

BC Perinatal and Neonatal Health Care Provider Specialty Education Guidance During COVID-19 Pandemic

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many perinatal and neonatal Health Care Provider (HCP) courses have been postponed or cancelled across British Columbia. As specialty education is a key component of ensuring high quality patient care, provincial guidance has been requested to support sites and Health Authorities in gradually resuming education and training activities, while adhering to BCCDC and WorkSafeBC guidelines.

To support consistent guidance in British Columbia, a BC Health Care Provider Education Advisory Committee during COVID-19 was struck. This committee includes Health Authority representatives for perinatal and neonatal health, Midwives Association of BC, educators, and health care providers. The committee has identified that it is critical for sites to provide education and/or training that supports training that is expected to maintain required skills of HCPs. For courses/workshops that need to proceed, instructors and participants should follow precautionary measures to maintain the safety of learners and instructors.

Perinatal and neonatal education falls into two categories:

1. Fundamental Education

- The courses/workshops identified by the provincial committee as needing to continue due to it being necessary for new or returning HCPs:
 - o Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP) – initial education
 - o Fetal Health Surveillance (FHS) fundamentals
- Fundamental education should continue and can be provided in a modified format or with precautionary measures in place as per BCCDC/ WorkSafeBC guidance. Virtual options of education should be considered where possible.
- Additional education required by new or returning HCP should resume in BC if it has not already restarted.

It is important to acknowledge that the continuation of education may be impacted by the availability of instructors and specific needs or direction of sites, health authorities, and provincial organizations and regulatory bodies.

2. Secondary Education

- Includes courses that are not identified as fundamental or are delivered outside of the site (e.g., CPR)
- All update or renewal courses are considered optional during a pandemic unless otherwise deemed by the institution and the Health Authority.
- An update or renewal will be gradually re-introduced by Health Authorities and sites as conditions permit in accordance with provincial and regulatory bodies' guidance. Privileging requirements dependant on specific education may need to be taken into consideration by sites during this time.
- Extensions to updates/renewals have been provided by different governing bodies. Please check with the specific governing body for the most up to date information as extensions are being updated regularly.

To support the transition to resume education, Perinatal Services BC has developed a Tool Kit that provides additional information and offers instructors guidance, templates, and resources.

The Tool Kit includes:

- Guidance on education such as: Neonatal Resuscitation (NRP), Fetal Health Surveillance (FHS), and Advance Care of at-Risk Newborns (ACoRN)
- Questions and Answers section
- Template: Instructor letters to learners (recommended to reduce learner anxiety during COVID-19)
- Template: In-Person Education COVID-19 Safety Checklist
- Resources to assist instructors with virtual education

Please contact Perinatal Services BC at psbc@phsa.ca if you have any questions about this guidance or the available tool kit.

For additional guidance on resuming a course in your region please connect with your site and/or Health Authority.