

# COVID-19: BRI FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated: November 27, 2020

This FAQ has been created to answer frequently asked questions about COVID-19 as it relates specifically to the Bloorview Research Institute. We will update this document regularly based on new questions that may arise. The new/updated sections are highlighted. If you have any additional questions, please speak to your lab manager or to Mani Kang, director of research operations, at [mkang@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:mkang@hollandbloorview.ca)

## **Toronto COVID19 Lockdown (effective November 23 to at least December 21, 2020)**

On November 23, at 12:01 a.m. the City of Toronto entered the grey or lockdown zone for at least 28 days.

### **1. Will on-site research studies still continue during the city's lockdown?**

**At this point, there is no change to our practices on how we handle on-site research activities.** As such, we request you continue to follow [current guidelines](#) on PPE, participant registration and personnel scheduling. For those you working in multiple institutions, other institutions may have different positions on on-site research activities; please consult with those representatives directly.

### **2. Will I still be able to come onsite to conduct research/work at BRI during my scheduled shifts?**

Yes, you can. You would still follow all IPAC protocols – screening, masking, social distancing, washing hands regularly – to keep yourself and everyone else safe at the hospital.

### **3. I don't feel comfortable coming into work now in light of the high cases of transmission in Toronto. Am I able to continue to work remotely?**

Holland Bloorview's Thrive Together people strategy supports it employees to work remotely during the pandemic if they are able to and if they have approval from their operations manager. See the hospital's [Working Remotely guideline](#) for more details.

### **4. I am a scientist and am working with other researchers and/or graduate students from U of T. I see that they have suspended all non-COVID face-to-face research based on this [memo](#) posted on their website. What does this mean for me?**

The University of Toronto recognizes that there are several projects involving university faculty members and students, and where the REB of record and physical location is at a TAHSN hospital. As

research is under the hospital's auspices, decisions whether or not to continue with the in-person research is therefore under an individual researcher's discretion.

This decision has no impact on the research conduct by affiliated faculty and graduate students at hospitals including Holland Bloorview, therefore it remains an individual decision.

### ***BRI Recovery Process***

#### **1. What phase is the BRI in during its recovery process?**

- The BRI is currently in Phase 2 of its recovery process with a maximum of 50 per cent of its staff onsite.
  - During Phase 2, research that needs access to on-site equipment as well as studies that require in-person contact with research participants have resumed.
  - Select inpatient studies put on pause prior to the pandemic are continuing with approval by a BRI committee
  - Research that have been running during Phase 1 will continue. This includes:
    - Research that does not occur in clinical areas;
    - Regulated clinical trials, COVID-19 related research and research that requires onsite equipment.
- To ensure the institute does not exceed these numbers, managers (scientists and lab managers) as well as onsite staff are using the a scheduling app, When I Work.
- Please refer to the Guidelines for BRI Personnel Recovery on the COVID-19 staff resources [web page](#) for more details on the Phase 2 process.
- Information about caregivers will now be requested through our Participant Registration system.
- For staff who are returning to the BRI for the first time since the pandemic was declared in March, please read the recovery section on the COVID-19 resources for staff [web page](#) for the latest details on screening, masking and maintain social distancing measures. Staff can also send any general questions to [covid19@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:covid19@hollandbloorview.ca)

#### **2. How have the screening procedures changed?**

- We are now screening to ask if our clients or visitors have been outside of Canada in the last 14 days, it is no longer the province. Please see the updated pre-screening process map in Appendix A in the Guidelines for BRI Personnel Recovery.

#### **3. Where can I order more PPE?**

- Please order PPE items e.g. goggles, shields via an email to #Stores at least 1-2 days in advance. Include the name and number of items required, as well as the account # to be charged. All orders placed must be picked up from Stores. For urgent requests, staff can come down with an account #.

#### **4. What types of masks should I wear when I can't maintain a two-metre distance while interacting with my clients?**

- You will be given two choices for masks when interacting with clients: 1) Level 3 Primagard mask + shield or goggles OR 2) Level 2 Primagard mask with a visor, with no need for shield or goggles.

## 5. Does the BRI have Plexiglas barriers so researchers can safely conduct on-site visits with their study participants?



- Yes. The Plexiglas barriers can be found in the following rooms for researchers to use:
  - 4W320 Data Collection Room 1
  - 4W435 Gait Lab – Standing Pieces (picture below) – *remember to use the wheel locks when set-up*
  - 2E160 Assessment Room Autism Research Centre
  - 2E104 Assessment Room Autism Research Centre
  - 0W MRI Assessment Room 1 & 2
- When you are using Microsoft Outlook to book any of these rooms, you are also reserving the Plexiglas barriers.
- There are two pieces that can be booked centrally through the following process:

A screenshot of a Microsoft Outlook meeting creation form. The 'From' field is 'jfong@hollandbloorview.ca'. The 'To...' field is 'Plexiglas1(Research)'. The 'Subject' field is empty. The 'Location' field is 'Plexiglas1(Research)'. The 'Start time' is 'Sat 9/5/2020 10:00'. The 'End time' is 'Sat 9/5/2020 11:00'. There is a checkbox for 'All day event' which is unchecked. A 'Rooms...' button is visible on the right.

