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July 19, 2019

Re: Public Engagement on Daylight Savings Time

I am writing on behalf of the Island Health Medical Health Officers, the public health physicians responsible for the communities of the Vancouver Island Health Authority. We are interested in the potential population health impacts, beneficial or harmful, of a change to permanent daylight savings time for BC residents. The information provided on the BC government's Daylight Savings Time backgrounder provides a short summary of a number of studies examining the impact of time changes from various jurisdictions around the world, primarily focused on road traffic safety and cardiovascular event risks. There are many other potential health effects that should be considered, and have been examined in some studies, including: effects on physical activity levels, particularly in children and youth; effects on mental health and specific conditions such as depression, seasonal affective disorder, sleep disorders; effects on injury risks for pedestrians and motorists; effects on injury risks in the workplace.

We recommend a health-focused review of the potential impact of this proposed change; this would be beneficial for policy-makers, and would provide a framework for examining future impacts to the BC population if the change is adopted. The Office of the Provincial Health Officer or the BC Centre for Disease Control could be consulted on this matter. Because many of the studies conducted on this topic are not in Canadian jurisdictions, particular attention should be paid to the applicability of study findings to our province. Factors such as our northerly geographic location relative to many other countries, climate, and transportation infrastructure should be used to contextualize the review.

Yours in health,

Dee Hoyano, MD, FRCPC, CCFP
Medical Health Officer