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Sent: November 20, 2020 1:38 PM

To: GVRDall <gvrall@metrovanancouver.org>

Cc: Chair Dhaliwal <chair@metrovanancouver.org>; Linda Buchanan <lbuchanan@cnv.org>; 'gvrdeu@telus.net' <gvrdeu@telus.net>; Karlene Bateman <kbateman@teamsters31.ca>

Subject: Mental Health During COVID-19 – November 20, 2020

Dear Staff,

I know I just wrote last week, but I wanted to write again as last week is already feeling like a long time ago ... October and November are starting to feel like March and April for me and time seems to be losing all meaning again. I know we are all collectively watching the news reports around the world and also closer to home, and that this continues to be a difficult time for so many.

The recent increase in cases of COVID-19 within our region is also very concerning, and I'm sure you all share my sentiments on wanting to do as much as we can to ensure this virus doesn't impact the health of our staff, our loved ones, and also our ability to continue to deliver our essential services to our region. I'd also like staff to please know that there are resources available to support both your physical health *and* your mental health during this time. Please see a list of these resources below.

Also, please see Corporate Safety's email last night about updated, expanded orders from our Provincial Health Officer (PHO) related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions will now be in effect from November 19th at midnight to December 7th at midnight as currently posted on the [Province of BC's COVID-19 website](#). The details related to the orders are subject to change as per the PHO, and if this occurs we will adjust accordingly. Masks are now required in all workplaces for shared work areas, (kitchens, elevators, break rooms, hallways) and meeting rooms with more than four people. The [COVID-19 Protocol - Use of Masks](#) has been updated with the new requirements. For staff who work at a desk, this does not include your desk/work station.

For staff that have the ability to work from home, we are continuing to encourage work from home for the next several weeks, and continuing to relax/temporarily remove the 1 day a week requirement. Please speak with your supervisor.

Resources:

EFAP (Employee and Family Assistance Program)

I'd like to remind staff that our [Employee and Family Assistance \(EFAP\) program](#) is available to you and your dependents at any time, and is a confidential service. The Employee & Family Assistance Program is a voluntary, confidential short-term counselling and advisory service that connects you and your eligible family members to an external network of professionals that can be contacted 24/7. This group of professionals includes psychologists, social workers, addiction and career counsellors, child and eldercare specialists, and legal and financial experts. The service is currently offered by Morneau Shepell, one of Canada's largest and most respected EFAP service providers. The cost of the service is paid by Metro Vancouver and as such, is available at no cost to you. Our EFAP has adjusted their model to offer telephone and virtual counselling as well as some in-person appointments.

Resiliency Lunch & Learns

Our HR team continues to roll out training and support offerings on resiliency, remote working and

more. Information will be coming shortly regarding some new lunch and learn sessions on Resiliency – please watch out for these and we encourage your attendance and participation where possible.

Metrofit

While we can't all get together to practice physical and mental fitness, Metro Vancouver remains dedicated to employee health and wellness and offers numerous programs to all of its employees through its very own Health and Wellness Program: [MetroFit](#). The fitness centre discount program (for when fitness centres open again and are safe to attend) via [Metrofit is listed here](#).

Psychology Benefit:

Metro Vancouver has a psychology benefit available to staff. This existing psychology benefit provides up to \$1,000 of coverage per calendar year, per covered person, for all three employee groups (Exempt, GVRDEU, Teamsters).

Additional External Resources:

Please find some additional external resources below.

- The BC Government has a webpage dedicated to [“Virtual Mental Health Supports During Covid-19”](#). In particular, **BounceBack™** provides free access to online, video and phone-based coaching and skills-building program.
- **Psychological Support Toolkit for Workers and Employers: COVID-19** BC Municipal Safety Association (BCMSA) has partnered with workplace mental health expert Diana Vissers, Work to Wellness, to deliver a free multimedia interactive platform with education, tools and resources to support the detection and efficient resolution of emerging and anticipated psychological and psycho-social problems. For more information, please visit the [website](#).
- **HealthLinkBC Directory** provides listings for health services provided by the provincial government, provincial health authorities, and non-profit agencies across the province. [Program: 310 Mental Health Support](#) in particular provides a toll-free number connecting callers to a BC crisis line, without a wait or busy signal. Offers emotional support, information on appropriate referral options, and a wide range of support relating to mental health concerns.
- **Documents / Resources:**
Additional documents/resources are available below.
 - [Tips for Coping with the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
 - [Emotional Well Being During COVID-19](#)
 - [Resilience During a Pandemic](#)

Thanks everyone. Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of the above supports, as well as your leadership team, and/or HR, as required.

Take care of yourselves, and each other.

Be well,

Jerry

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Commissioner/Chief Administrative Officer

