

Annual Report

2023 - 2024

For the period ending
March 31, 2024



Photo Courtesy Cranbrook Tourism

Leadership Report

The East Kootenay Division of Family Practice (EK Division) is committed to our vision of progressive, fulfilled, healthy family physicians who are empowered and equipped to practice optimal primary care in support of healthy communities across the East Kootenay.

Throughout the past year, our approach to achieving this vision has continued to evolve in response to the dynamic landscape of healthcare. We've embraced new challenges and opportunities within the system, such as the transition of many Family Physicians to the Longitudinal Family Physician payment model in B.C. Moreover, through the East Kootenay Primary Care Network (EKPCN), all family practice clinics now benefit from access to allied health and nursing providers. Additionally, our Division has prioritized supporting Shared Care projects, as well as enhancing physician well-being through initiatives like locum travel supports and physician wellness programs. Continuous physician networking and learning opportunities also remain core priorities.

Highlights of Our Achievements in 2023/24:

- **Primary Care Network:**
 - 5 new PCN positions were implemented this year
 - To date, 59 of the 75 PCN providers (RNs, AHPs, and NPs) have been implemented
 - 2,003 East Kootenay residents were attached to a family physicians or nurse practitioners through the Health Connect Registry.
- **Physician Recruitment:** Welcomed 10 new providers to family medicine.
- **Shared Care Projects:** Launched 6 impactful projects.
- **Infrastructure Support:** Secured funding for renovations in three East Kootenay medical clinics to accommodate PCN providers.
- **Networking Initiatives:** Facilitated networking meetings, including: the Maternity Leads Network, Cranbrook/Kimberley Physician Leads, Regional Physician Representative Committee, and New to Practice Physician Network.
- **Representation:** Advocated for East Kootenay physicians in regional and provincial networks such as the Interior Divisions Network and Rural Divisions Network.
- **Professional Development:** Hosted two conferences and ten monthly Happy Hour & Learn sessions through the EKCPD program.
- **Physician Support:** Provided travel cost support to 14 locum physicians for 20 separate visits to the East Kootenay.
- **Innovation:** Supported the development of a Planetary Health Guide for Primary Care.

The Board of Directors and staff of the EK Division are immensely proud to support Family Physicians across our region. We acknowledge and celebrate the leadership demonstrated by our regional physicians in improving healthcare. We look forward to the ongoing innovation and collaboration that will continue to advance our collective mission of empowering and supporting family physicians as they work to optimize the health and wellness of their patients.

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

Recruitment & Retention

The East Kootenay Division of Family Practice continues to prioritize recruiting and retaining physicians in the East Kootenay. Our continuous efforts focus on finding, supporting, welcoming, and retaining physicians to ensure a robust healthcare system.



Photo Courtesy Cranbrook Tourism

We emphasize matching new doctors to communities where they will thrive both professionally and personally. By identifying their strengths and interests, we aim to foster their satisfaction and success. Our regional recruitment approach acknowledges the unique qualities of each community, which enhances our ability to attract and retain physicians.

There are 19.6 open positions in the EK region. A significant factor contributing to these vacancies is the limited available clinic space, a challenge that grows as our communities expand. Despite this, we have successfully recruited 9 doctors over the past year.

Welcome to **Dr. Abiola Imasogie** (Kimberley), **Dr. Lucinda Wallace** (Cranbrook), **Dr. Chantal Serwatkewich** (Elkford), **Dr. Tristan Brownrigg** (Golden), **Dr. Brittany Weaver** (Invermere), **Dr. Victoria Elliot** (Kimberley), **Dr. Ann Akabogu** (Cranbrook), **Dr. Patricia Massel** (Cranbrook), and **Dr. Sarah Crisp** (Cranbrook).

