

For immediate release

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In just six months, more than 1,100 local patients without a family doctor have found care

Thanks to many local solutions, more than 1,100 patients in our region have been able to find care. “I feel so incredibly lucky,” says Jan Kostek, who located a primary care provider by signing up on the SOS Division regional waitlist (www.divisionsbc.ca/sos).

“Finding health care was one of our biggest concerns moving here from Edmonton,” she says. “We’d heard about the physician shortage, and we had no connections.”

All patients looking for a primary care provider, either a family physician or a nurse practitioner, in the South Okanagan Similkameen should register using this centralized Patient Attachment List.

“I read about the list in the newspaper, so I went online and filled out the application,” she explains.

“My husband and I got a call while shopping. We were told we’d been placed with a provider and a first appointment was booked. We were thrilled!”

Kostek was placed with NP Kimberly Hayter, one of three new family practice nurse practitioners hired into our communities, thanks to Ministry of Health Primary Care Network Funding. Nurse practitioners have graduate degrees and family medicine training, and are able to provide all primary care services with the exception of obstetrics. “We love seeing Kim,” says Kostek. “She is thorough, knowledgeable and personable. She also communicates well and follows up promptly.”

The SOS Division is working on many fronts to attract new physicians and nurse practitioners to the region, including hiring a new family physician through an international graduate program, partnering with young physicians graduating from UBC, and being one of the first regions in the province to move to a new team-based model of care.

Hayter is thrilled to be a part of this new team approach. “Having the ability to discuss and plan health goals with patients is amazing, and I recognize how fortunate I am to have time to spend with patients,” she says.

The SOS Division Patient Attachment List is first-come-first-serve, while allowing for physicians to identify patients that have urgent acute care needs, as well as ensuring that providers attaching new patients continue to have a manageable balance of patients under their care.

Those who don’t have access to a computer can ask a friend or support provider to sign up for them. After signing up, patients will receive confirmation of their registration. Due to the ongoing physician shortage, we’re unable to know how long individual patients will have to wait. To get a general idea, patients can check back on the SOS Division website to see what month of sign up we are currently addressing. At this time, we are working to attach patients who signed up in June 2019.

The SOS Division of Family Practice would like to thank all of the family physicians and nurse practitioners in the area who are pulling together to provide primary care to more residents, as well as express gratitude to Ministry of Health and Doctors of BC for Primary Care Network funding, which will allow us to continue to bring new providers into our region over the next three years. ==30==

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Photo: NP Kimberly Hayter (left) with new patient Jan Kostek.