

Bellwoods Community News

The latest news, updates and announcements



In the photo (left to right): Craig K., Ralph V., Lori H., Joan T., Jacqueline M., Hazra S., and Sharon R.

Message to Clients from Lori Holloway, CEO

October was a busy month where we celebrated *Ontario Community Support Month* which gave all of us an opportunity to recognize and give thanks to our staff. The month kicked-off with a Staff Appreciation Fall Fair where we honoured staff who have given 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years of service!

We could not deliver on our vision of achieving a future where barriers do not exist without the support and dedication of our staff. Their passion and commitment help and inspire all of us to do better.

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RESPONSE TO COVID-19



Bellwoods' Mandatory Vaccination Policy

As of November 22, 2021, all Bellwoods employees, independent contractors, third party agencies, volunteers and students will be required to be fully vaccinated with any approved COVID-19 vaccine, unless it is medically contraindicated. Our vaccine policy comes as a result of *Directive #6 issued under Section 77.7 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA), R.S.O. 1990.*

If you have any questions about the Vaccination policy contact *Huy Ngo, Director Quality & Client Engagement* at hngo@bcclsp.org

Expanded Eligibility for Third Doses of the COVID-19 Vaccine

On November 3, 2021, the Ontario government announced that booster doses are now recommended for specific populations. The province will begin offering third doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to:

- People who are 70 years of age or older (born in 1951 or earlier)
- Health care workers
- Designated essential caregivers in congregate settings (including long-term care home and retirement home staff and designated caregivers)
- Those who received two doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine (no mixing), or one dose of the Janssen vaccine
- First Nations, Inuit, or Métis

AND received their second dose (Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca) or the Janssen single-dose vaccine more than six months ago.

Third doses continue to be available to specific high-risk groups to help provide sufficient protection based on suboptimal or waning immune response to vaccines and increased risk of COVID-19 infection. For more information please visit:

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19_vaccine_third_dose_recommendations.pdf

Enhanced COVID-19 Vaccine Certificate

The enhanced vaccine certificate with an official QR code and the free, made-in Ontario verification app, **Verify Ontario** is now available to download. These tools make it easier, more secure and convenient for individuals to provide proof of vaccination, and for businesses and organizations to verify vaccine certificates while protecting people's privacy.

To download your enhanced vaccine certificate visit: <https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/> Each enhanced vaccine certificate contains a SMART® Health Card QR code that businesses can easily scan at the door. The Verify Ontario app does not allow the Ontario government or businesses to track or save personal identifiable information.

If you have a red and white health card - call the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre at 1-833-943-3900 and they will email a secure URL through which individuals can access their vaccine certificate.



Available for download by logging onto the provincial portal at covid-19.ontario.ca with your health card.



You must show your ID with your name & date of birth along with your vaccine certificate.



You can print or save a digital copy of your receipt on your device.



If you don't have a computer or photo health card, call the provincial line at 1-833-943-3900.

COVID-19 vaccination receipts (without QR codes) are still valid & can be used as proof of vaccination.

Reopening Ontario

Over the next six months, Ontario will slowly and incrementally lift all remaining public health and workplace safety measures, including the provincial requirement of proof of vaccination and wearing of face coverings in indoor public settings.

The reopening plan will be guided by the ongoing assessment and monitoring of key public health and health care indicators such as:

- Identification of any new COVID-19 variants,
- Increases in hospitalizations,
- New ICU admissions / ICU occupancy
- Rapid increases in transmission

Public health and workplace safety measures will be lifted based on the proposed following milestones:

A plan to safely reopen Ontario and manage COVID-19 for the long term

Fall 2021

October 25, 2021

Lift capacity limits where proof of vaccination is required in:

- restaurants and bars
- sports, recreational fitness facilities (such as, gyms), physical fitness training and waterparks
- casinos, bingo halls, and other gaming establishments
- meeting and event spaces (indoor)

