

# JO ANN LAMB RETIRES AFTER 50 YEARS IN HEALTHCARE



## SHE LEAVES A LEGACY OF TEAM-BASED CARE IN THE EAST KOOTENAY

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After over 50 years in healthcare, Jo Ann Lamb is stepping into retirement for the third time, leaving a legacy of commitment and innovation that has profoundly shaped healthcare in the East Kootenay region.

Since moving to Kimberley from Calgary in 1977, Jo Ann has been a tireless advocate for team-based care, making her mark on the region's healthcare system and helping establish some of its most important community health initiatives.

Jo Ann's journey began at the Foothills Hospital School of Nursing in Calgary, where she developed the foundational skills that would carry her through decades of service. During her 30 years in acute care, including 25 years at Kimberley and District Hospital until its closure in 2002, she was known for fostering a collaborative spirit among the medical staff, a precursor to her later work in team-based care.

The closure of Kimberley's hospital marked a significant turning point in Jo Ann's career. Recruited by Interior Health into management, she quickly found herself leading efforts to build new healthcare models. Notably, Jo Ann became the primary healthcare lead, a role that would eventually lead to being involved in the establishment of primary healthcare centres across Interior Health, a model of care that was still new to British Columbia at the time.

Kimberley, having lost most healthcare services after the hospital closure, became a priority, and Jo Ann's leadership played a pivotal role to revitalize healthcare in the community. The project was especially dear to Jo Ann, as it exemplified the kind of integrated, team-based care she believed in. Under her leadership, the centre brought together diverse services and was built with input from all healthcare providers, ensuring a collaborative approach right from the start.

Her passion for team-based care extended beyond the walls of the Kimberley Health Centre. Jo Ann also spearheaded the implementation of the Tele Home Monitoring Program for heart failure patients, a program that spread throughout Interior Health and continues to serve patients today. Additionally, she organized chronic disease management conferences, advocated for the development of the Cranbrook Wellness Centre, led the introduction of the Integrated Health Network (IHN) in the region, and played a key role in integrating nurses into physician offices. The IHN and integration of nurses into clinics was the beginning of what eventually evolved into the East Kootenay Primary Care Network.

After officially retiring from Interior Health in 2012, Jo Ann continued to contribute to the community, first as a contractor and then as a staff member and eventually a board member for the East Kootenay Division of Family Practice. During her six years on the board, she remained steadfast in her advocacy for comprehensive, team-based care, serving on the Finance Review Committee and helping to guide the direction of healthcare in the region.

"Jo Ann has been an impactful leader in the East Kootenay health sector, driving the development of team-based primary care throughout the region. She was decades ahead of the current primary care network initiative, always recognizing the importance of enabling healthcare teams to work together for the well-being of their patients," said Megan Purcell, Executive Director, East Kootenay Division of Family Practice. "During her time with the EK Division, Jo Ann spearheaded the integration of social workers into primary care, significantly improving patient access to essential social supports. We are profoundly grateful for her leadership, and the guidance she has provided in expanding team-based care in the East Kootenay."

As Jo Ann enters retirement, she leaves behind a healthcare system that has been strengthened by her vision, leadership, and unwavering belief in the power of teamwork. From her early days as a nurse to her role in shaping the future of healthcare in the East Kootenay, Jo Ann's legacy is one of compassion, collaboration, and community.

"Jo Ann was a trailblazer in launching innovative programs," said Dr. Shaun van Zyl, Chair of the East Kootenay Division of Family Practice Society. "She championed the Patient Medical Home model, as well as nurse-in-practice and social work initiatives, well ahead of their adoption as provincial programs. Her leadership was pivotal in bringing team-based care to life at the Kimberley Health Centre. Jo Ann's vision and dedication will be deeply missed throughout the region, but especially by those of us on the Division Board."

Reflecting on her career, Jo Ann credits the teams she worked with for the many successes along the way. "It's never about one person," she said. "I've had a wonderful career. I've worked with amazing and dedicated people at every stage. I didn't do it alone -- it was always a team effort, for sure. And I'm ready to go into retirement knowing there's some great people continuing to lead the work, in my humble opinion, in the right direction."

Now, Jo Ann looks forward to spending more time with her family and friends and enjoying the natural beauty of the Kimberley area, where she has built a life filled with love, adventure, family, and accomplishment.



**East Kootenay**  
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