



**East Kootenay**  
**Division of Family Practice**  
An FPSC Initiative

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

*For the period ending March 31, 2023*





# LEADERSHIP REPORT



Primary care has been a central focus in British Columbia this year. With the new Physician Master Agreement and the development of the Longitudinal Family Physician (LFP) compensation model, physicians have more choices on how to be compensated and how to structure their work. As a result, we have been excited to see many East Kootenay family physicians (FP) evolving their practices. In rural areas, some aspects of family medicine are not yet properly compensated under

the new model, including rural ER, long term care, maternity and in-patient. While new payment systems are designed, physicians have had access to stabilization payments with the hope of maintaining services.

At the EK Division, we continuously work to identify gaps that exist in patient care in local East Kootenay communities and develop solutions to meet both our physician's and community's needs. Over the last year, some of our priorities focused on enhancing primary care services through the East Kootenay Primary Care Network (EK PCN) implementation, advancing a wide range of Shared Care and Innovation projects, and supporting physician recruitment and retention. Retention supports include Continuing Medical Education through EK CPD, as well as Flourishing Physicians, Professional Resiliency workshops, and a New to Practice group.

The wide ranging work of the Division is highlighted throughout this Annual Report, and we are grateful to all the physician leads, staff, and contractors who create positive and innovative changes in the East Kootenay. These efforts are important in the face of ongoing systemic challenges in which the population's need for care often exceeds the health system resources available.

Thank you to our members for remaining engaged with the organization and offering your insight, skills, and leadership to help make the East Kootenay a great place to live, work, and play.

Dr. Shaun van Zyl, Board Chair  
Megan Purcell, Executive Director

## We are 158 members strong across eight communities

Our Vision: Progressive, fulfilled, healthy family physicians who are empowered and equipped to practice optimal primary care in support of healthy communities across the East Kootenay.

Our Mission: To empower and support family physicians as they work to optimize the health and wellness of their patients.



# COMMUNICATIONS

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A warm Thank You to the clinics and physicians who supported the EK Division's photography project in 2022/2023. Our goal was to acquire professional images that showcase regional physician stories, as well as highlight the people, practice, lifestyle, passions, and opportunities that are reflective of rural practice, specific to our East Kootenay communities and clinics. The resulting images have greatly supported and enhanced EK Division's website, communication and media efforts, marketing materials, and recruitment initiatives.

You can view some of these images of your colleagues on our website <https://divisionsbc.ca/east-kootenay>, or connect with us on Facebook ([@EastKootenayDivision](#)) and Instagram ([@ek\\_familydoctors](#)).

# PHYSICIAN SURVEY

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Between July 28 and August 14, 2023, 38 percent of physician members responded to the 2023 EK Division Physician Survey. This survey focussed on physicians' current practice, plans for their future practice, overall satisfaction with their professional life, health and wellness, experiences with the division and the EK PCN, and their experience with supporting patients with unique needs. Key findings included:

- 85 percent of physicians are 'somewhat satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their professional life. Results indicated 49 percent of physicians are 'very satisfied' with the current compensation method - with 27 percent of physicians delaying retirement by 1-10 years due to the LFP model.
- Though most physicians were satisfied overall, there was a common consensus more recruitment and locum support was needed to reduce the unattached population, and ease their ability to take time off comfortably. 48 percent of physicians reported their ability/inability to find locum coverage affects their work-life balance.
- Visions to support physician health and wellness included access to counselling for physicians, recreation programs or health retreats, improved recruitment efforts and locum supports, and extended benefits.
- Overall, physicians were generally satisfied with the support received from the EK Division. There were many positive comments about the division's involvement and 60 percent of physicians were 'very confident' or 'extremely confident' the organization would respond to their needs. Suggestions for improvement included more support from the EK Division with PCN staff integration, recruitment and locum supports, and office management and EMR efficiency.





# PHYSICIAN WELLNESS

The East Kootenay Division recognizes the strong connection between the experiences of physicians and those of their families. Our physician wellness initiatives, including Flourishing Physicians, the CME accredited Professional Resiliency Workshops, and the New to Practice Groups, focused on supporting physician wellness in the workplace and at home.

## Flourishing Physicians

We proposed an approach that enabled physicians to prioritize and value wellness the same way we value and prioritize physician leadership and administrative work. Instead of asking physicians to give up free time and pay for access to wellness resources we designed a pilot program that supported physicians to participate in a wellness initiative. We knew physicians would benefit from the support group; we needed them to attend. Flourishing Physicians support group was designed to provide tools that create balance, reignite passions, and return joy to the workplace.