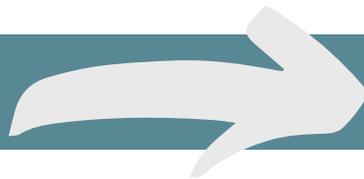
Permit certain settings to lift capacity limits if they require proof of vaccination, including, but not limited to:

- museums, galleries, etc.
- religious services, rites, or ceremonies
- tour and guide services
- personal care services, including barber shops, salons, body art

November 15, 2021

Lift capacity limits in other high-risk settings where proof of vaccination is required:

- food/drink establishments with dance facilities such as, night clubs, wedding receptions in meeting/event spaces where there is dancing
- other social clubs



In the absence of concerning trends, begin to lift vaccine certificate requirements, starting with the lowest risk settings, as follows:

Winter 2022

January 17, 2022

- restaurants and bars
- sports and recreational fitness facilities (such as, gyms) and waterparks
- casinos, bingo halls, etc.

February 7, 2022

- other social clubs

Spring 2022

March 28, 2022

- meeting and event spaces
- sporting events
- concerts, theatres and cinemas
- racing venues
- commercial and film productions with studio audiences

After March 28, 2022

- All remaining public health and workplace safety measures in businesses and organizations lifted, including masking
- Revoke public health Emergency Orders under the Reopening Ontario Act
- Recommendations on where masking could be maintained (such as transit)

As the province manages COVID-19 for the long term, responses will be localized and tailored based on local context and conditions.

Local indicators will also inform decisions to apply additional measures to specific public health regions at the discretion of the local Medical Officer of Health.



Flu Shots available in November

Flu clinics will be organized at Bellwoods' sites in the coming weeks. Please stay tuned for a clinic close to you.

Toronto Public Health is preparing for annual public flu vaccination clinics and is encouraging all Torontonians to get their free flu vaccine. Flu vaccines will be administered by appointment at each of the City's five mass immunization clinics. Toronto residents can start booking their appointment at <https://www.tphbookings.ca/Default.aspx?PageID=11288>

Flu vaccines are also available from your local pharmacy or primary care practitioner.

It is safe to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and the flu shot at the same time.

Ontario is investing over \$89 million this year to purchase over 7.6 million flu vaccine doses, which is 1.4 million more doses than the previous year. This includes a total of 1.8 million doses specifically for seniors.



Organizational News

Bellwoods kicked off Ontario Community Support Month with a Staff Appreciation Fall Fair. We were thrilled to have more than 70 staff attend the event. Here are some great photos of Team Bellwoods:



In the photo (left to right): Estela C., Hazra S., Paulette B., and Cheryl M.



Bellwoods Service Excellence Management Team in the photo (left to right): Otelio J., Shawn K., Hazra S., Joy V., Joana N., Jan M., Beverley A., Sharon R., and Sacha H.

Staffing changes within the Service Excellence and Innovation team

In May 2021, Bellwoods brought its client support members together under a single portfolio now known as the *Service Excellence & Innovation Team*. This alignment reflects our organizational values, focuses our teams work around our core mission, and positions us to better respond to needs unfolding in our environment.

We are actively engaged in developing a plan to realign all our teams. As part of this work the following changes were implemented effective October 25, 2021:

- Schedulers are now referred to as Service Coordinators to reflect our commitment to our client and staff community and deliver support services in alignment with service plans.
- Director of Transitions & Special Projects is now the Director of Transitions & Community Partnerships (Anne Dumais).
- Manager of Client Services is now the Manager of Service Excellence (Jan Mowat).

We would also like to congratulate the following team members who have accepted permanent roles at Bellwoods:

- *Bethel Ihueze-Mannix, Service Coordinator*
- *Hazra Shekh, Support Service Supervisor*
- *Jan Mowat, Manager of Service Excellence*
- *Jamila Minaei, Clinical Supervisor*

As we continue to realign our support teams, we will communicate and engage staff and clients through town hall meetings, community councils, site visits, and newsletter updates.



