SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

“The miraculous creation of the vaccine in such a short time; this is the result of massive cooperation. Survival through the pandemic has also been the result of massive public cooperation.”

—Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer for the Province of BC
British Columbia is rolling out an unprecedented public health initiative: the largest immunization program in the province’s history. Over the course of just a few months, the province aims to deliver 8.6 million vaccinations for 4.3 million British Columbians. This enormous, complex project is being enabled through an evidence-informed, coordinated province-wide communication effort linked to related national and international initiatives.

The BC COVID-19 Strategic Research Advisory Committee (SRAC) and its Public Communications Working Group, along with co-hosts Genome BC, the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, Simon Fraser University Faculty of Health Sciences, and the BC Centre for Disease Control, on April 7, 2021 hosted the BC COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Collaboration and Networking Workshop. The workshop brought together health communications professionals and communications researchers from across the province, all of whom are involved in one way or another in supporting the COVID-19 vaccine rollout in British Columbia.

The workshop began with keynote presentations, followed by a moderated Q&A panel discussion. The event moved onto breakout sessions, and then the group reconvened to discuss outcomes and findings.

The conclusions of the workshop were multifold and highly informative. Key takeaways identified the following needs:

- A provincial community of practice and dedicated forum for health communicators to share experiences and discuss opportunities and challenges, with the goals of:
  - Ensuring solidarity and consistency of messaging, both provincially and nationally.
  - Managing vaccine brand uncertainty. Research has shown that the best communication to counter this is about death prevention, not effectiveness against infection/efficacy.
  - Building and supporting content development, engagement, and dissemination of new COVID-19 resources.
- The development of a broad social media strategy, grounded in research and best practices, to disseminate consistent public health messaging. This will help counter the misinformation and disinformation flooding the space, and also help reach diverse audiences, including young people.
  - Much of the social media content being consumed is US-based: There is an identified need for more accessible Canadian content.
  - Visual messages are powerful: Infographics and visuals that are easily and quickly understood and then shared work well on social media. Recommend engaging young people to ask how they want to be involved in vaccine advocacy.
- Better communication tools to inform front-line vaccinators and health-care workers. Easy-to-share soundbites or key messages will help them be better prepared.
• Messaging that stays focused on key information. Include facts and evidence-based truths to counter misinformation. Communications must be neutral and communicators must not to engage in inflammatory debates.

• Develop and apply platforms, mechanisms, and methods for greater engagement with the public and patients, especially for Indigenous and racialized people/communities.
  • Within these groups there are clear ‘influencers’: In Indigenous cultures Elders lead the way for the community. If they advocate for vaccination others will following. Within Black communities, teachers and church leaders tend to lead.
  • Work to identify priority topics for Indigenous peoples and communities with a focus on COVID-19 prevention measures and vaccination messaging.
TRUSTED RESOURCES

BC COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Collaboration and Networking Workshop
These short background videos and slides address topics of interest identified by workshop participants via a pre-workshop survey. *Last updated: April 16, 2021.*

**How to create dissemination materials: Co-creating with patients**
Dr. Iva Cheung
Post-doctoral Fellow, Department of Psychiatry, UBC
*Co-creating dissemination materials with patients*

**A myriad of reasons for getting vaccinated: Why should you do it?**
First Nations Health Authority
UBC Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Health
First Nations Health Authority Chair in Cancer and Wellness at UBC
*COVID-19 vaccine public service announcement*

**How to make an infographic to combat vaccine hesitancy: A co-creation model**
Dr. Sharon Straus
Geriatrician & Clinical Epidemiologist, St. Michael’s Hospital, University of Toronto
*Vaccine hesitancy infographic*

**Why are people hesitant to get vaccines? How they work and why they’re safe and effective**
Immunize Canada and Dr. Anna Taddio
Professor, Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Toronto
*Understanding vaccine hesitancy*

**Communicating risk in a clinical setting: A patient or service user perspective and Communicating with patients and service providers: Trauma and resiliency informed practice**
Beverley Claire Pomeroy
Patient Engagement Specialist, Fraser Center, BC SUPPORT Unit
*Applying clinical risk communication techniques to COVID-19 vaccine communications for patients and public*
How are vaccines developed? From emerging viruses and the strength of clinical data to COVID-19 immunity

