

RURAL HEALTH NEWS

A QUARTERLY UPDATE FROM THE RURAL AND REMOTE DIVISION OF FAMILY PRACTICE



STRATEGIC PLAN SUCCESSES

The Division's Strategic Plan includes five strategic priorities. Below are examples of how each strategic priority has progressed since the last quarterly update. This is not an exhaustive list as the examples are numerous at the community, Chapter, regional and provincial level.

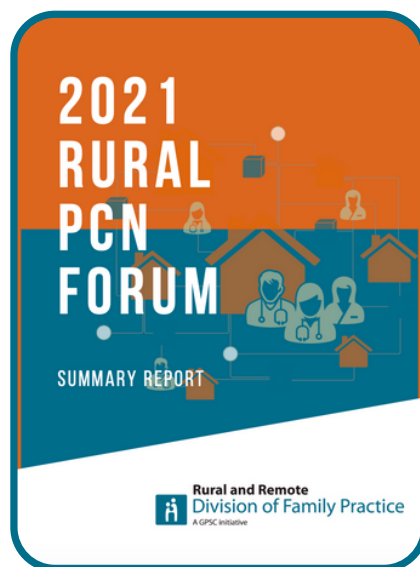
Strategic Priority 1: Building Physician Leadership and Capacity & Strengthening Relationships Across the Division

The Division's Board voted to welcome a new Chapter to the Rural and Remote Division

The physicians of Fort Nelson have officially become a new Chapter of the Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice. This marks our Division's first expansion in three years. Led by Dr. Marius Mostert, this group of five physicians has been operating within the Doctors of BC's growth and sustainability portfolio. Fort Nelson is part of the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality and includes Toad River, Prophet River and Fort Nelson First Nations. In addition to these communities, a large portion of patient care is provided to travelers and workers in the region. The physicians, Medical Clinic, Fort Nelson General Hospital, Public Health unit and Emergency Services are all located in Fort Nelson, which is located at Mile 300 of the Alaska Highway at the confluence of the Sikanni, Muskwa and Prophet Rivers in northeastern B.C. The Fort Nelson and Prophet River First Nations have community health centers. A regional Health Care Steering Committee includes the Chief of Staff, Northern Health COO and HSA, local First Nation Health representatives, emergency service and public health representatives, and municipality councilors. A community health plan was developed by the steering committee with inputs from more than 500 community members. To learn more about the Fort Nelson Chapter, [watch this presentation](#) from Physician Lead, Dr. Mostert and Chapter Coordinator, Diana Penney from our August 24th Board meeting.

The Division hosted a Rural PCN Forum

On October 19th, 2021, the Rural and Remote Division of Family practice hosted a Rural PCN Forum for our members, staff, members and staff from other Divisions, and other partners, including First Nations, health authorities, GPSC and JSC. More than 132 people from rural communities across the province logged into Zoom to share ideas, successes and challenges and leverage the hive mind of rural physicians and Divisions. Session recordings can be viewed [here](#), and here's a *first look* of the [Rural PCN Forum Summary Report](#). We will share more of these learnings in the New Year.



[Download the 2021 Rural PCN Forum Summary Report](#)

Strategic Priority 2: Partnership & Collaboration

An update on PCN planning within the Division

- The Revelstoke Collaborative Services Committee's (CSC) Expression of Interest (EOI) for a Primary Care Network was approved the Joint Executive Committee (JET) of the GPSC on August 5th. The CSC is now in active service planning mode.
- The Interior Rural CSC (Merritt, Ashcroft, Lytton, Lillooet & Clearwater) have submitted their EOI and area awaiting a response from JET.
- The Gabriola Island Chapter has signed on to the Rural Group Service Contract with the Ministry of Health. This formerly fee-for-service practice implemented this change in the fall shortly after welcoming an early draw nurse practitioner (NP) to their practice.
- The Pemberton and Long Beach CSCs have drafted EOIs that were endorsed by the Division's Board of Directors on November 24th. Next steps include endorsement from the Senior Executive Teams at Vancouver Coastal and Island Health, respectively, and then they will enter the 'queue' at the JET. Stay tuned for further updates.

Strategic Priority 3: Influence & Advocacy

Evaluation activities

The Division contracted an evaluation firm, Reichert and Associates, to conduct research to support the division to:

- Develop a clear understanding of the systems designed to support a stable patient medical home in Rural and Remote communities.
- Develop a clear understanding of the roles of the Division, health authorities, provincial programs and communities to support these activities.