The concept for Flourishing Physicians was developed by 3 family physicians who attended our 3-part Professional Resiliency Workshops. They identified the need to sustain the momentum gained from the workshops and the need to support and value physician participation in a local networking group. Flourishing Physicians was open to all East Kootenay physicians. Meetings were held virtually every 6 weeks. They were facilitated by a registered psychologist and expert guests. Time was dedicated to learning, resource sharing, open dialogue, and networking.

Each meeting focused on a specific topic. Examples of topics included parenting, trauma, mindfulness, etc. Physicians had the opportunity to be reminded of their current skills, learn new skills, and provide encouragement to each other.

## New to Practice

This project aimed to create a supportive and connected community for physicians transitioning from residency and physicians new to practice in the East Kootenay. Transitioning to a new practice can be especially challenging when relocating from an urban to a rural community. The project worked to provide support and resources to new physicians as they build practices and navigate the healthcare system.

The First Five physician group met quarterly to connect and foster a sense of community. Dr. Cecile Andreas, an executive physician coach, facilitated the meetings. The new to practice physicians established a WhatsApp group, elected a representative to the East Kootenay Regional Physician Representative Committee, attended workshops on EK Division and provincial resources, discussed building a sustainable practice, and learned about supports such as PSP and RCCbc's Real Time Virtual Supports.



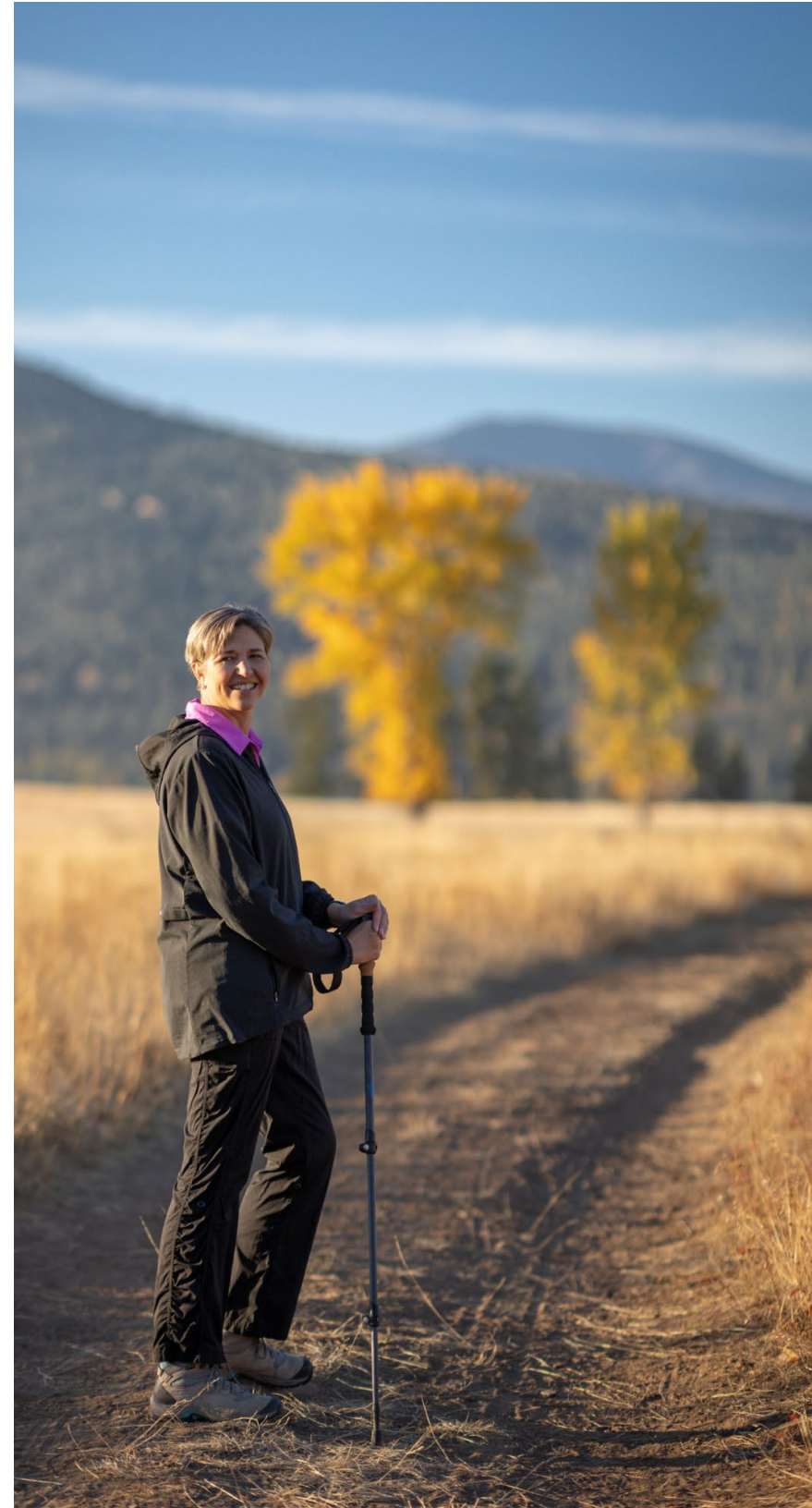
# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