A screenshot of a Microsoft Outlook calendar view for Saturday, September 5, 2020. The calendar shows a meeting titled 'CHEC' scheduled from 10:00 to 11:00. The meeting is highlighted in blue. The calendar interface includes a 'Send' button, a search bar, and a list of attendees on the left.

		15:00	16:00	8:00 AM	09:00	10:00	11:00	12:00 PM	13:00	14:00
All Attendees	Jeannie Fong		CHEC							
	Plexiglas1(Research)									
	Click here to add a name									

- Open Outlook and proceed to creating a meeting/appointment. Please note you can't book the Plexiglas for more than 3 hours at a time.
- Add either Plexiglas 1 or 2 as you would for any meeting attendee. If you need to see when it's available, please use the scheduling assistant as you would for viewing the schedule of any staff member at Holland Bloorview.
- If there is an opening available for either Plexiglas 1 or 2, your meeting invite will be accepted automatically. Your meeting acceptance notice will contain a code to open the

wall-mounted lock box next to Room 4W380 where the Plexiglas is stored. Inside the lock box, you will find the key to enter the room.

- After retrieving the Plexiglas you have reserved, please close and lock the door. **Please remember to return the key to the lock box.**
- If you accidentally send a request to a slot that is already taken up, your meeting invite will be declined automatically.
- You also need to disinfect the Plexiglas before and after using it as long as it can be done safely. Please remember to return the Plexiglas to 4W380 and lock the door afterwards.

#### **6. Where can I find wipes to disinfect my workstation?**

- Wipes are now also available in the 4W Mail Room.

### ***Research Visits***

#### **1. I'm a researcher who would like to start home-based research visits with my study participants. Is this allowed now?**

- The BRI is piloting a program where researchers can start going into the community to conduct research visits in a study participant's home.
- Out of an abundance of caution, however, our research institute is still operating under a virtual-first principle. This means we prefer researchers to continue to conduct virtual research visits, followed by on-site hospital research visits. The third option is home-based research visits.
- All home-based research visits need to be approved in advance by Mani Kang, director of research operations.
- Please visit our [Home-Visit Research Guidelines](#) on how to conduct these visits safely.

### ***When I Work App***

#### **1. Why is the BRI using this app?**

- This app will help with scheduling and tracking the number of staff onsite to ensure we don't go over maximum threshold of staff allowed onsite at all times.
- The app can be downloaded from the App Store and is compatible via web, iOS and Android.

#### **2. Will it track my movements at the BRI?**

- No, it is only tracking when a staff or trainee member has entered and left the building. It will not track a staff member's location while they are onsite.

#### **3. Who needs to download this app on their phone?**

- Leadership groups (scientist and lab managers who have staff and trainees scheduled to be onsite) have been set up with accounts and have received training.
- Staff and trainees who are required to be onsite will also be set up with accounts so that they can take, swap and cancel shifts. These staff members will have to sign in and sign off at the end of each shift.

**4. I have some privacy concerns about my employer knowing where I am while at work. Is this really necessary?**

- The application is used to track when staff are arriving at the hospital and when they leave after signing off.
- Please be re-assured that this information is not being collected for payroll and human resources purposes.
- The information collected through this app is no more extensive than what would be normally collected, the only difference being we are now logging your entry and exit times and collecting this information in a more streamlined way.

**2. I am a staff member and currently working from home. Can I continue to do so for the foreseeable future? With school and camp closures, I have limited daycare options now for my kids.**

- Yes, you can for now as long as you have your manager's approval.
- I would recommend speaking to your manager to work out a schedule that meets your needs as well as the organization's.

**Economic Aid for Medical Research Sector – Update (updated Nov. 6)**

**Federal Subsidy Update (CRCEF)**

Holland Bloorview has received the funds from Stage 1 and 2 of the CRCEF. Notional allocations for Stage 3 and 4 have been announced, the final amount granted is yet to be determined.

**Tri-Council Funded Personnel Subsidy**

CIHR has provided unconfirmed information that another \$291M will flow through the tri-agencies to support staff, trainees, and post-docs that are paid from tri-council grants or awards. Specifically for CIHR:

- \$8.2M for award extensions of trainees that hold eligible scholarships e.g. CGS, Banting, Vanier and are not receiving other supplements e.g. CERB, CESB.
- \$80M to provide support for approximately 5,000 to 6,000 active CIHR grants; specifically to support staff wages as long as they are not benefitting from other programs e.g. CERB, EI, and redeployment. Approximate amount per project will be communicated directly by CIHR to principal investigators.

**1. Can you provide an overview of the federal government's economic aid package?**

- Total announcement for medical research institutes across Canada is \$450 million and is an extension of the federal government's wage support subsidy.
- The funding package will be retroactively effective to approximately mid-March 2020. The wage supports will be up to a maximum of 75% of an individual's salary during the funding period with a maximum of \$847/week for up to 24 weeks (combined Stage 1, 2 & 4) of salary support (consecutive or broken up over the eligibility period) per individual, incurred within the eligibility period between March 15 and August 29, 2020.

