

Island Health MLA Update



July 2014

Introduction

Welcome to the July edition of Island Health’s “MLA Update.” Over the next few weeks, as many of Island Health’s dedicated physicians, nurses, allied health care providers and support services staff take time off with family and friends to recharge their batteries, we hope that you, our elected partners, have time to do the same.

As an organization dedicated to health and wellness, Island Health recognizes that being well is much more than not being sick – wellness is an over-arching concept embodying wellness of the body, mind, spirit and soul. Island Health also recognizes that everyone’s path to wellness is going to be personal and different, and as such we offer a range of programs, services, information and ideas to help our residents live better. One path to health and wellness this summer is Island Health’s “**Be #islandhealthy Selfie!**” initiative. This is a fun way to celebrate healthy choices and an active lifestyle. As leaders in our communities, we encourage you – the next time you find yourself doing something healthy – to take a ‘selfie’ and share it on Facebook or tweet using #islandhealthy. This allows everyone to celebrate your healthy choices with you! See details at www.viha.ca/islandhealthy.htm.

Island Health is proud of our **Continuing Health Services** team, which received the prestigious 3M Health Care Quality Team award from the Canadian College of Health Care Leaders. This national award recognizes teams that demonstrate innovation, quality and teamwork in a community setting. Island Health was recognized for several connected initiatives which improve the quality, coordination and timeliness of patient transitions from hospitals to community. These initiatives create better patient journeys through the healthcare system, especially for frail seniors and patients with complex health needs.

This edition of “MLA Update” contains a lot of information about what Island Health is doing to promote healthier communities. From sun safety, to quitting smoking, to improving the understanding of the challenges First Nations patients face when they are discharged home to remote communities, to supporting pregnant mothers and their babies — you will find information in this edition.

Enjoy the remaining weeks of July and August. The next edition of Island Health’s “MLA Update” will be issued mid-September. If there is information you would like to see in future updates, please contact suzanne.germain@viha.ca.

Need Information? Here's who to contact:

We know your staff work regularly with Island Health program staff to respond to constituent questions. We have provided several helpful links below as well as the following contact information for your inquiries:

North/Central Vancouver Island:	Valerie Wilson	250-739-6303 valerie.wilson@viha.ca
South Vancouver Island:	Suzanne Germain	250-370-8294 suzanne.germain@viha.ca

Useful Links

News: www.viha.ca/about_viha/news/. Information about new initiatives, partnerships and programs.

Facts & Stats: www.viha.ca/about_viha/. Information about Island Health, our populations and our staff.

Local Area Profiles: www.viha.ca/mho/stats/lha_profiles.htm. Community population and health statistics to support local health and wellness planning.

Performance Indicators/Accountability: www.viha.ca/about_viha/accountability/

Wait Times: www.health.gov.bc.ca/swt/. Surgical wait times by physician and facility.

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1. Island Health Management Realignment to Improve Local Health

Island Health is committed to supporting the best health possible for our communities and for our residents. Last fall, Island Health had extensive discussions with staff, physicians, community leaders, First Nations and the public around how we can – together – improve the health of the population and support health and health care.

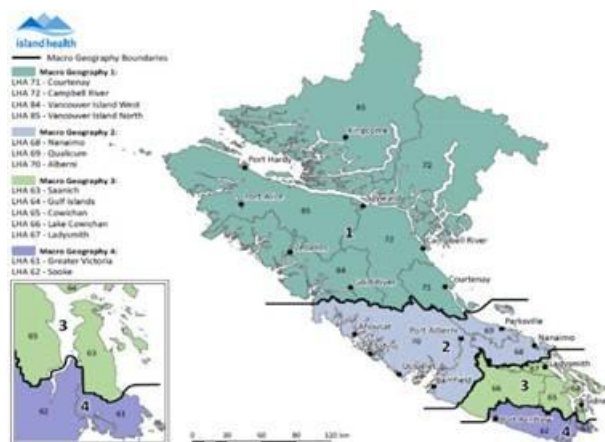
During these discussions, we heard there were opportunities for Island Health to do things differently to improve how the health of the population is supported – and at the same time align health priorities with the new priorities of the Ministry of Health (see [Setting the Priorities for the BC Health System](#)).

