



East Kootenay Continuing Professional Development (EK CPD)

A physician-led, locally designed CPD program that brings high-quality education close to home—and builds the relationships that make rural care stronger.



Program Components

EK CPD: Regional CME funds are used to host four annual events/initiatives:

- Monthly Happy Hour & Learn session: Physician speakers providing high quality CME via Zoom.
- Monthly Newsletter & Calendar: A summary of what is happening locally, regionally, and provincially.
- Annual EK CME Event: A family-friendly, in-person two-day networking and accredited CME event featuring local and regional physician speakers.
- Annual Winter Conference: A focused in-person conference held during the winter months in Kimberley.

Fact: Since 2017, the EK CPD program has delivered over 137 talks.

The Impact: Knowledge, Connection, Community

Expanded access to quality CME

Regional collaboration and pooled RCME funding allow physicians to access high-quality, locally led education close to home—reducing travel, saving time, and increasing attendance.

Strengthened professional networks

Consistent opportunities to meet, collaborate, and share knowledge with peers help break down geographic silos and build lasting referral and support networks.

Improved collegiality and retention

Shared learning, mentorship, and social connection foster a sense of belonging and professional support—key factors in sustaining rural practice and reducing isolation.

Integration of cultural and community perspectives

Initiatives like the “Night of Cultural Safety” embed cultural humility and relationship-centred care into CME, enriching clinical practice and supporting inclusive, safe care environments.

Development of local physician leadership

The physician-led Steering Committee and priority on local speakers create pathways for new and established physicians to build teaching skills, share expertise, and shape regional CME.

Stronger continuity of care for patients

By improving relationships and communication between providers across settings, EK CPD helps create smoother transitions and more coordinated care for patients throughout the region.

Creative, Physician-led Solutions to Local Challenges

The East Kootenay Continuing Professional Development (EK CPD) Program is a physician-led initiative that strengthens medical education and professional connections across the East Kootenay. Funded through pooled RCME contributions from all eight East Kootenay communities and coordinated by the East Kootenay Division of Family Practice, the program is guided by a Steering Committee of local RCME leads and specialists who ensure it reflects the needs of regional physicians.

EK CPD delivers a balanced mix of learning and networking opportunities designed around the realities of rural practice. What sets EK CPD apart is its emphasis on relationships. Prioritizing local speakers—especially those new to the region—helps build trust, strengthen referral networks, and shorten the “who do I call?” gap in day-to-day care. Social elements like meet-and-greets, family-friendly meals, hikes, bike rides, and ski days are intentionally built in, making each event as much about connection as it is about education.

The program also tackles local challenges with creative, practical solutions that make participation accessible and meaningful. By hosting high-quality CME close to home, it reduces travel and time away from practice while improving equity of access for rural physicians. The inclusion of cultural content, such as the new “Night of Cultural Safety” featuring Indigenous storytelling and a fireside chat on substance use, reinforces EK CPD’s commitment to culturally safe, relationship-centred care.

Together, these elements make EK CPD more than a series of events—it is a catalyst for collaboration, professional growth, and strengthened patient care.

Why it Started:

Physicians across the East Kootenay were travelling far for CME. In 2017, the EK Division brought together local leaders to build a framework to pool RCME funds region-wide and formed a physician-led steering committee so communities could co-design a robust, local program that fits rural realities. Priorities were simple: CME close to home, local speakers, and deliberate time for connection to strengthen referrals, collegiality, and retention.

Fact: The East Kootenay is a large geographical region spanning eight communities and five Indigenous communities across 80,000 sq.km.



Physician Leadership & Governance

Regional, physician-led steering committee with RCME/CME leads from each community; meets regularly (rotating chair) to set priorities, accredit courses, and evaluate impact.

Steering Committee:

Dr. Chris Pienaar (Cranbrook)	Dr. Kate Buddo (Kimberley)
Dr. Sarah Chesney (Cranbrook)	Dr. Tara Chalmers-Nixon (Fernie)
Dr. Tasha Haiduk (Cranbrook)	Dr. Virginia Clark (Golden)
Dr. Corné Brink (Cranbrook)	Dr. Benjamin Tan (Fernie)
Dr. Bryn Fell (Creston)	Dr. JoyAnne Krupa (Invermere)
Dr. Atma Persad (Creston)	Dr. Jane Fleet (Invermere)