



Dear Colleague,

As leaders in community, home health and public health, the Board of Directors of the Community Health Nurses of Canada (CHNC) has held an emergency meeting and made the difficult decision to postpone our CHNC2020 annual conference, originally scheduled for May 25-27, 2020. The conference will be postponed and will be held at the Radisson Hotel Vancouver Airport in Richmond, BC at a later date in 2020 (more details to come). We will provide an update with the new conference dates as soon as they are confirmed.

(If you were scheduled to present at CHNC2020, your presentation will be automatically rescheduled and you will receive notice of your new presentation time.)

We have made this decision factoring in the on-going uncertainty around COVID-19 and its potential impacts on the health and safety of the participants, exhibitors, speakers, and the local host community. We also considered that many of the participants and speakers (community health nurses) will need to be working on (or redeployed to) containment and contact tracing during the global outbreak in their multiple roles in their communities and regions in Canada and may have difficulty scheduling travel to a conference in May.

In making our decision, we drew upon the guidance on mass gatherings provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada [1]. Amongst other important considerations, the guidance document asked us to consider, “Are persons attending the event members of critical infrastructure roles, such as healthcare workers?” Furthermore, the Provincial Health Officer for British Columbia has recently called for large gatherings to be cancelled for the time being. Accordingly, CHNC has undertaken a risk assessment, and for the following reasons made the difficult decision to postpone our conference:

- attendees are healthcare workers with critical infrastructure roles in the COVID-19 response
- conference activities and overnight accommodation could contribute to virus spread during this period
- these times of great uncertainty could be a deterrent to travel and travel authorizations for our delegates
- mass gatherings have been discouraged in British Columbia

CHNC sincerely apologizes for any inconvenience this may cause. However, during this unprecedented time, delay of the annual conference is a mitigation strategy to potentially reduce the impact of a national outbreak and prioritize the safety of our conference participants and crucial healthcare workforce. We also trust that postponing the conference will permit more of our delegates to be able to attend the conference to share their exciting and important work.



We understand some may have already made airline bookings to attend the conference. Air Canada and Westjet are offering some limited opportunities to change flights. If you have trip cancellation insurance, it may cover you in the event of a business meeting postponement; if you did not purchase trip cancellation insurance, we would encourage you to check with your credit card company as you may have coverage through them, depending on the card.

We are most grateful for your understanding, and please do not hesitate to be in touch with any questions or concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Cheryl Cusack, President, on behalf of the Board of Directors,
Community Health Nurses of Canada

1. Government of Canada. Risk-informed decision-making for mass gatherings during COVID-19 global outbreak. 2020-03-07 [cited 2020 March 9, 2020]; Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/mass-gatherings-risk-assesment.html>.