- Identify where the current systems and initiatives designed to support a stable patient medical home are serving communities in the Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice.
- Understand the opportunities for the Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice to meaningfully engage and support initiatives intended to stabilize the patient medical home, including recruitment and retention activities without duplication of existing supports.
- Investigate how the Division can support the internal readiness of patient medical homes to receive new physicians to create a stable and welcoming environment given the parameters of the existing programs and services.
- Identify any barriers, incentives, or opportunities to access systems and initiatives established to support stable patient medical homes.
- To develop a set of recommendations aimed at removing barriers to these initiatives in our communities with the objective of stabilizing the patient medical home and preparing for PCN.

A final report including a set of recommendations will be shared in the new year. Next steps include hosting a meeting with all Chapter Physician Leads to discuss how to implement and share the findings among members and stakeholders, as well as submit abstracts to present at upcoming conferences.



Strategic Priority 4: Governance & Organizational Health

New Board members elected

The Division membership elected the 2021/22 Board of Directors at our AGM this fall. New members include Nola Jeffrey and Connie Leong:

- Nola is of Tsimshian and Coast Salish ancestry and is a member of the Eagle Clan. She has worked at Tsow-Tun Le Lum Society since 2000 and assumed the role of Executive Director in 2015. Her strong leadership and team building skills are utilized as she continues to foster a common vision with her team of more than 40 employees.
- Connie is currently the Director, Finance and Corporate Controller of a biotech company and serves as a board member of Pacifica Treatment Centre, a Vancouver based non-profit organization promoting health and recovery from addictions through treatment, education and support. Mrs. Leong has more than 15 years of experience in the biopharmaceuticals industry.

To read more about our Board members, click [here](#).

Nurse Practitioners full voting members and other Board updates

The Division members endorsed a special resolution at our AGM to welcome NPs as full voting members of the Division, where in the past they had been non-voting associate members. This change increases our funding envelope and promotes team-based care and collaboration in our Chapters. The Division is proud to have eight NPs among our membership.

- The Board of Directors has included an update to the Division Policy Manual. Key updates include:
- a revised gifts and prizes policy to align with changes to our funds transfer agreement (FTA) with the GPSC;
 - an updated member code of conduct that increases expectations around cultural safety and humility and adherence to the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) code of ethics.

Click [here](#) to review the Division’s policy manual on the members only site.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

The Board’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee held its first meeting. Committee members include Dr. Tracey Thorne, Nola Jeffrey and Laurie Walters. The committee has determined that they are open to new members to share their experiences. The time commitment is three 2-hour meetings per year for which you will be remunerated. If you are interested in joining this committee, reach out to: lmorgan@divisionsbc.ca.

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Strategic Priority 5:Continuous Learning, Knowledge Sharing & Quality Improvement

Patient Medical Home Projects

The Division’s Patient Medical Home (PMH) Projects continue to wrap up their evaluations. Recently completed evaluations include:

- Pemberton: The Pemberton Chapter’s PMH project identified community health needs and assessed the social determinants of health (SDH) affecting the clinic’s patient population.
- Revelstoke: The Revelstoke Chapter’s PMH project included four components: a physician survey, the creation of the Revelstoke life website, manpower planning, and expanding after-hours access.
- Salt Spring and Outer Gulf Islands: This Chapter’s PMH project was holding a planning day for physicians to develop an integrated approach to primary care services and to support physician health and wellness by creating a space to connect with colleagues.



[Click here](#) to view the completed evaluations from these communities, in addition to those from the North Vancouver Island, Gabriola Island, Bella Coola, Hazelton, Long Beach and Bella Bella Chapters.

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2019 Strategic Plan Evaluation

Division members approved our [first Strategic Plan](#) in September of 2019. As we move into the final year of implementation, consultants Adam King from BeThink Solutions and Dr. Ron Lindstrom were engaged to help collect data on progress with the five strategic priorities. The consultants conducted key informant interviews with Regional and Chapter Physician Leads in the fall of 2020 and repeated these interviews in the fall of 2021 to measure change over time. In addition, an all-member survey was conducted to gain a broader perspective. The key observations and report will be discussed by our Board of Directors and Strategic Planning Committee and shared with members this coming spring.

