

For Immediate Release

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New list makes finding a family physician or nurse practitioner easier

There's a new and easy way for patients in the South Okanagan Similkameen region to be connected to a family physician or nurse practitioner.

Effective immediately, patients who do not currently have a primary care provider can add their name to a centralized list, rather than visiting or calling family physician offices individually to try to locate a provider. The list can be accessed on the South Okanagan Similkameen Division of Family Practice website: www.divisionsbc.ca/sos.

This centralized list is a part of the South Okanagan Similkameen Primary Care Network, a partnership between the South Okanagan Similkameen Division of Family Practice, Interior Health and local First Nations communities. Over the next three years, it is expected to bring more than 20 new health-care providers to the region.

"While this work doesn't immediately solve the doctor shortage, we are pleased that our communities are working together to attract new providers to the area, and that patients will have a reliable way to register they are looking for a primary care provider," says Dr. Jennifer Begin, a family physician in Penticton.

Since May, three new nurse practitioners (primary care providers who have a master's degree in nursing) have been hired in our communities as part of the Primary Care Network.

How the centralized list works:

- Patients visit www.divisionsbc.ca/sos to register to be matched to a primary care provider.
- As providers become available, patients will be contacted to set up an initial appointment, using contact information provided.

Please note:

- Patients may be attached to either a family physician or nurse practitioner.
- This service is free, and first-come-first serve, with some provision for prioritizing patients assessed as having urgent or complex care needs.
- This list is for all patients, including Indigenous patients living on or off reserve, who are currently without a provider in the area.
- Patients in Princeton who have filled out a Cascade Medical Centre Request for Attachment Form do not need to re-register on the new centralized list.
- All other patients in the region who have signed up on a clinic waitlist should re-register on the new centralized list.
- When registering, patients will be able to provide information about care preferences to assist with a match.
- A patient who declines a provider will be given another chance to be attached to an available provider, before being re-assigned to bottom of the list.

For more information about the Primary Care Network in our region, please visit our SOS Division of Family Practice News Page: www.divisionsbc.ca/sos. ==30==

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