

RURAL HEALTH NEWS

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



THE DIVISION'S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN SETS SAIL

Ahoy! The Board of the Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice is proud to present the newly minted guiding document: **Strategic Plan 2022 – A rising tide lifts all boats**. The creation of this plan was led by the Division's Strategic Planning Committee, which includes Jennifer Brunelle, Dr. Kate McCarroll, Dr. Jamie McKeen, Leanne Morgan, Dr. Tracey Thorne, Laurie Walters, Dr. Liz Whynot, Brooke Wood, and our Governance Consultant, JP Baker from Vantage Point. Member consultation was key to the construction of this plan. Through key informant interviews, surveys and two-member focus groups the committee was well-informed on member priorities. Click [here](#) to access the new strategic plan on our website. All hands on deck...It's time to set sail...



ROAD TO 2022 STRATEGIC PLAN WRAP-UP

The Division's initial strategic plan included five strategic priorities. This newsletter marks the final time members will be updated on the successes of this plan. Below are examples illustrating the advancement of each strategic priority 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 newly rebranded Southern Gulf Islands Chapter

The Southern Gulf Islands Chapter has rebranded. The Chapter, formerly known as the Salt Spring Island Chapter, changed its name to be more inclusive of members of other Gulf Islands, including Galiano Island, Mayne Island and Pender Island. To kick off the new vision for the Chapter, there was an all-member retreat and the appointment of Dr. Chris Applewhaite as the Chapter's new Physician Lead.

All-member webinars

Two all-member webinars were organized on the topics of Long-Term Care and Emergency Management this quarter. The latter session entitled, *Inferno – Primary Care During Natural Disasters*, was moderated by Dr. John Soles (Regional Physician Lead, Interior). The session included Dr. Duncan Ross (Chapter Physician Lead, Merritt), along with other physicians from other Divisions. In case you missed either webinar, click [here](#) to visit our Division Youtube channel.

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Strategic Priority 2: Partnership & Collaboration

An update on PCN planning within the Division

- The Revelstoke Collaborative Services Committee (CSC) has received their data from the Ministry of Health and will begin creating their service plan with a final submission of March 31st, 2023.
- The Long Beach and Pemberton CSCs have submitted their Expressions of Interest (EOI) to the Ministry of Health and now join Interior Rural CSC (Ashcroft, Clearwater, Lillooet, Lytton and Merritt) in the queue to receive a response from the Joint Executive Team (JET).
- The Gabriola Island and Southern Gulf Islands CSCs presented their Expressions of Interest for endorsement at the Board of Directors on February 23rd, 2022. Next steps include endorsement from the Senior Executive Team at Island Health, and then they will enter the queue at the JET.



For those keeping score at home: six of our Division's nine CSCs have now completed EOIs. Chapter Physician Leads, supported by the staff team, are making excellent gains in collaboration with partners to participate and shape primary care transformation in rural communities across B.C.

GPSC inpatient bridge funding

Ten sites across the Rural and Remote Division collaborated with Health Authority partners to create a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to access inpatient bridge funding from the General Practice Services Committee (GPSC). The objectives of this funding are to:

- implement formal and informal structures to preserve, nurture, and enhance the collaboration;
- develop processes that foster efficient and open communications;
- provide each partner the mutually agreed upon required resources to ensure success of the initiative;
- work proactively, purposefully and in collaboration to identify and act on mutual priorities for the benefit of the patients;
- engage in ongoing efforts to refine and improve the quality of patient care; and,
- invest strategically to promote and support stable, accountable, and effective inpatient care services.

Kudos to the Clearwater, Fort Nelson, Lillooet & Lytton, Long Beach, Merritt, North Vancouver Island Revelstoke, and the Southern Gulf Islands Chapters for the effort to enact these MOUs. Special mention to the North Vancouver Island Chapter who developed three MOUs – one for each facility in their Chapter.

Long term care initiative

The Bella Bella Chapter worked in collaboration with Vancouver Coastal Health to complete the Long Term Care Initiative MOU, and submitted it to the GPSC. Bella Bella becomes the sixth Chapter in the Rural and Remote Division to participate in the Long-Term Care Initiative.



