

East Kootenay Maternity Strategy

A regional strategy to strengthen and sustain rural maternity care through collaboration, evaluation, and system integration.

Overview

Led by the East Kootenay Division of Family Practice, the **East Kootenay Maternity Strategy** brings together physicians, midwives, nurses, and allied health professionals across communities to build sustainable, team-based care models that keep maternity services local, connected, and resilient.

The Challenge

In many rural communities, maternity care has traditionally depended on a small number of dedicated providers working with limited resources. This can strain services and create challenges in ensuring consistent, equitable access for families. Sustaining high-quality care requires collaboration, cross-coverage, and coordinated system support.

Our Regional Response

The East Kootenay Division of Family Practice provides coordination and overarching support for maternity services across all eight East Kootenay communities. This work enables physician mobility between communities and strengthens networking and collegiality through shared learning opportunities. By fostering a collaborative, connected maternity care network, the Division is working with regional providers to identify and address current and emerging gaps in care and service. This coordinated strategy strengthens maternity care across the region through:

- Shared Care projects
- ROAM funding
- EK CPD program
- Primary Care Network integration
- Interior Health partnerships
- Collaborative recruitment efforts

These initiatives are supported by Indigenous partnership, data-driven evaluation, and region-wide recruitment and retention strategies that ensure sustainable, high-quality care for families.

Collaborative Models in Action

Care is provided through collaborative models in Golden, Invermere, Cranbrook/Kimberley, Creston, and the Elk Valley. Innovative team-based clinics and shared practices are already making a difference across the region:

- Maple Maternity Clinic – Creston
- Encompass Pregnancy Care Clinic – Cranbrook/Kimberley
- Golden Maternity and Breastfeeding Clinics
- Elk Valley Maternity Clinic
- Invermere Midwives - supported with part time perinatal PCN RN

Interior Health offers clinic space for some of the collaborative clinics. Each site reflects local collaboration between family physicians, midwives, nurses, and allied health providers.



Integrated Support Through the PCN

Maternity care is woven into the East Kootenay Primary Care Network through flexible staffing models that connect patients to:

- Perinatal Nurses
- Social Workers
- Aboriginal Care Navigators

These supports ensure care continuity and culturally safe wraparound services for families.

Cultural Safety

We work closely with Indigenous partners to co-design safe spaces and processes that honour culture, respect, and community voice in maternity care.

Building a Skilled & Sustainable Network:

A Regional Maternity Network Table brings together ROAM project leads, family physicians, midwives, and obstetrical leads to align regional standards—beginning with Induction Standards—and build stronger cross-site connections.

ROAM funding supports:

- Upskilling of rural providers in surgical and maternity skills.
- Regional Learning Days to share knowledge and build relationships.
- Travel and accommodation support for updating skills opportunities.

Evaluation & Continuous Improvement

A regional maternity evaluation framework guides consistent measurement across all sites using:

- Primary Care Team Dynamics Survey
- Professional Fulfillment Index
- Mother's Opinion of Experience Survey (MOES)
- Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREM)

Indicators align with Shared Care Committee metrics and EKPCN measures to drive ongoing quality improvement.

Recruitment & Retention

Maternity recruitment is fully integrated into East Kootenay Division-led physician recruitment, ensuring maternity opportunities are visible and well supported. Cross-coverage and locum sharing between sites strengthen both services and collegiality. Interior Health locum funding helps support locum travel and accommodation costs.

Next Steps & Opportunities

To maintain momentum and connection beyond project timelines, the EK Division is exploring sustained FPSC funding for a dedicated Maternity Network Coordinator.