**Congratulations
Service Excellence
& Innovation
Team**

News for Clients

Food delivery to 200 Madison

We would like to profile one of the partnerships we have with the **Stop Community Food Centre**. The Stop graciously stepped in and helped deliver food hampers to our clients twice monthly to help meet the food security needs of some of residents at our Madison site. The food hampers include: fresh produce, pantry goods, dairy and meat. A big shout out to our volunteer Jean Brown who has picked up and delivered the hampers!

In the photo: (top left) Mike T., (centre) Jean B. and (right) Jermaine



Client BBQ

We were happy to have some time for clients to socialize and enjoy the Client BBQ at 1082 Dundas St. on September 15. Over 65 attendees enjoyed a perfect summer day!



September was an awareness month for spinal cord injury and muscular dystrophy

Bellwoods' clients shared some of their perspectives with us:



Patricia Hughes

Patricia was diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy Type 3 at Sick Children's Hospital in Port Hope. Patricia and her family relocated to Toronto. As her disability progressed, Patricia moved into St Mark's that integrated with Red Cross and later Bellwoods. Patricia has two children and has been employed with Roger's Communications for 32 years.

“ My experience has taught me to never let your disability get in your way. Living with Muscular Dystrophy Type 3 does present hurdles but you can get over them. Follow your dreams and never give up.



Warren Jones

Warren was born in Toronto and has lived across Ontario. He is married with two children. When he was 18, he was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy and has been with Bellwoods for over five years.

In his spare time, he enjoys playing game consoles such as Switch, loves online bridge, and managing his family finances.

“ Muscular dystrophy is a progressive disorder. I have lived with it my whole life. I do as much as I can to be as active and involved as possible.



Benjamin Kwarteng

Benjamin grew up in Toronto and spent some time living in Brampton before locating back to Toronto after his spinal cord injury. He sustained his spinal cord injury in 2008 while on vacation in Africa. He moved to Bellwoods in 2009 following a four months rehab program at Lyndhurst.

“ People living with spinal cord injury are often misunderstood because of the trauma they have gone through and the fact that their independence has suddenly been taken away. The thing people need to know about spinal cord injury is that your body goes through many changes over time. Every day's different. The way you do things today may not be the same tomorrow. Deal with the challenges as they come and live in the moment. Don't regret what you didn't do yesterday. Be humble, be patient, be respectful, even with people you feel don't deserve it. Most importantly, live life the best and the healthiest way you know how.

News from Bellwoods' Community Advisory Council (BCAC)

Meet Tara Gibson, Client Member of BCAC

Tara was born with cerebral palsy spastic quadriplegia. She has been with Bellwoods' since 2007. Though her disability presents some challenges and limitations that require a team of allies to assist her to live her best life, her disability does not define who she is.

Tara is active in a lot of activities at Bellwoods including the Garden committee. The raised gardens are important to her because it allows everyone to connect with nature. She is a member of BCAC and is proud of the many accomplishments that has been made by this group.

**BCAC was launched in Spring 2019. The Council serves in an advisory capacity making recommendations on matters that impact the experience of clients and also provides advice on issues that will improve quality and service experiences.*



Bridging the Gap Fund (BTGF)



This fund is intended to '**Bridge the Gap**' for Bellwoods' clients experiencing periods of greater financial hardship.

If you need help or know of a client that does, apply or reach out to the Bridging the Gap Coordinator at 416-447-1168 or by email at ayip@bcclsp.org



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This newsletter is produced by Bellwoods a charitable, not-for-profit organization headquartered in Toronto. Bellwoods provides housing, personal support and reintegration services to individuals with a broad range of disabilities and also provides transition programs and supports for clients transitioning from hospital and/or those at-risk of homelessness.

Electronic copies of this newsletter are available on our website <https://bellwoodscentres.org/about-us/publications/> See Publications > Newsletters. For a printed copy and/or suggestion on content for future topics contact Anna Yip, Communications & Development Associate at 416-447-1168 or by email at ayip@bcclsp.org