Our success is attributed to several factors: positioning the East Kootenay as an excellent place to practice medicine, the diverse opportunities available for family doctors, new payment models that offer practice flexibility and fair compensation, and enhanced recruitment incentives through provincial programs. Additionally, strong partnerships with other Divisions and Interior Health recruitment and the supportive environment fostered by our Primary Care Network have played crucial roles.

The recruitment process is detailed and collaborative, involving significant provincial investment and partnerships. From initial contact to onboarding and ongoing support, we ensure physicians are integrated smoothly into their roles. Our involvement continues throughout their careers, including business supports, access to continuing medical education, support with succession planning and retirement, and establishing healthy and robust primary care teams.

Pathways

The usage of Pathways significantly increased over the last year. Specialist views doubled compared to the previous year, with most views directed at local specialist profiles. Total content views, including clinician tools, patient resources, and community services, rose from 17,838 to 21,783.

Over the four years Pathways has been available in the East Kootenay, content views grew from 8,828 in the first year to 21,783 in the last year, demonstrating Pathways' importance as a resource tool for physicians and their staff.



Several locally developed Care Pathways were uploaded during the year to facilitate easier navigation and access to local resources. These included:

- Fatty Liver (NAFLD) Care Pathway – 122 views
- ED or Inpatient with Opioid Use Disorder Care Pathway – data not yet available
- Invermere and Area Counselling Access – data not yet available
- East Kootenay MSK Care Pathway - SORT – 65 views
- Gender Affirming Care Provider Roadmap - East Kootenay – 16 views
- East Kootenay Gender Affirming Care Patient Roadmap – 49 views

For more information on Pathways or to access these resources, please contact Hanlie Du Plessis, the EK Pathways Administrator, at hduplessis@ekdivision.ca.



Photo Courtesy Tourism Kimberley



EAST KOOTENAY Primary Care Network

- 59 of the 75 PCN providers (RNs, AHPs, and NPs) have been implemented to-date, providing patients across the region with increased access to primary care services.
- 90% of the PCN providers were co-located within primary care clinics and health centres across the region.
- Led by the EK Division and in collaboration with partners, the EKPCN launched a new website, which serves as a centralized source of information for both providers and public. www.ekpcn.ca.



Photo by Nicole Leclair



Coaching Supports

The PCN support coaches continued to maintain a flexible approach as they worked with clinic teams across the region offering five key areas of support:

- Educate and coach through change
- Facilitate role development and clarity
- Integrate new PCN providers into clinic teams
- Support team growth and sustainability
- Identify and support quality improvement opportunities



Peer Network

Working with family practice clinics and in a team-base care model is a new experience for most of the PCN's nurses and allied health clinicians. This year, we established the EKPCN Peer Network to offer them additional supports as they learn to work in these new settings.

- Dr. Tyla was hired to lead the bi-monthly sessions with topics on accountability in communication, psychological safety, self-regulation, and perceptual maturation.
- An average of 17 nurses and allied health attended each session.



Health Connect Registry (HCR):

All communities are now participating in the HCR.

- Over this past year, 2,003 East Kootenay residents were attached to a family physician or nurse practitioner through the HCR
- Bringing forth learnings from our region, our attachment coordinator met regularly with HealthLink BC to help inform HCR system and process improvements.

Cultural Safety

- The EKPCN continued to offer educational opportunities for all those working within the PCN and the PCN partner organizations to strengthen their cultural awareness and to enhance their ability to establish culturally safe, respectful engagements and environments.
- Jared Basil from the Ktunaxa Nation led this work by creating an inclusive space for over 200 attendees that took part in the various workshops offered.
- A brand-new initiative saw Jared partner with Dr. Nerine Kleinhans, a family physician from Creston, to create a CME accredited workshop. In collaboration with IH Facilities, the EKPCN held this workshop in Creston, Fernie, and Invermere, and will be spreading it to the rest of the EK in the 2024/25 year.