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Strategic Planning Board Committee

The Strategic Plan Sub-Committee has been hard at work since July working on our next strategic plan. It has representation from the Board, Physician members and staff team. Members include: JP Baker (Vantage Point Facilitator), Jennifer Brunelle (Chapter Coordinator, Revelstoke), Dr. Jamie McKeen, (physician, Hazelton), Leanne Morgan (Executive Director, Vancouver), Dr. Tracey Thorne (Division Physician Lead, Gabriola Island), Laurie Walters (Board Chair, Williams Lake), Brooke Wood (Chapter Coordinator, Long Beach) and Dr. Liz Whynot (Board Member, Galiano Island). The committee will be meeting to discuss input from the Chapters and other recent evaluations and reports to create a first draft in mid-January. A draft will be circulated to all members in February and focus groups will be held to solicit input. Our goal is a completed strategic plan by March 31, 2022.

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New Faces and Grateful Farewells

David Durksen (Coordinator for Ashcroft): David is retired, has been working with the community of Ashcroft in creating sustainable change in health care for the past 14 years. He has a background in consulting with churches and non-profits change to meet the realities of the 21st century. His priority is to bring the community voice and leadership back into local health care

Katherine Brown (Interim Regional Manager, Interior): Katherine has rejoined the Division as Interim Interior Regional Manager. Katherine will be covering for Christianne Kearns who will be working as our Division’s PCN Planning Manager. Katherine joined the Division in 2017 as the Chapter Coordinator for our Revelstoke and was the Interim Interior Regional Manager during Christianne’s maternity leave back in 2020. This past year, Katherine has worked as a PCN Liaison for Doctors of BC and brings with her a wealth of knowledge from her time working closely with other Divisions. For those who don’t already know Katherine, she has over 15 years experience in project management and proposal writing. She is currently completing her Master’s in Health Leadership at Royal Roads University.

Graham Gillies (Chapter Coordinator, Bella Coola): Graham is the Bella Coola Chapter Coordinator as of October 2021. Graham attended Simon Fraser University and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, with a major in Communications and a minor in First Nations Studies. He joins the team with over five-years experience working as a communications manager and strategic advisor within various First Nations-led organizations and government settings. In 2017, he co-founded and managed an Indigenous community radio network with the Tsilhqot'in Nation that is dedicated to language revitalization and emergency management. His interests also include public policy and dialogue around systemic racism, mental health, and poverty reduction. Currently, he resides in Surrey and enjoys creating music in his free time. One of his personal goals is creating new opportunities and access to music and studios for youth and underserved populations. He makes regular trips to Bella Coola as part of his ongoing work with the Nuxalk Nation on the reconstruction of the House of Numst' heritage building that will be the new home of Nuxalk Radio.

Kayla Downs (Virtual Care Coordinator): Kayla has joined the Division in the role of Virtual Care Coordinator (VCC). Kayla joins us with 15 years of experience working in health care in both clinical and administration positions. She currently resides in Penticton, previously Clearwater, with her husband and blended family of 5 children ranging from 10 to 21yrs. They love the outdoors and spending quality time together hunting, fishing, boating and are always up for adventures.

This new position has a Division-wide role of supporting both physicians and their patients to establish an active and dynamic support network, linking patients with clinicians, specialist, and physicians through virtual technology. Kayla will work with local Chapter Coordinators (or alternates) in communities across the Division to establish systems and communication pathways that enhance virtual team-based care at a local level. Interested coordinators will be identified across the Division/Chapters and funded to support the RRDFP VCC in local solutions. Further communication to follow once Kayla gets her feet wet.

Diana Penney (Chapter Coordinator, Fort Nelson): Diana has been supporting the physicians working within in the Doctors of BC growth and sustainability portfolio since 2020. She is also the Project Manager for the MSA and the Practice Support Coach. In addition to her roles supporting healthcare in the community, Diana is the co-owner of an automotive business and is an active volunteer in her community. Diana has more than 15 years of administrative and management experience in the energy sector and hospitality industry and will be a fantastic asset to our team.

Bev Grossler: Bev has resigned her position as Chapter Coordinator for the Lillooet/Lytton Chapter of the Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice, effective December 31st, 2021. Bev joined the division in the summer of 2020 and has been a highly valuable contributor to the priorities of the Chapter. She has supported the physicians to strengthen the local health planning table, participate in the Interior Rural CSC, and make significant strides towards PCN planning in her communities. She has been a trusted colleague by physician members, health authority leadership, and the many Indigenous partners who live in the region. Bev has successfully led Division participation within the Interior Physician Recruitment and Retention steering committee, as well as the recruitment process in her communities. Bev will be sorely missed by all. Efforts are currently underway to recruit Bev's replacement to ensure a smooth transition.