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The East Kootenay Division remained focused on a regional approach to recruitment that included supporting physicians and clinics to find the best fit for their practices and their community. The provincial shortage of family physicians continued to affect the volume and number of enquiries. Despite this, we were fortunate to welcome 17 new family physicians to our region this year. We welcome the following physicians to our communities: Dr. Amy Morrison (Cranbrook), Dr. David Yamabe (Cranbrook), Dr. Craig Lynch (Cranbrook), Dr. Megan Ure (Cranbrook), Dr. Folake Olabode (Cranbrook), Dr. Breanne Berg (Cranbrook), Dr. Abiola Imasogie (Kimberley), Dr. David Tetrault (Kimberley), Dr. Matthew Siray (Golden), Dr. Jade Nutting (Golden), Dr. Cassandra Tayler (Golden), Dr. Bryn Fell (Creston), Dr. Robert Bailey (Creston), Dr. Chelsea Hart (Creston), Dr. Tiffany Vracas (Fernie), Dr. Ben Tan (Fernie), Dr. Jay West (Sparwood), and Dr. Michael Galic (Sparwood).

The East Kootenay Division secured funds to support locum travel and accommodation and supported 16 visits to East Kootenay communities this year.

The East Kootenay Division is also involved on a leadership level in the Interior Physicians Recruitment and Retention (IPRR) Network. The IPRR highlighted systemic challenges and successfully advocated for local recruitment resources for Divisions to offer its members.





# SHARED CARE

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The relationship between family physicians and specialists is fundamental to the delivery of effective health care, especially for patients with chronic health conditions.

Gaps in communication between hospital and community-based physicians, and family doctors and specialists, can impede the flow of care, resulting in a fragmented health care experience for patients, families, and providers.

Many regional family physicians, specialists, and partners at the EK Division of Family Practice, Interior Health and Ktunaxa Nation, are working together through Shared Care initiatives to bridge those gaps, with the goal of providing a coordinated health care experience for all East Kootenay residents. By facilitating collaboration between physicians, Shared Care initiatives foster mutual trust, respect and knowledge of each physician's expertise, skills, and responsibilities, all of which are integral to effective collaboration and collegial relationships.

Long term, Shared Care work helps to build a collaborative infrastructure to support sustainable improvements for a coordinated health care system in our region.

The East Kootenay Shared Care Steering Committee, formed in 2013, helps us:

- identify and develop new regional and community projects;
- bring specialists and family physicians together for better coordinated patient care;
- bridge gaps in communication between hospital and community-based physicians with the goal of providing a coordinated health care experience for all;

Committee members include local specialists, family physicians, Interior Health members and provincial Shared Care staff. If you have an idea for a potential Shared Care project, please contact Jacqui van Zyl ([jvanzyl@ekdivision.ca](mailto:jvanzyl@ekdivision.ca)) Shared Care Program Manager.



### **Acute Care Transitions**

This project was developed to address interprofessional challenges and communication barriers between Family Physicians, ER Physicians and Hospitalists in the Cranbrook and Kimberley area, as well as to create a memorandum of understanding that outlined standard processes, appropriate communication and communication platform, admission processes, and an on-call process for Acute Care Transitions. Through this project, the development of standard procedures, communication platforms, and engagement opportunities will strengthen professional working relations and support the care of patients.