Photo by Nicole Leclair

EKCPD

The EKCPD Program, under the guidance of the EKCPD Steering Committee, continued to successfully facilitate the building of knowledge, networks, and relationships among East Kootenay Physicians. Through events like the EK CME Day, Happy Hour & Learn sessions, and the Winter Conference, physicians access high-quality regional opportunities for professional development and collaboration.

EK CME Day – October 14, 2023

The East Kootenay Division of Family Practice presented the annual EK CME Day on October 14 at Copper Point Resort in Invermere. The event brought together 73 family doctors, specialists, nurse practitioners and medical students from around the East Kootenay to learn, share, and network in the beautiful Columbia Valley. The event featured eight presentations from nine physician and specialist speakers, as well as a talk by Dr. Alex Chan on the SORT project during the EK Division Lunch/AGM. The conference began with an informal meet-and-greet on Friday evening, sponsored by Rural Surgical and Obstetrics Networks (RSON), and concluded with a family-friendly dinner on Saturday evening, attended by 123 participants, including spouses and children.

Happy Hour & Learn

The Happy Hour & Learn sessions averaged 23 attendees per session. Most of the sessions were recorded and uploaded to YouTube, with an average of 13 views per video. The link can be found on Pathways or by contacting Nicole Anker. The presentations included:

- Dr. Sam Neufeld on "Radiology Update"
- Dr. Nic Baldwin on "Alcohol Use Disorder Update"
- Dr. Katie Vaile on "Hip & Knee Arthritis"
- Dr. Peter Chong on "Colon Cancer Screening"
- Dr. Ashley Jewett on "Psychosis in General Practice"
- Dr. Cindy Liu on "Management of Dementia Related Behaviours"
- Dr. Scott Anderson on "Eye Emergencies"
- Dr. Lincoln Pac on "How to Extract the Most Information from the CBC"
- Dr. Bing Wang on "Superinfections in Winter Season"
- Dr. Hodgson on "Thyroid Disease in Pregnancy"



EKCPD CONT.

Winter Conference – January 26-27, 2024

The Winter Conference was held on January 26-27, 2024, at the Kimberley Conference Center with the theme Responding to Emergencies: From Clinic to Climate. The two-day event included 16 presentations by 18 speakers.

On the first day, the focus was on planetary health, sponsored by the Kimberley physicians, and featured both virtual and in-person presentations. There were 30 virtual attendees and a total of 46 in-person participants. Dr. James McCormack delivered the keynote presentation on shared decision-making during dinner. The second day centered on emergency medicine for clinics and hospitals, with local and regional specialists presenting. There were 54 attendees, and the conference ended in the afternoon to allow time for participants to enjoy the ski hill.

We are proud of the success of the EKCPD 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 following physicians who served on the EK CPD Steering Committee:

- Dr. Sarah Chesney
- Dr. Bruce McKnight
- Dr. Tara Chalmers-Nixon
- Dr. Luke Turanich
- Dr. Virginia Clark
- Dr. Chris Pienaar
- Dr. Atma Persad
- Dr. Kate Buddo
- Dr. Pete Chong
- Dr. Benjamin Tan
- Dr. Tasha Haiduk
- Dr. JoyAnne Krupa
- Dr. Rae Petrucha



Physician Health & Wellbeing

In the 2023/2024 year, the East Kootenay Division of Family Practice maintained its dedication to physician wellness and a connection with the Physician Health Program via the Physician Wellness Network. Our efforts concentrated on three primary areas: Flourishing Physicians, Professional Resiliency Workshops, and the New to Practice/First Five Physician Group.

If you are a physician looking for a primary care provider please connect with hduplessis@ekdivision.ca



Photo by Nicole Leclair

Key Initiatives



Flourishing Physicians

Our partnership with Dr. Tyla Mackay has been instrumental, building on her impactful contributions to other Division-based initiatives such as team-based care and the Primary Care Network (PCN).



Professional Resiliency Workshops

These workshops aim to build a peer support network among local physicians, fostering a sense of community and mutual support.



