



**AVI Health and
Community Services**
where harm reduction works

We are sorry to announce that in July 2022, AVI will be closing our Westshore Health Centre. The Centre has been primarily funded through fee for service (MSP) billing and this has not covered the full costs of operation. We have not been able to secure other sources of financial support. Most of our patients will be transferred to the new Westshore Community Health Centre operated by Pacific Centre Family Services Association (PCFSA) which is scheduled to open in June. We are working closely with Island Health to ensure that all patients who have attended the AVI clinic will continue to have access to substance use care.

We have been deeply honoured to provide support to the community over the last 5 years. While we hope that this change will be positive, we also recognize that it can be challenging to access care in a new environment with new people and a change in services. We are dedicated to doing everything we can to make sure that the transition to new services goes smoothly and seamlessly.

AVI has been providing low barrier care for people who use substances and their family members in the Western Communities since 2017. From its inception as a grassroots clinic, we have worked to meet community members where they are at – both where and when they are ready to receive support. We have repeatedly heard from patients and their families about the importance of staff consistently offering a safe environment free from stigma and judgement that was rooted in a harm-reduction approach and how integral this was to their health. We are incredibly proud of the 95% retention rate for patients who are receiving Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT). OAT allows people to receive treatment in their home community. A key element of our success was the quality of the relationships that exist between the community members who are supported by the clinic, and our staff and volunteers who actively advocate both for and with patients. We have demonstrated a model that successfully provides support to some of the most vulnerable populations who are disproportionately at risk for fatal overdose including men between 30-49, folks who work in the trades, and people who use alone at home. Our work has paved the way for services to continue to be available in the community by demonstrating the need that exists, and the positive impact of offering these supports in the Westshore.

The new Community Health Centre will be located at 324 Goldstream Ave, and will offer longer operating hours, open Monday through Thursday from 8am – 8pm, Friday from 9am – 5pm and Saturday from 10am - 3pm. Patients who don't currently have a primary care provider may be able to access one at the WSCHC and their family members may also be attached to the clinic. Dedicated outreach teams will also be part of the Centre's service model.

We understand the needs of patients and are working actively with Island Health and the PCFSA's Westshore Community Health Centre to develop transition plans for every patient involved in the change to make sure there are no barriers to access. Existing team members at the AVI Westshore Health Centre are available, willing and happy to offer support and training for folks at the new WSCHC. Our clinical services will be ending once the WSCHC is open. Our staff will be available for transfer support and harm reduction supplies until July 15th. We are grateful to the Western Communities for the warm welcome that we received here and to the staff, volunteers, and clients who make our work possible.