### **Access to Liver Care in the EK**

This project focused on improving access to specialist care for people with liver disease in the East Kootenay region. Screening processes were improved and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease management and referral algorithms were developed. Several continuing medical education sessions provided updates and information on preventing and managing liver disease. Engagement sessions were held with the internal medicine & surgical groups to explore patient pathways and ideas for team-based care. The project also provided a patient education session at Tobacco Plains. New referral algorithms were posted to Pathways.



### **Gender Affirming Care**

This project aimed to improve and better coordinate gender affirming care in the EK. We identified current gaps in care in the region and developed the necessary resources and networks to address these gaps.

The project has developed gender affirming care resource maps for patients and providers. Roadmaps are uploaded onto Pathways. A successful and well attended Gender Affirming Care education session was held at the Kimberley Conference and Athlete Training Centre on January 27, 2023, in conjunction with the EK Pediatric Conference.



### **Adult Mental Health and Substance Use**

The project is working to identify community resources and gaps in care for patients requiring AMHSU services. Dr. Johnny Chang has joined Dr. JoyAnne Krupa as Physician Lead. The project hosted an in-person dine and learn event at St. Eugene Mission for all Kimberley and Cranbrook physicians on March 8, 2023. The focus is on building relationships and aligning with the Interior Health OAT initiative.

### **EK SORT**

East Kootenay **S**hared **O**rthopedic **R**eferral and **T**riage Project (SORT Project)

The project received full funding on December 7, 2022. Engagement has included individual interviews with stakeholders to assess need and current referral patterns, and establishment of the Project Steering Group, Orthopedic Working Group, and GP Working Group. The two year **S**hared **O**rthopedic **R**eferral and **T**riage Project aims to decrease the wait-time between GP referral to orthopedic surgical consult within the East Kootenay through evidence-informed strategies such as implementation of a consistent referral, a multidisciplinary triage, and increased capacity-building and engagement between GPs, MOAs, physiotherapists, and orthopedic surgeons.



### **Kimberley and Cranbrook Maternity Care Project**

Encompass Pregnancy Care Cranbrook is a team-based pregnancy care practice co-located in Cranbrook's Urgent and Primary Care Centre (UPCC). The new model launched officially in May 2022 and is an innovative approach to sustaining maternity care in Cranbrook and area. The goal of this project is to develop a shared, team-based maternity service and a collaborative maternity network to service all patients, easily connect attached and unattached patients to interdisciplinary pre- and post-natal care, and sustain providers in Cranbrook and Kimberley. Next steps include integrating Registered Midwives (RMs) into Encompass Pregnancy Care as part of a new Shared Care Project.



# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

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This project developed a clinic level environmental guide that supports family physicians and their staff to make evidence-based process changes to increase clinic efficiencies, decrease clinic overhead costs, and positively impact the environment.

We began with an envisioning event where identified physician champions met to discuss how the East Kootenays could help lead primary care environmental stewardship. We gathered information about work already being done in our region and across the province and conducted literature reviews. We identified the skills needed to move the work forward and formed a network of physicians ready and willing to make changes. We drew on programs already developed (eg. CASCADES, Choosing Wisely) and developed a guide that lowered the barrier to making environmentally sustainable healthcare decisions. The guide is unique as it moves away from traditional models of sustainability that focus on recycling and waste and energy reduction and looks at reducing our carbon footprint through high value clinical decision making, empowering patients, and reducing unnecessary care. We are currently exploring opportunities to share our work.

## PATHWAYS

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The East Kootenay now boasts 283 active users on Pathways; these include Family Physicians, PCN Allied Health Supports, MOA's, and Specialists. Viewing of resources and services has increase by 37% and viewing of East Kootenay Specialists has increased by 47%. The numbers give a clear indication that this is becoming the best way to search for resources to use in everyday practice.

The East Kootenay public-facing site was launched in 2023, which allows all communities in the East Kootenay to have access to information on Community and Health Authority Services in the area. Pathways does yearly maintenance on all services added to the community facing page to ensure links are up to date and active.

For more information on Pathways or access to Pathways, please contact Hanlie Du Plessis (eastkootenay@pathwaysbc.ca) EK Pathways Administrator.