New to Practice/First Five Physician Group

This initiative was designed to build a cohesive and supportive community for physicians beginning their practice in the East Kootenay, whether they are transitioning from residency or relocating to the area. The group offers essential resources and guidance to help physicians establish their practices and adapt to the healthcare landscape of the region.



Photo by Dr. Stefanie Mclellan

Key Achievements include

- An active WhatsApp group building connections between communities.
- Enthusiastic participation in the Professional Resiliency Workshops.
- Improved participation of new physicians in local CME events.
- Connecting new physicians to UBC's Coaching and Mentoring Program.

We look forward to new initiatives that include a Peer Support Network and Gender Equity in Medicine in the coming year. Thank you to all participants, partners, and organizers for their continued support and commitment.

Shared Care

Pediatric Psychiatry

The addition of a Pediatric Psychiatrist to the East Kootenay region – a specialized service we have never had before – presents an opportunity to develop and implement more effective care pathways and referral processes for children and youth requiring psychiatric services. Supported by the East Kootenay Division of Family Practice, the Integration of Pediatric Psychiatric Services Project received funding approval from the Shared Care Committee on April 30, 2024.

The project aims to:

- Clarify the scope of pediatric psychiatry
- Establish care pathways and referral processes that detail the steps for referral, assessment, treatment, and follow-up, ensuring a coordinated and efficient approach to care delivery that is guided by the appropriate level of care at the appropriate time.
- Enhance local communications
- Build relationships among providers

In the Expression of Interest (EOI) phase, over twenty stakeholders were interviewed to identify opportunities and gaps. This information guides current project activities, defining the child psychiatrist's role to support consultation and treatment.

Recent achievements include planning project deliverables, expanding the evaluation plan, and finalizing the communications plan. The team is working on care pathways to support children needing psychiatric care, expected to be implemented in the fall.

Pediatric Asthma

Asthma is the most common chronic pediatric condition in BC. This project addresses the significant impact of asthma on children in East Kootenay, aiming to reduce hospital admissions by 25% and decrease hospital stays by 12 hours for pediatric asthma patients.

The team is compiling data from emergency room visits and hospital admissions to establish a baseline. Early project phases identified inconsistencies in diagnostic tools and care management. A standardized diagnostic and treatment pathway is being developed, including tools for prescribing methods and referrals to pediatricians. Once validated, the pathway will be implemented across East Kootenay.



PROactive SPecialist Engagement and Recruitment (PROSPER) Project

The PROactive SPecialist Engagement and Recruitment (PROSPER) project, led by a multidisciplinary Steering Committee, aims to develop a data-informed strategy to identify and address regional specialist needs. Over two years, the project supports family physicians and specialists in advocating for new specialist positions in East Kootenay.

In the first six months, engagement sessions clarified project goals and identified improvement opportunities. Moving forward, the team will:

- Collate data on specialist access, population distribution, disease burden, and resources
- Conduct a local survey of primary and specialist care providers
- Enhance recruitment pathways and documentation with Interior Health partners

The establishment of a PROSPER Working Group and collaboration with Interior Health are key to the project's success.

Shared Care

Encompass Pregnancy Care Cranbrook

The Encompass Pregnancy Care Cranbrook project has integrated midwives into a team-based clinic. Significant progress includes defining roles, workflows, and group guidelines, and establishing a governance structure.

Future priorities include:

- Exploring culturally safe care with Indigenous partners
- Piloting group prenatal visits
- Implementing patient/provider surveys
- Updating communication resources
- Collaborating with ROAM partners on a Maternity Capability Framework

Visit www.encompasspregnancy.ca

Curiosity, Frailty, & Palliative Care Project

This project aims to embed a palliative approach to care that is person-centered, culturally appropriate, and trauma-informed. Using tools like the What Matters to You (WMTY) Movement and Serious Illness Conversation Workshops, the project seeks to improve patient care and experiences.