**2. When can Holland Bloorview expect the cash inflow from the federal economic aid? (Updated Nov. 6)**

- We have received funds for Stage 1 and for Stage 2.
- Applications for funds for Stage 3 are open; deadline to apply is November 27, 2020.
- CRCEF Stage 4 request for Holland Bloorview has been submitted; our collective ask is about \$440K and it is anticipated that BRI will receive about \$136K in alignment with the proportion of funds left at the national level.

- Each lab will receive notification on the amounts they are to receive.
- Funds will be deposited into the respective cost centres that originally incurred the costs.

#### **4. How will determinations about which employees' wages are supported be made?**

- Eligible expenditure guidelines have been established by the federal government and can be viewed on the CRCEF website. The institutions will determine based on the eligibility guidelines provided by the federal government on research staff that are eligible for the wage subsidy.
- As always, we are committed to providing you with complete and reliable information in a timely manner. We are certain the information provided above will evolve in the coming weeks, and further details will be provided.

#### ***Research Studies (Updated June 12)***

##### **1. How can I get approval to do my research activities remotely?**

- a. The Holland Bloorview Research Ethics Board (REB) has developed an expedited amendment process for those seeking approval to reduce and/or replace in-person participant interactions. Please see the [REB website](#) for more information or contact Marie Steele, Research Ethics Manager, at [msteele@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:msteele@hollandbloorview.ca)

##### **2. I am an investigator. Can I ask REB to review my study now so that when pandemic restrictions on research are lifted, I can start the recruitment process immediately?**

- a. Yes, you can. Please submit your study to REB so they can be reviewed online. Please appreciate that the review process may take some time. We also don't know at this point when you can start actively recruiting.

#### ***COVID-19 Related Funding Opportunities***

##### **3. I'm interested in any research funding related to COVID-19. Can you help me find these grants?**

- a. Here are links to COVID-19 related funding from the tri-councils:
  - i. [CIHR Updates](#)
  - ii. [NSERC Updates](#)
  - iii. [SSHRC \(including NFRF updates\)](#)
- b. Meghann Proulx, Manager, Grants, Contracts & Awards sends out a list of the latest COVID-related funding opportunities every Wednesday. If you have any questions, please email her at [meghann.proulx@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:meghann.proulx@hollandbloorview.ca) for more details.

#### ***Work Arrangements (updated June 12)***

##### **4. Am I able to work at the hospital?**

BRI is in Phase 2 of its recovery process now and is allowing up to a maximum of 50 per cent of staff to return to working onsite. To protect our on-site BRI staff, the hospital has implemented active screening measures to ensure no one at risk is entering the building. Please note that all staff must enter the building through the [main entrance](#).



**5. How can I get access to hospital systems to work from home?**

- a. Hospital IS is providing remote access to Citrix or VPN for scientists and research staff to work remotely. Please appreciate that it will take some time to scale up remote access for a larger volume of users.
- b. VPN access to BRI Network: Users with BRI credentials have been notified about obtaining VPN access to the BRI network drives. If you have not received a notification, please contact [Ka Lun Tam](#) by email.

Note: Those with Holland Bloorview laptops may be required to come on-site to install VPN. Those with personal devices only will be provided Citrix access remotely.

**6. How can I hold meetings remotely?**

- a. BRI has expanded our Zoom licenses to handle the increased demand. The recording option may be used; however, it is essential to record to your local hard drive on Holland Bloorview-sanctioned machines for immediate transfer to hospital servers. Do NOT save your recordings to the cloud option provided by Zoom.
- b. To increase Zoom meeting security, BRI has disabled the one-click join feature. This update will require attendees to enter the meeting password to join the Zoom conference. Please remember to communicate the password to meeting attendees when sending out your Zoom meeting link.
- c. If you are using Zoom for data collection, please inform your participants to only use their first name when joining the session.
- d. The chat feature on the BRI Zoom accounts has been disabled.

Further questions with regards to Zoom can be directed to [Wei Su](#)

***Hospital's Upgrade to Microsoft Office 2016***

1. I heard that IS is upgrading our computer systems to Microsoft Office 2016. How does this impact me if I have MS Office 2010?

- The hospital has migrated to MS Office 2016 because MS Office 2010 is no longer supported.
- MS Office 2016 comes Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Outlook.
- Changes to the upgrade include: removal of Access and Visio.
  - If you still need Access or Visio, please contact the Help Desk as it can be reinstated for a fee.
- It also does not come with OneDrive or Teams as this is not supported by the hospital's license.
- This upgrade will occur automatically for those who are on VPN, while others will be upgraded once they are back onsite.

If you have other questions/concerns, please contact Mani Kang, Director of Research Operations, at [mkang@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:mkang@hollandbloorview.ca)

For Holland Bloorview's latest updates on COVID-19, visit: [www.hollandbloorview.ca](http://www.hollandbloorview.ca)

