- Please note that you cannot be an interviewer if you, a family member, personal friend or close acquaintance is applying for medical school this year or in the near future.
- Apply by **Thursday, October 31, 2024** at 11:59 pm PST. Applications take approximately 10 minutes to complete.
- For help, please review the [Interviewer Application Help Guide \(PDF\)](#).

### [Apply to be an interviewer](#)

We know that your time is valuable, and we thank you for considering this important role in our admissions selection process. Without your support, we would not be able to evaluate so many qualified applicants.

If you have any additional questions regarding either the MMI or the NRPI, please contact the MD Admissions Office at [interviews.md@exchange.ubc.ca](mailto:interviews.md@exchange.ubc.ca).

**Upcoming Events and Courses:**

## 11. Join PHSA's Quality, Practice & Clinical Informatics Team for a Special Collaborative Learning Rounds on December 12

The PHSA QPCI team, in partnership with the University of British Columbia, Greg's Wings, and BC Cancer are hosting a special screening of *Falling Through the Cracks: Greg's Story*, followed by a virtual panel session.

The impactful film highlights Greg Price's journey through the Alberta healthcare system and the crucial role of information in delivering quality care. Through a case study that underscores areas for improvement, this session includes a panel session that will explore expert insights and practical recommendations to enhance patient care.

### Event Details:

- **Date & Time:** Thursday, December 12, 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- **Register via Zoom:**  
<https://phsa.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5UquqtrTMTGddvGMWr6xuKwbkXBgRSz8fD#/registration>

For more information please email: [learning.nursingandallied@phsa.ca](mailto:learning.nursingandallied@phsa.ca)

### PHSA Operational & Leaders' News

- Read the latest [PHSA Operational News](#) and [Leaders' News](#)\*:
  - [Download the Virtual Health checklist for respectful and culturally safe virtual health visits](#)
  - [Small Bytes: Protect yourself from AI-driven cyber threats](#)
  - Unique PHSA stories this week

### Ongoing Resources:

- Check out the [Medical Staff webpages](#) on phsa.ca for information and resources for dentists, midwives, nurse practitioners, clinical scientists and physicians.
- Learn about [health and wellness](#) resources to support you.
- Looking for past issues of the Medical Staff Newsletter? Visit our Communications [page](#).
- Visit [POD](#) for stories about our workforce and supporting resources\*.