Achievements include:

- Initiating the Frailty Working Group
- Creating a draft definition and screening tool for frailty
- Launching a project LinkedIn page to connect people and share resources

The project has shared its message at various events and will continue to do so.



Adult Mental Health & Substance Use

The Adult Mental Health and Substance Use (AMHSU) project aims to improve access to services, enhance care provider collaboration, and address care gaps.

Key objectives include:

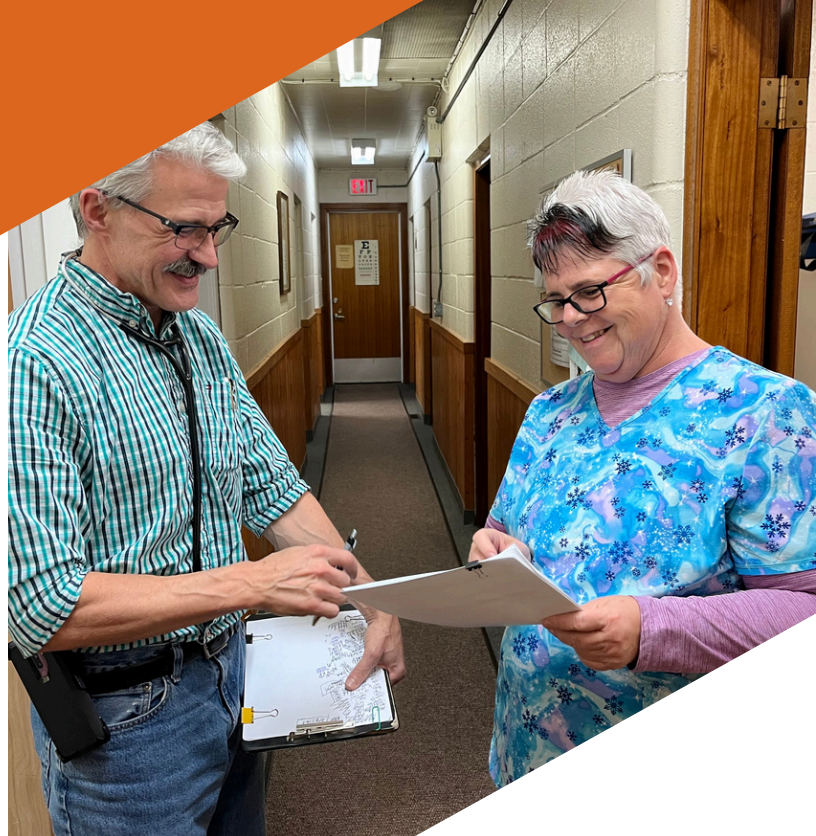
- Enhancing access to care
- Expanding services across East Kootenay communities
- Promoting team-based care
- Strengthening partnerships

Significant outcomes include establishing the Invermere Situation Table and developing educational resources and care process tools. Despite challenges, the project has improved care coordination and built sustainable relationships. Future recommendations include expanding successful models to other communities, supporting educational initiatives, and advocating for improved services and communication processes.



MOA Support & Resource Group

Over the past year, the MOA Support and Resource Group has focused on promoting professional growth and building a supportive network for medical office assistants (MOAs) in our region.



Key Activities



Monthly Meetings

We continued our monthly meetings, addressing topics to improve patient care and clinic efficiency, including:

- Pathways
- PCN Nurse in Practice
- Health Connect Registry
- Chronic Disease Education
- PSP Quality Improvement Projects
- HPV/Pap Collection Changes
- Shared Care Projects for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease
- Gender Affirming Care Roadmap
- Specialist Orthopedic Referral and Triage (SORT) Project
- OAT Therapy/Adult Mental Health and Substance Use

Each session provided strategies to enhance patient care, education, resource utilization, and clinic operations. Attendance averaged 12-20 MOAs per meeting. We also created a private YouTube playlist with recordings for those unable to attend.