**PlanetaryHealth**  
for Primary Care





# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The EK CPD program had another excellent year offering a full range of learning opportunities in the East Kootenay. We were pleased to host our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual EK CME Day at Copper Point in Invermere, attended by 73 family physicians, specialist physicians, and nurse practitioners. Our local specialists and family physicians delivered presentations on a variety of topics including General Surgery, Pediatrics, Orthopedics, Emergency Medicine, Radiology, Internal Medicine, Update on MAiD, and Gastroenterology.

In January, we organized our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Winter Conference at the Kimberley Conference Centre, focusing on pediatrics. Our local group of pediatricians shared their insights on gait abnormalities, cholesterol in kids, infant GER/D, and tic disorders. Dr. Carrie Fitzsimons, a visiting specialist delivered a presentation on pediatric cardiology, and Dr. Mark Anselmo provided an update on asthma. Dr. Virginia Robinson also shared her expertise on using POCUS effectively for pediatrics, followed by a hands-on ultrasound session. The day concluded with fresh powder on the ski hill.

We continued to offer virtual talks throughout the year. Our monthly Happy Hour & Learn sessions covered various topics, including Gastroenterology, Rheumatology, Pathology, Space Medicine, Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, and Concussion. Most of these sessions were recorded and are available on our YouTube Channel. In addition, we held two other virtual talks: Update on Vaginitis and Antimicrobial Stewardship, which were well received by attendees.

We are proud of the success of the EK CPD program in providing ongoing education and support for healthcare professionals in the East Kootenay. We look forward to continuing to offer valuable learning opportunities. Many thanks to the EK CPD Steering Committee team.

We extend our gratitude to the following physicians who served on the EK CPD Steering Committee.

Dr. Kate Buddo    Dr. Luke Turanich    Dr. Sarah Chesney  
Dr. Tasha Haiduk    Dr. Virginia Robinson    Dr. Bruce Johnson  
Dr. Virginia Clark    Dr. Peter Chong    Dr. Chris Pienaar  
Dr. Tara Chalmers-Nixon





# PRIMARY CARE NETWORK

The EK PCN is working to improve the health of the population through timely access to comprehensive, person-centered, team-based care that is equitable and culturally safe.

Here are some of this year's accomplishments:

- Hired and integrated 18 new PCN team members (12 FTE) throughout the region. Since the EK PCN began, we have added 77 new positions (52 FTE) into primary care.
- Supported maternity care throughout the region by continuing to:
  - Provide group contracts for physicians working at Maple Maternity Care in Creston and Encompass Pregnancy Care Cranbrook
  - Fund and provide integration support for maternity nurses in Cranbrook, Creston, Golden, Sparwood and Elkford
  - Support the integration of PCN allied health professionals into maternity services across the region
- Continued support for the Golden Secondary School Clinic
- Held nine cultural safety and humility workshops that were developed and delivered locally by Jared Basil, EK PCN Cultural Safety Framework Educator. Workshops were attended by PCN nurses, allied health professionals, physicians, MOAs, IH managers and support staff, EK Division staff and contractors, and the EK Collaborative Services Committee.
- PCN support coaches continued to focus on supporting integration of new and existing PCN team members into clinics.
- Launched the Health Connect Registry in participating communities in our region. The Health Connect Registry is province-wide patient registry for people who are looking for a family physician or nurse practitioner.
- Completed a baseline PCN evaluation. Information was collected across the region from family physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, allied health professionals, family practice clinics, and patients helped us to better understand what worked well and what could be improved.
- Developed a communication strategy aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the PCN services, programs, and initiatives among internal audiences (e.g., primary care providers, clinics staff, staff from the partner organizations, etc).





# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## East Kootenay Division of Family Practice Society

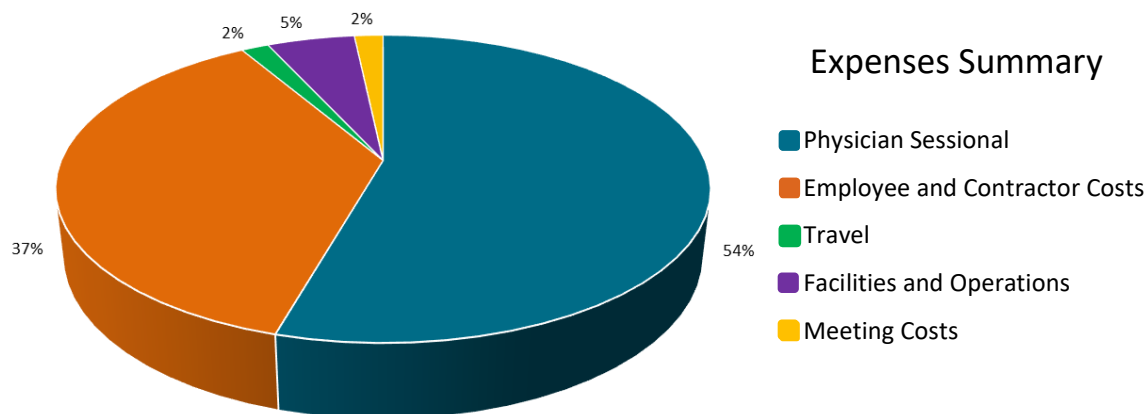
### Summary of Income and Expense Statement for Year Ending March 31 2023

