



B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union
A Component of NUPGE (CLC)

November 8, 2020

Via email: victoria.lee@fraserhealth.ca

Dr. Victoria Lee
President and CEO
Fraser Health Authority
Suite 400, Central City Tower
13450 – 102nd Avenue
Surrey, BC V3T 0H1

Dear Dr Lee,

I am writing out of concern for the health impacts on BCGEU members due to the increased spread of COVID-19 in the Fraser Health region. We have members that work directly for the Fraser Health Authority (FHA) and members who work for employers which have funding and contracts with the FHA. We are writing to ask that direct action be taken by the Fraser Health Authority to ensure protection from Covid-19 for our members that work in the health sector over which the FHA has influence.

As you are certainly aware, the last month has seen a dramatic increase in cases. Of most concern, daily new-case records have been set four times in the past week and over 70 per cent of active cases have been concentrated in the Fraser Health region. In many of these new cases, epidemiology has pointed to offices – including lunchrooms and other communal spaces – as a growing location for individuals acquiring the virus.

In light of this new data and yesterday's statements from the Provincial Health Officer, I do not doubt that the FHA is re-evaluating safety protocols for workplaces, including those for which the Health Authority has contracts with. While we appreciate that many of those working within health care would be considered essential services during this time, there are some who may be able to work from home, at least partially if not completely. Therefore, as the process of re-evaluating safety protocols develops, on behalf of BCGEU members across the Fraser Health Authority, I urge you to consider the following:

- The implementation of a broad policy across the Fraser Health Authority, for direct FHA employees and for employees of employers that have contracts with the FHA, that, excepting where it is not possible for essential health services, workers not be required

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to report to their worksite and be allowed to work from home. In order to protect worker and public health, offices that don't need to be open should be closed.

- The requirement of mask wearing in all common areas of all worksites under the Fraser Health Authority's authority. Preferably with the requirement of a minimum of three-layer mask as recommended by Health Canada in updates this week.

Our union has appreciated the shared communication and cooperation with the Fraser Health Authority as we have together adapted to the latest science and public health recommendations over the past nine months. In the spirit of that cooperation, I have attached a briefing note from our union's Occupational Health and Safety department with recommendations on updating and strengthening workplace safety in light of the latest science on how the SARS-CoV-2 virus spreads.

As always, our union is ready to meet with representatives from the Fraser Health Authority as workplace safety protocols are re-examined, and we sincerely urge the agency to the implement the above policies as part of any forthcoming plan.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Smith
President

AD/sg
MoveUP

cc: Michael McMillan, HEABC President & CEO