

FAQs About the Provincial Health Officer's March 23, 2020 Update For Regulated Health Professionals

What does this update from the Provincial Health Officer mean for registrants of CCBC?

The expectation is that all health care practitioners in the community to whom [Dr. Henry's letter](#) applies will comply with Dr. Henry's advice and expectations.

Chiropractors must cease all in-person, non-essential services until such time as the Provincial Health Officer deems it is safe to resume.

What is considered "emergent, urgent and/or essential care for registrants and their patients?"

The CCBC's recommendations for considering if a patient's condition is classified as "emergent, urgent and/or essential care" include:

- The patient has an acute condition that, without care, would severely limit him or her from activities of daily living, and (or the patient has an acute condition that requires immediate attention to relieve pain or because his or her daily activities are severely limited, and)
- The chiropractor can ensure that care will be provided in a manner that provides adequate protection against the risks of COVID-19 infection.

Are patients receiving care further to coverage from ICBC or WorkSafeBC exempt from the urgent or essential care requirement?

- No, currently there isn't any information on ICBC or WorkSafeBC websites that would suggest there is an exception for patients receiving care further to coverage from one or the other organization. To the contrary, the health care providers' pages on both websites speak to adherence with the Public Health Officer's recommendations, promote telehealth and indicate there will be extensions for coverage periods.

Since chiropractic has now been deemed an essential service, can we resume non-essential service levels?

- Chiropractors must not resume non-essential service levels until the Provincial Health Officer provides direction to this effect. The list of essential services also states that "[Essential service providers] must, however, follow the orders and guidance provided by the PHO to ensure safe operations and reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19."

What is the expected time-line before non-urgent community services are re-established?

- The Provincial Health Officer has not provided a time-line, it is unknown at this time. Follow updates on the College or Government of BC website or via social media where updates are regularly posted.

How should I screen my patients for COVID-19?

- Ask the patient if they are experiencing any [symptoms of COVID-19](#), as described by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), including cough, sneezing, fever, sore throat, and difficulty breathing.
- Ask about any recent [travel](#) outside of Canada.
- Ask about any contact with individuals who have a confirmed or presumptive diagnosis of COVID-19.
- Try to pre-screen patients by phone if possible.
- As suggested by BCCDC, individuals can use the [COVID-19 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool](#) to help determine if they need further assessment or testing for COVID-19

What are the implications of providing hands-on care?

- When direct physical contact is required for the care of patients, appropriate infection control practices and use of personal protective equipment as recommended by the BC Centre for Disease Control must be used. When close proximity to the patient is not required, a distance of two meters should be maintained.
- When direct physical contact is required for the care of patients with presumptive or confirmed COVID-19, health professionals must use infection control practices and including as appropriate personal protective equipment. See the BCCDC's page on COVID-19 [Infection Control](#).
- If you are not able to ensure adequate infection control, do not provide care to the patient. Seek an alternate approach to meet their care needs such as with [telehealth services](#). Chiropractors who choose to participate in telehealth practice must continue to meet all the same legal, ethical and professional obligations that apply to in-person practice.

Where can I find more information on providing virtual care?

- Registrants must comply with the CCBC's [standard of practice and guidelines on telehealth services](#).
- The Office of Virtual Health and Digital Health Team at Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) has developed a [Virtual Health toolkit](#) for use during the COVID-19 pandemic. The toolkit provides information on virtual care technology solutions, endorsed by the Ministry of Health and PHSA. COVID-19 resources on the BCCDC website also link to the toolkit.
- The Virtual Health toolkit includes email as a solution, and notes that Canadian privacy laws apply to email accounts based in Canada. BC's Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) outlines rules applicable to private practice registrants about the collection, use, and disclosure of information. Ensure your virtual care solution is PIPA compliant.

What if I have symptoms as a provider?

- Go to <https://bc.thrive.health/> to access the self-assessment tool and follow the directions.

What do I do if I am aware of health care providers continuing to provide care that jeopardizes community safety?

- The Health Professions Act has a section called Duty to Report ([s. 32.2 HPA](#)). This requires health care practitioners to report if they are aware that the practice of another health care practitioner may cause harm.

For example, what do I do if I am aware of another registrant who is promoting chiropractic treatment or supplements to prevent or cure COVID-19?

The [Clinical Reference Group \(CRG\) of the Health Emergency Coordination Centre \(HECC\) issued a position statement on Unproven Therapies for COVID-19, March 24, 2020](#) on the [BCCDC's website](#):

“There are no proven therapies for the prevention or treatment of COVID-19. All agents have the possibility of associated harm, and pharmaceutical supplies province-wide and nationally for many of the possible agents are severely limited. It is recognized that compassionate use of drugs will be pursued for ill patients with no known therapy. Ideally, use of these agents would be through a controlled clinical trial so as to better inform practice; in the absence of research studies, patients should be aware of the risks and benefits of novel therapies, and safety data collected to inform the larger community.”

- In the public's interest, and in alignment with the CRG's position statement and the CCBC's [Professional Conduct Handbook](#) (Part 14 and Appendix N), registrants must not advertise health benefits of services when there is not acceptable evidence that these benefits can be achieved.
- Any such claims made by registrants are inappropriate. Such claims should be reported to deputyregistrar@chirobc.com, Doug Wright, and they will be forwarded immediately to the Inquiry Committee for investigation.