Annual In-Person Day

The year's highlight was our second annual In-Person Day on September 30th at the Prestige Hotel in Cranbrook. Thirty-one MOAs from Creston, Kimberley, Fernie, Sparwood, and Golden attended, with travel and sessional time compensated, thanks to the support of EK physicians.

The day featured insightful presentations, networking opportunities, and a raffle of donated items. Attendee feedback was overwhelmingly positive, praising the venue, food, guest speakers, and workshops.



Clinic Manager Meetings

Feedback from the MOA Support and Resource meetings revealed the need for a dedicated networking platform for clinic managers. To address this, we held meetings in April 2023, September 2023, and January 2024, covering topics such as Private pay, Pharmanet changes, COVID protocols, Policy development, and Business Pathways presentations by Doctors of BC.

There are currently 17 manager positions in non-IH clinics in the East Kootenay, with 10-13 managers attending each meeting. We also established an email list to facilitate ongoing communication and inquiries.

Communications

The East Kootenay Division of Family Practice offers multiple communication channels to engage and connect with our physician members, stakeholders, partners, and the community. Explore the below resources to stay informed and involved.



- **East Kootenay Division of Family Practice Website:** Visit our main website for comprehensive information and updates
- **East Kootenay Primary Care Network Website:** Learn more about our regional primary care network team, initiatives, supports and services
- **Facebook:** Follow us for the latest news and community stories
- **Instagram:** See our visual updates and highlights from the region
- **LinkedIn:** Connect with us professionally and stay updated on our activities
- **YouTube:** Watch videos about our programs, events, and initiatives
- **Take 2 Newsletter:** Stay informed with the EK Division's Take 2 Newsletter, a monthly update designed for family physician members and other regional primary care providers. EK Division physician members are automatically subscribed to the Take 2 Newsletter



Evaluation

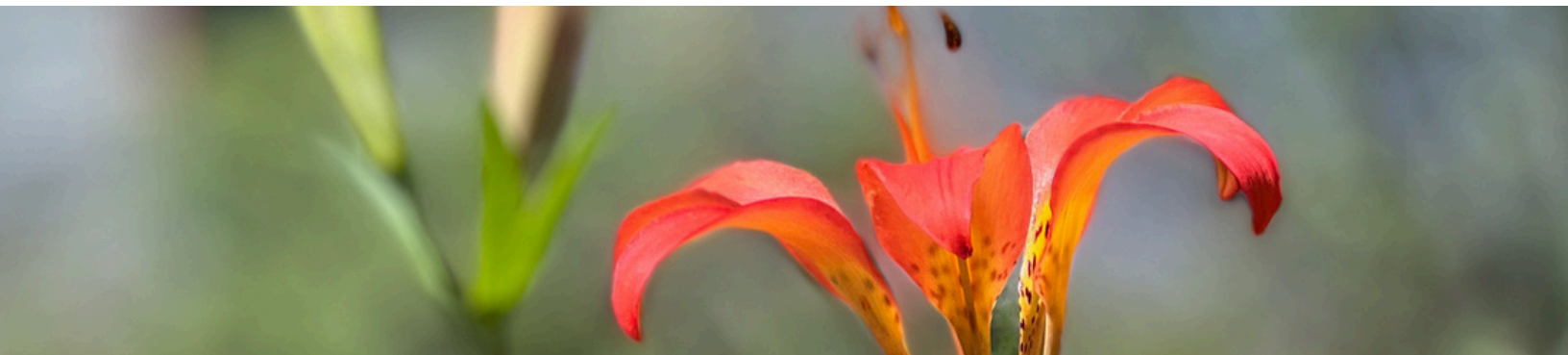
Over the past year, the EK Division has prioritized evaluation and quality improvement, integrating these practices across multiple areas of its work. Resources were dedicated to embedding these processes into initiatives such as the East Kootenay Primary Care Network (EKPCN), Shared Care projects, and various strategic goals, including elections, steering committee development, and employee/contractor feedback.