#### Income

2022-23 Funding Received including interest	\$3,366,937.00
Plus: 2021-22 Funding Carried Forward	\$947,635.00
Less: Funding to be Carried Forward to 2023-24	(\$811,275.00)
Less: Funding to be Repaid	(\$30,075.00)
<b>Total Income after adjustments</b>	<b>\$3,473,222.00</b>

#### Expenses

Physician Sessional	\$1,853,620.00
Employee and Contractor costs	\$1,262,956.00
Travel	\$55,153.00
Facilities and Operations	\$175,907.00
Meeting Costs	\$57,644.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$3,405,280.00</b>
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	\$67,942.00
<b>Total Expenses and Unused Funds</b>	<b>\$3,473,222.00</b>





### Board of Directors

- Dr. Shaun van Zyl, Kimberley - Chair
- Dr. Nerine Kleinhans, Creston - Physician Lead
- Dr. William Brown, Invermere - Physician Lead
- Helena Oosthoek, Golden - Vice-Chair
- Mike Adams, Cranbrook - Treasurer/Secretary
- Greg Wanke, Creston - Director
- Jo Ann Lamb, Kimberley - Director

### Regional Physician Representative Committee

- Dr. Katherine Wight, Cranbrook
- Dr. Suzanne Hopkins, Creston
- Dr. Shaun van Zyl, Kimberley
- Dr. Allison Clare, Golden
- Dr. Gareth Mannheimer, Invermere
- Dr. Lori Gadsden, Fernie
- Dr. Greg Andreas, Cranbrook
- Dr. Luke Turanich, Creston

### Staff and Contractors

- Megan Purcell, Executive Director
- Laura Vanlerberg, Operations Lead
- Jacqui van Zyl, Program Manager
- Tina Hochart, Finance Coordinator
- Hanlie du Plessis, Pathways and CME Coordinator
- Kerry Stanley, Administrative Support
- Kelsey Brown, Evaluation Lead
- Andrea Gotaas, Recruitment and Community Integration Coordinator
- Jody Jacob, Communication Lead
- Shirley Parent, Project Lead

### Shared Care Project Leads

- Dr. Greg Andreas and Dr. Lori Wik; Steering Committee
- Dr. Jessica Chiles and Lisa Larkin; Gender Affirming Care
- Dr. Tara Chalmers-Nixon and Dellanee Kahlke, EK Access to Liver Care
- Dr. Katherine Wight, Dr. Mia Tait, Dr. Sophia Bianchi and Dellanee Kahlke; Cranbrook Acute Care Transitions
- Dr. Madeline Oosthuizen, Dr. Tanya Burch, Dr. Alisa Sanregret and Michelle Mueller; Cranbrook and Kimberley Maternity Care
- Dr. JoyAnne Krupa, Dr. Johnny Chang and Kathy Shuftita; Adult Mental Health and Substance Use
- Dr. Alex Chan, Dr. Yvonne Keyzer, Dr. Megan Ure and Liz Fradgley; East Kootenay SORT Orthopedic
- Dr. Ilona Hale and Lisa Larkin; Environmental Sustainability in Primary Care

### PCN Team

- Sarah Loehr, PCN Strategic Manager
- Caitlyn Flint, Support Coach
- Rachelle Robichaud, Support Coach
- Nicole Anker, Primary Care Coordinator

All photos by Nicole Leclair



The Divisions of Family Practice Initiative is sponsored by the Family Practice Services Committee, a joint committee of the BC Ministry of Health and Doctors of BC.



[divisionsbc.ca/east-kootenay](https://divisionsbc.ca/east-kootenay)



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