

PRESS RELEASE FROM COMOX VALLEY DIVISION OF FAMILY PRACTICE

April 8, 2020

**LATEST NEWS ON ACCESSING YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR – ANNOUNCING THE CAPE CLINIC**

We know that accessing your family doctor is important to you. We know that having a relationship with one family doctor is best for you, someone who knows not only your medical history but you as a person. This is known as longitudinal care.

During this COVID pandemic we want to re-assure you that all family doctors continue to provide longitudinal care. If you have a health concern or need to discuss your medications or medical treatment, you should continue to access your family practice in the usual way by contacting their office by phone or online (if available) to book an appointment. This initial appointment will be by phone or video. This is to keep everyone safe – our patients, our staff and family doctors - through reducing risk of transmission of COVID-19.

If there is a need to see a doctor face-to-face then this will occur through agreement and discussion with you.

As you are aware there is an international shortage of PPE. To reduce our usage of PPE, new clinics have been created to offer face to face assessments. Following your virtual appointment you may be referred by your family physician, walk-in clinic doctor, specialist or nurse practitioner to one of the following clinics where physical assessments are being provided. Both of these clinics require a referral:

- *Assessment Clinic at Comox Valley Hospital* - for those of who have symptoms of cough, fever, etc. and need a physical examination. (These are in the trailers in front of the Emergency at the Comox Valley Hospital)
- *The new CAPE (Community Assessment and Physical Examination) Clinic* for those who do not have any respiratory symptoms and need a physical examination (opened Wednesday, April 8, 2020). The location will be shared with those being referred as this is not a Drop-In clinic.

If you do not require a physical assessment, and meet the current criteria for swabbing for COVID-19, you will be referred to the drive-through Testing Site at Comox Valley Hospital. (The tents in front of Emergency)

## **HOW WILL THE CAPE CLINIC COORDINATE CARE WITH MY DOCTOR?**

We appreciate that some patients may be uncomfortable not seeing their own doctor for an examination.

The doctor at the CAPE clinic will have your medical history from the doctor who refers you. She or he will share the findings of the examination with the doctor who referred. If it's simple and straightforward or needs prompt action, you will be given treatment after the examination, otherwise the doctor who referred you will follow up with you about the next steps later that day or the next day. It is worth remembering that a diagnosis is reached with a lot more information than a physical examination – it is your medical history, the symptoms you've discussed with your doctor, the examination and any investigations such as blood tests and x-rays that help a doctor make a diagnosis.

## **IS MY DOCTOR'S OFFICE OPEN?**

Yes - your family doctor's office is open. Please do contact your regular doctor if you have any medical concerns. Appointments are typically done virtually via video conference or telephone, and appointments can be booked in the usual way.

## **WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A FAMILY DOCTOR?**

If you don't have a family doctor, you should contact one of the walk-in clinics or access the service you usually do for primary care. Following a phone/video conference appointment, you can then be referred to one of the physical assessment clinics.

## **DOES THE CAPE CLINIC OFFER A DROP-IN SERVICE?**

No, both the CAPE Clinic and the Assessment Clinic can only be accessed through referral from a doctor or nurse practitioner.

Dr. Adam Thompson  
COVID-19 Physician Lead  
Comox Valley Division of Family Practice