Effective community partnerships are essential to improving overall health. Communities have a unique understanding of their local area and population. Local autonomy and decision-making allows people and communities to be more accountable for, and involved in, health and care planning in their regions. A more community-focused model will also better support the health of the population and the needs of patients.

As a result, Island Health’s service areas have been divided into four geographic areas, each to be led by an executive director/executive medical director team. In the structure Island Health has had for the past decade, these leadership teams oversaw programs (for example, home and community care) on an Island wide basis.

The geographic approach will evolve over the coming 6-9 months and ultimately will:

- Improve community partnerships;
- Improve the experience of our patients, clients, and residents; and
- Focus on communities to better support the health and needs of the populations we serve.



Broadly, the four geographic areas are:

- Geographic Area 1: Comox Valley and all areas north
- Geographic Area 2: Nanaimo, Oceanside and the west coast
- Geographic Area 3: Ladysmith, Cowichan Valley, Gulf Islands and Saanich Peninsula
- Geographic Area 4: Greater Victoria, Sooke and Port Renfrew.

Island Health is not increasing its management structure; rather we are aligning our existing personnel. Referral patterns for physicians and other care providers for their patients and clients will not change.

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2. New Island Health Strategic Plan – Island Health 2020

Island Health will be releasing a new strategic plan, *Island Health 2020: Our Roadmap for the Future* this summer. In 2013, Island Health leaders travelled across the health region, speaking to staff, physicians, members of the public in remote, rural and urban communities, Aboriginal people and community leaders. The aim was to gather feedback about health and health care for the future, and

has been instrumental in helping Island Health develop a road map to improve health and care for the island and mainland communities that we serve.

Island Health 2020 describes a path towards a transformed health and care system designed to increase value for patients by providing patient-centered, high quality services that are accessible and sustainable. The plan will be distributed and [posted](#) by the end of July.

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3. Patient Transportation – Information about Transportation Fees

Every day, Island Health staff work with patients and their families to arrange transportation to and from care facilities, including discussing transportation options as patients prepare to be discharged from an Island Health facility.

Island Health staff work closely with patients and families to make sure everyone understands in advance who is responsible for what.

Patients are responsible for the cost of transportation to and from medical care; however there are some travel assistance programs available. The cost of transportation varies depending on the level of medical care required during transport (for example, this can vary from family/friends and taxi if no care is needed through to Medi-Van or Ambulance if higher levels of care are needed).

Patients do not pay when they are transferred between hospitals and staff will always use the lowest cost transportation option that meets the patient's medical needs.

More information for patients and family members about transportation options and fees is available [here](#).

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4. Health Promotion – Keeping Residents and Communities Healthy



a) Summer Edition of Island Health Magazine - The summer edition of [Island Health Magazine](#) is now online, featuring warm weather topics and informative articles. This issue includes feature articles on compulsive hoarding, food security and the benefits of sex after sixty. We also feature a tips for a safe and healthy summer along with warm-weather recipes perfect for lazy summer days.

b) Quit Smoking - Island Health would like our entire service region to be smoke free! We all know quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for better health. Did you know that quitting smoking 6-8 weeks prior to facing surgery helps patients:

- heal faster
- have fewer complications
- get out of bed sooner
- improve breathing
- reduce the risk of infections



Over the past few months, Island Health, in collaboration with the B.C. Cancer Agency, has been promoting the ‘stop smoking before surgery’ message to patients and surgeons. Posters can be [downloaded here](#).



c) Sun Smart Campaign - Island Health, the Canadian Cancer Society and Save Your Skin Foundation are joining forces this summer to help prevent skin cancer. The *Sun Smart* campaign will educate residents about sun safety and the importance of skin protection while enjoying outdoor activities.

Over 400 people visited Island Health’s booth at the Multicultural Festival in Nanaimo June 14th go get information about melanoma, and learn about the myths and facts about tanning, heat illness and UV rays. Next stops will include:

- July 15: Marine Day at Witty Lagoon’s Regional Park
- July 27: Canadian Open Sand Sculpting Competition and Exhibition – Art in the Park
- August 2: Cowichan Sunfest Music Festival
- August 4: Comox Valley Filberg Festival
- August 9 & 10: Campbell River Salmon Festival

More information about this campaign is [available here](#).