Strategic Priority 3: Influence & Advocacy

Staffing challenges briefing note

In response to staffing challenges in some of our most remote communities, a briefing note was developed and presented to the Network of Rural Divisions by Dr. Amber Bacenas (Regional Physician Lead, Vancouver Coastal). This communiqué was further submitted to the Doctors of BC’s Board, and the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues. Next steps are pending for individual communities and will be shared among the membership for learning purposes.



Strategic Priority 4: Governance & Organizational Health

Call for nominations initiated

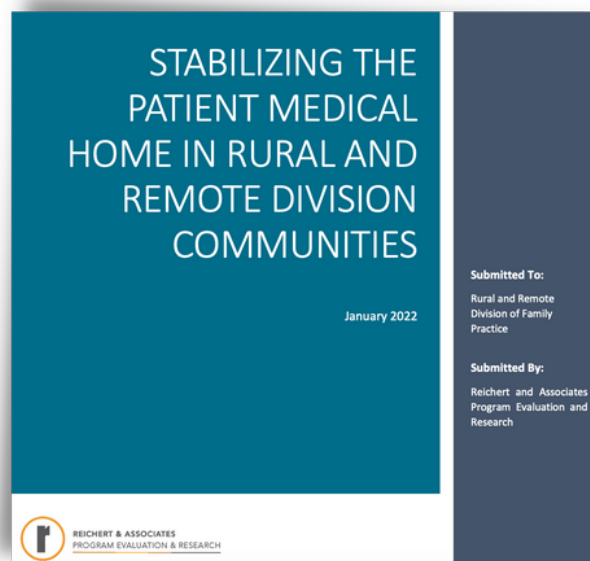
The Board's Development Committee has released the call for nominations for our Board of Directors and aims to present a slate of candidates to our members at September's Annual General Meeting (AGM). This year, the committee refined the skills matrix and application materials to make it more straightforward for applicants.

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

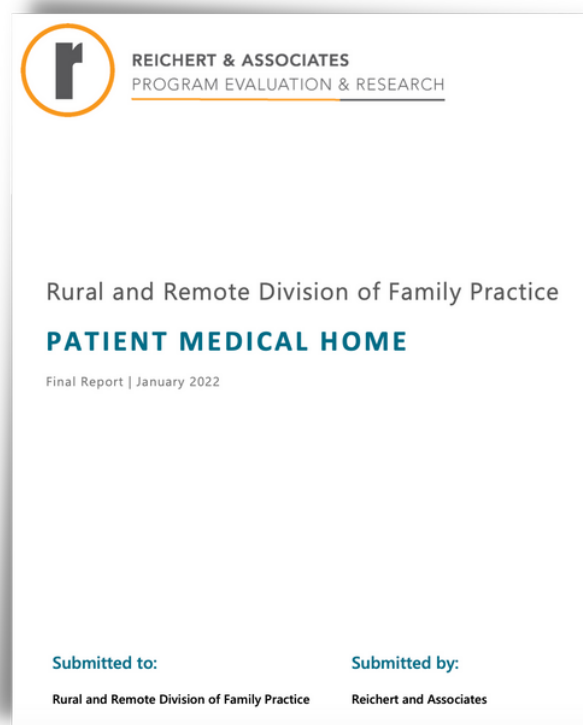
Quality Forum 2022

The Quality Forum 2022 has accepted the abstract for a storyboard presentation for the Patient Medical Home (PMH) Diabetes Education project. The Joint Collaborative Committee (JCC) Pre-Forum 2022 has also accepted the abstract for a rapid-fire presentation on the Stabilizing the Patient Medical Home report – which was released earlier this year (available [here](#)).



Patient Medical Home final report

Speaking of PMH, the Patient Medical Home project began in 2017. Each Chapter approached select aspects of the PMH to improve and a final report, including all the Chapter's individual project evaluations, is now available on our website [here](#).



Cultural Safety and Humility

This year Chapters were funded to create locally relevant cultural safety and humility training. While an interim evaluation of the ongoing work is currently underway, below are some examples of the initiatives underway and taken by several Chapters. Evaluations will be shared with all members to inform future work in this area.