Three 20-minute presentations followed by an expert panel discussion moderated by:
Dr. Deanne Taylor (Director, Research Dept., Interior Health) with the below speakers and guest
Dr. Robert McMaster (Vice Dean, Research, UBC Faculty of Medicine)

**Vaccine development**

- Introduction to immunity – by Dr. Alyson Kelvin*
- Strength of the data – by Dr. Darby Thompson+
- COVID-19 immunity – by Dr. Manish Sadarangani^  
  *Assistant Professor, Dept. Microbiology and Immunology, Dalhousie University; Scientist, Canadian Centre for Vaccinology, IWK Health Centre, Halifax  
  +Biostatistician & President, Emmes Canada  
  ^Director, Vaccine Evaluation Centre, BC Children’s Hospital Research Institute

**What is the evidence for deferring the second dose of the vaccine?**
Dr. David Patrick  
Director of Research, BC Centre for Disease Control; Professor, School of Population & Public Health, UBC  
[https://youtu.be/5pop2B9ntoU](https://youtu.be/5pop2B9ntoU)

**What to know about BC’s COVID-19 immunization plan**
Government of BC  
[BC’s COVID-19 immunization plan communications](#)

**What is a vaccine and how does it work? A humorous primer**
Dr. Matthew Menard  
Physician, Haida Gwaii, BC  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdIKQO-t45g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdIKQO-t45g)

**Why social media matters during a pandemic: Using it well and effectively**
Dr. Heidi Tworek  
Associate Professor, School of Public Policy and Global Affairs and History, UBC  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXAya7D1O8M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXAya7D1O8M)

**What are young people in BC wondering and thinking about the COVID-19 vaccine? Perspectives of BC youth**
Dr. Hasina Samji  
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University; Senior Scientist, BC Centre for Disease Control  
Youth from The Chart Lab: Gaelen, Judy, Mari, Amilya, Julia, Christopher  
[COVID-19 vaccine engagement in youth and young people](#)
What do people in BC ask about the COVID-19 vaccines?
Dr. Anne-Marie Nicol
Associate Professor, Professional Practice, Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University; COVID-19 Knowledge Translation Team, BC Centre for Disease Control
https://youtu.be/ntw1c8g-8wY

A wave of COVID-19 variants in BC and elsewhere
Dr. Hope R. Lapointe
Research Coordinator, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS
https://youtu.be/1mPrz0qm2o4

COVID-19 vaccine logistics
Stephanie Dion
Public Health Manager, BC Centre for Disease Control
https://youtu.be/zcQiAek_IyA

Indigenous COVID-19 wise practices discussion
Elder Roberta Price, Coast Salish Snuneymuxw (SNA-NEIGH-MUH) and Cowichan Nations
Dr. Brittany Bingham: Director, Indigenous Research, Centre for Gender & Sexual Health Equity
https://youtu.be/qwAXhRsEraM and slide deck

A conversation on engaging communities in COVID-19 research and vaccine discussions
Dr. Cindy Jardine: Professor and Canada Research Chair, Health and Community, University of the Fraser Valley
Marinel Kniseley: Research Manager, University of the Fraser Valley
Dr. Kusum Soni: Community Liaison, University of the Fraser Valley
Sherry Wang: Community Liaison, University of the Fraser Valley
https://youtu.be/H3a9qXBScUM

What is the digital divide and why is it important to COVID-19 vaccination communication?
Dr. Devon Greyson
Assistant Professor, Health Communications, University of Massachusetts Amherst
https://youtu.be/fn68naDIzMO

Together against misinformation
A social media movement developed by a team of independent scientists, healthcare providers and science communicators to stop the spread of misinformation around COVID-19
www.scienceupfirst.com
The Royal Society of Canada COVID-19 resources
https://rsc-src.ca/en/covid-19

Infodemic pathways: Evaluating the role that traditional and social media play in cross-national information transfer
Frontiers in Political Science

“What and who is Two-Spirit?” in health research: Guidance on how to collect and discuss Two-Spirit data in a more culturally affirming way
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/52214.html

What factors and language improve vaccine acceptance? Findings from a US national poll
The de Beaumont Foundation
https://debeaumont.org/changing-the-covid-conversation/vaccineacceptance

COVID-19 resources for Indigenous people and communities in BC
BC Centre for Disease Control
www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/indigenous-communities-and-local-governments

#VaxChamp and COVID-19 resources for Indigenous people
First Nations Health Authority
https://fnha.wishpondpages.com/vaxchamp