From April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, the Division achieved the following through its evaluation efforts:

- Developed, implemented, and analyzed **34 unique surveys** to inform services and decision-making
- Completed **9 quality improvement projects** in collaboration with EKPCN support coaches and clinics
- Evaluated **10 special events** to gauge impact and effectiveness
- Conducted **2 local needs assessments** to guide community health priorities
- Executed **2 election/voting procedures** to support governance and leadership processes
- Carried out **4 project evaluations** measuring the success of Shared Care projects
- Completed the annual **EK Division Physician Member evaluation survey**
- Developed and implemented **3 staff/contractor evaluation tools**
- Disseminated **4 EKPCN clinic data requests** to inform and enhance clinic operations

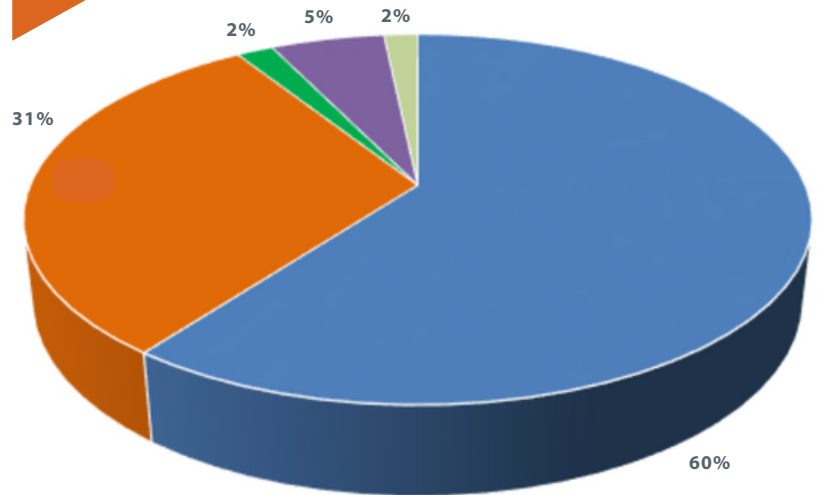
In addition, the EK Division's Evaluation Lead played a pivotal role in streamlining and standardizing evaluation processes, conducting interviews for data collection, designing data collection tools, and creating comprehensive evaluation and quality improvement plans. These efforts culminated in the production of reports and presentations that continue to drive the Division's strategic direction.



Finance

Expenses Summary:

- Physician Sessional
- Employee and Contractor costs
- Travel
- Facilities and Operations
- Meeting Costs



Summary of Income and Expense Statement for Year Ending March 31 2024

Income:

2023-24 Funding Received including interest	\$4,737,954.00
Plus: 2022-23 Funding Carried Forward	\$811,275.00
Less: Funding to be Carried Forward to 2024-25	(\$1,207,786.00)
Less: Funding to be Repaid	\$0.00
Total Income after adjustments	\$4,341,443.00

Expenses:

Physician Sessional	\$2,514,864.00
Employee and Contractor costs	\$1,281,668.00
Travel	\$74,712.00
Facilities and Operations	\$232,561.00
Meeting Costs	\$69,006.00

Total Expenses: \$4,172,811.00

Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	\$168,632.00
Total Expenses and Unused Funds	<u>\$4,341,443.00</u>



Board of Directors

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

Staff & 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
- Karrie Kelleher, Recruitment Coordinator
- Jody Jacob, Communication Lead
- Shirley Parent, Project Lead
- Carla Post, Bookkeeper
- Sarah Loehr, PCN Strategic Manager
- Caitlyn Flint, Support Coach
- Rachelle Robichaud, Support Coach
- Nicole Anker, Primary Care Coordinator



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. Wilhelm Pieterse, Cranbrook
- Dr. Sheri Bentley, Upper Elk Valley
- Dr. Luke Turanich (2023-2024), Creston/
Dr. Stephen Trebble (2024), Fernie