- A regional cultural safety and humility event was hosted in February 2022 for all members of the Interior Rural Local Health Planning Tables and CSC. It featured a presentation from Harley Eagle and Jennifer Lewis. By all accounts it was a great success with more than 50 attendees who provided high evaluation scores for relevance to work and value. A recording was shared with all members.
- The Pemberton Clinic hosted a Cultural Safety Day and visited the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre. All the physicians and most of the MOAs were able to attend.
- The Hazelton Chapter invested in some literature and a decolonization game for their Cultural Safety and Humility library.
- The Gabriola Island Chapter purchased some Indigenous artwork for their clinic to make the space more culturally safe for community members – an action inspired by one of the recommendations in the *In Plain Sight Report*.

Recruitment and Retention

This year Chapters were funded to develop innovative local recruitment and retention initiatives. While an interim evaluation of the work so far is currently underway, Chapters invested funds in everything from locum advertising, team building events or taking a 'burnout inventory' to help measure the current state of each Chapter. The results of this evaluation will be summarized and distributed to all members to inform future work in this area.

New Faces

Dr. Chris Applewhaite (Chapter Physician Lead, Southern Gulf Islands): Dr. Applewhaite received his MD in family medicine training through the University of Calgary and completed his residency in Victoria. He also holds a Masters of Science in physical therapy. Originally from Alberta, he is excited to raise his family on Salt Spring Island. Dr. Applewhaite has a strong clinical interest in musculoskeletal medicine and pain management. Outside of medicine, he is an outdoor enthusiast and martial artist participating in brazilian jujitsu and outdoor pursuits from sea kayaking to fly fishing.

Dr. Marius Mostert (Chapter Physician Lead, Fort Nelson): Dr. Mostert is a general practitioner working out of Fort Nelson for the last 30 years. Dr. Mostert works with a well-established group of physicians serving the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality, which includes Fort Nelson, Toad River, Prophet River and Fort Nelson First Nations.

Dr. Chibuikem Ofoegbu (Chapter Physician Lead, Clearwater): Dr. Chibuikem Ofoegbu, or Dr. Chi, is a general practitioner, husband and dad to three boys. Dr. Chi obtained his medical degree from the University of Calabar, Nigeria in 2007, and subsequently completed post-graduate GP training and practiced full scope general practice in Nigeria until he moved to Canada with his family in 2014. Dr. Chi has a special interest in maternal and child health, preventative medicine and geriatrics, as well as mental health. He is dedicated to the medical profession and his patients, works hard, and is compassionate. When not practicing medicine, Dr. Chi enjoys playing soccer, listening to music and playing table tennis. He is keen to explore other sports activities in the community of Clearwater and environs.

Dr. Sushmita Shivkumar (Chapter Physician Lead, Lytton): Dr. Sushmita Shivkumar, or Dr. Sush, is a family physician, who originally trained in Montreal, and finished her Family Medicine Residency in Vancouver. The charms of B.C. kept her, and she has worked in the community of Lillooet and has done locums in the Kootenays for the past three years. She has a strong interest in rural health provision, mental health and addictions, women’s health, and medical education. Six years in, she continues to be blown away by B.C.’s beauty and the kindness of its small communities. While she is not working, she is out hiking, running, paddle boarding, or biking. She is humbled and grateful to be working in Lytton as the community starts to rebuild, and deeply hopes to contribute to health care in the area.

Noorul Nasir (Attachment Coordinator): Noorul has a clinical background having worked in healthcare for the past decade, alongside physicians in several specialties, including geriatrics, family medicine, internal medicine, and psychiatry. She worked as a clinical trainee with an education license via CPSBC, at the University Hospital of Northern BC, as well as at various family practices in Prince George, Richmond, Nanaimo, and Abbotsford. Her responsibilities at these locations included facilitating patient intake, conducting physical examinations and counselling, as well as advocating for patients. Noorul lives in Chilliwack and loves being surrounded by the mountains. On her off days, you can find her exploring backcountry with her husband, searching for waterfalls and hot springs.

Faye Missar (Project Coordinator, Long Beach Chapter): Faye recently joined the approved Shared Care project focused on improving access to alcohol support and treatment on the West Coast. Faye lives in Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ territory in Ucluelet with her husband and two young boys. Faye is a public health practitioner with a special interest in rural health, community development, harm reduction, child and youth development, and the healthy built environment. Faye coordinates a health network, the Coastal Family Resource Coalition, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. In her previous role as the Director of Community Health for the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust in Tofino, Faye co-published the Vital Signs report, which reports on the environmental, social, cultural, and economic determinants of health for the west coast region.

