

EAST KOOTENAY PRIMARY CARE NETWORK INFORMATION SHEET

Transforming primary care in the East Kootenay

What is a PCN?

A Primary Care Network (PCN) is a model of care that supports the delivery of team-based primary health care services in a local area. In a PCN, family physicians, other primary care providers, and allied health care providers in a geographic area work together to meet the health needs of their local community.

Across BC, family physicians, health authorities and community partners are working to transform the delivery of primary care through establishment of Primary Care Networks. The East Kootenay Division of Family Practice, Interior Health, and the Ktunaxa Nation have come together as partners to implement and support the development of the East Kootenay Primary Care Network (EK PCN).

About the East Kootenay PCN

The EK PCN is a network of high-functioning, multi-disciplinary health care providers working closely together to improve delivery of comprehensive primary care. It aims to optimize the overall health of the population in the East Kootenay by providing timely access to person-centered, comprehensive, team-based care that is both equitable and culturally safe. It is based on a wide body of evidence that shows that this approach achieves the quadruple aim of **increasing access to care, improving patient outcomes, enhancing provider experience and reducing care costs.**

EK PCN clinical teams will be patient-focused, coordinated teams and will include: physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, allied health providers (social workers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, mental wellness clinicians, dietitians, pharmacist, respiratory therapists) and aboriginal health coordinators actively working together to address the primary care needs of East Kootenay residents.

The development of team-based care is not new in the East Kootenay region. The EK region spans 44,983 square kilometers with primary care services spread over 8 rural communities. In these rural communities, where family physicians provide the full spectrum of acute and community care, and where resources are often limited, health care workers have had to learn to work creatively and collaboratively.

A number of team-based care initiatives are already operational in the region, including:

- primary health care nurses providing services in physician clinics to complex, co-morbid patients;
- social workers in primary care clinics and Ktunaxa band health centres, working closely with family physicians and their patients who require extra support, and whose social needs are a barrier to their health;
- integration of nurse practitioners into Ktunaxa Nation based services and health authority services;
- co-location of family medicine practice with health authority services and private physiotherapy and pharmacy.

The EK PCN builds on the experience of team-based care in the region, bringing together the full scope of primary care services in a collaborative and comprehensive network of care.

What to Expect as a Health care Provider with East Kootenay PCN

Operationalization of the EK PCN will bring together the three partners, with existing primary care services (15 medical clinics, three Health Authority Health Centres, one First Nation Health Clinic, and four First Nation Health Centres), as well as new PCN health care providers.

The success of the PCN relies on interprofessional teams working well together. This transition to a fully team-based approach is supported through training and coaching organized across the region. Each community is creating a local plan based on the strategic vision of the EK PCN and their personal and collective goals for team-based improvement. Health care providers will be supported to achieve their goals through the following resources:

- **EK PCN Learning Collaborative:** An opportunity for teams in the region to come together to build new knowledge, share information, participate in reflective continuous quality improvement, and develop a strong, team-based approach, grounded in relationship-based care. Teams then work on enhancing practices through “action periods”, testing the changes in a clinical setting. The action periods are supported by onsite visits from the PCN change coach, followed by clinics / teams connecting with each other to discuss processes and lessons learned.
- **Change Coaches:** Teams are coached to become self-organizing and practice shared decision making, taking responsibility for their work and keeping decision making authority closest to where the work will get done, within their team. This provides teams with clear expectations, maximizes the scope of practice and provides transparency to those impacted.
- **Cultural Agility: Culturally safe and agile care is the foundation to addressing the disparity in health outcomes for Indigenous people. Many of the PCN positions will be based within the Ktunaxa Nation providing outreach to Aboriginal and vulnerable patients throughout the East Kootenays. Primary health care teams will have a range of culturally based supports and resources to support the delivery of health care services. The East Kootenay PCN will support relationship-based practices that are rooted in cultural and traditional approaches.**
- **Steering Committee:** The PCN is governed by the three partners (EK Division of Family Practice, Interior Health, and the Ktunaxa Nation) through the PCN Steering Committee.

Is the East Kootenay PCN right for you?

If you are reading this document, you are likely contemplating joining this transformation journey, as one of the new nurses, allied providers or family physicians that will be working with our primary care services. This document is intended to assist you in determining if this role is a fit for you.

As a PCN team member, you will be on the front line of transforming health care for people in the East Kootenay. While hugely rewarding, transformative work takes time, resilience and openness to change. PCN team members will learn new ways of working together, with patients, and in a model of care with a partial roadmap and a lot of unknowns.

Success lies in jointly accepting responsibility for the challenges that arise and working collaboratively towards solutions that allow everyone in the East Kootenay to access the care they need that will lead to their healthiest life possible.

For more information about B.C.'s Primary Care Networks, visit: <http://www.gpsc.bc.ca/what-we-do/system-change/primary-care-networks>