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5. Promoting Healthy Choices for Maternity and Parenthood

Care providers throughout Island Health are dedicated to healthy mothers and babies. One such dedicated professional is Dr. William (Bill) Ehman, a family physician and member of the Perinatal Unit of Nanaimo Regional General Hospital. He encourages prospective parents to support the health of their babies and their own well-being by [making healthy choices](#) early. Many of those choices are best made months before conception.

Dr. Ehman promotes excellence in maternity care at the local, provincial and national levels. He is a consultant with Perinatal Services BC, assistant-professor in the faculty of medicine at the University of British Columbia and BC member of the Maternity and Newborn Care Program of The College of Family Physicians of Canada. When he talks about his practice, Dr. Ehman is clear that he provides health care for women who are pregnant, rather than “pregnant women.” He makes the distinction to emphasize that there is much more than a nine-month time frame to consider. “It’s about the health of women throughout their lives.”



Details about Island Health’s maternal supports and services including the Right from the Start program are available online at: www.viha.ca/children/pregnancy/. Prospective parents can also contact their local Public Health Units for valuable information. Contact details for the units are available at: www.viha.ca/locations/health_units.htm.

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6. North Island Hospitals Project – Construction Begins



It’s an incredible time for patients, residents, physicians and health care staff living and working in mid and north Vancouver Island. July 7 marked the start of construction of the North Island Hospitals Project (NIHP) that when complete, will deliver patient-centred care in world-class facilities.

Now that construction is underway, the new Comox Valley and Campbell River hospital building sites are bustling with activity that will continue through to the opening of both new hospitals, slated for late 2017.

Over the coming months there will be construction-related impacts on parking and traffic. Island Health, the NIHP project team and Tandem Health Partners are committed to keeping construction impacts to a minimum and to keeping residents and staff informed. Up-to-date information on construction and related impacts can be found on the NIHP website, <http://nihp.viha.ca/>. The website also features a virtual fly-through of each new hospital.

Both new hospitals will be designed to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification. Green hospital building design helps to create a healing environment for patients, staff and visitors. Unique to the NIHP is the first ever green bond – continuing Island Health’s and the province’s commitment to environmental stewardship.



After identifying a selected proponent in April, Island Health reached financial agreement (or close) on June 25th with Tandem Health Partners to design, build, partially finance and maintain the new \$331.7 million, 153-bed Comox Valley hospital and the new \$274.5 million, 95-bed Campbell River hospital.

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7. New Primary Care Centre in Port Hardy Well Underway



The hole is dug and the cement poured for the new Primary Care Centre in Port Hardy, to be located next to the Port Hardy Hospital. The concrete foundations and walls are in, sewer and water connections installed and wood framing is underway.

The new Primary Centre will be open by the end of the year. With a project cost of approximately \$2.6 million, it will benefit clients with easier access to integrated primary and community care services. The building will have 16 patient/clinic rooms and space for physicians,

nurse practitioners, visiting medical specialists and community practitioners (e.g. dietitian and diabetes educator). The facility will also assist with recruitment and retention of physicians and other health professionals.

The Centre resulted from recommendations of the Mount Waddington Health Services Local Working Group (LWG), in partnership with Island Health. The LWG consists of representatives from local and regional governments, local communities, physicians, First Nations, Island Health and other stakeholders. More information about the LWG’s work is [available here](#).

New hospitals bringing enhanced health care to mid and north island residents are getting closer and closer. This summer will be busy as construction has begun on sites for the state-of-the-art hospitals in Campbell River and the Comox Valley.

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8. Nurses get First-Hand Look at First Nation Health Challenges

Port Alberni’s West Coast General Hospital Registered Nurses Tracy Locke and Isabel Contant have a clearer understanding of the basic challenges faced by First Nations patients after accompanying Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC) colleagues to First Nations communities on the West Coast of Vancouver Island.

Both nurses are involved in discharge planning at West Coast General Hospital and both found it extremely valuable to see where some First Nations patients are headed when they leave hospital. Contant travelled to Opitsaht on Meares Island. Locke travelled to Ahousaht First Nation in Clayoquot Sound. The “job-shadowing” initiative originated through ongoing engagement between West Coast General Hospital and Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. While hospital staff consult regularly with a Tribal Council community liaison nurse, it is still hard to envision conditions in the remote communities.



The WCGH nurses gained a better understanding of the health care challenges and were also impressed by the dedication of their First Nations colleagues who are working to make the best use of available resources.

More information about this initiative is [available here](#).

Island Health has produced a [video](#) – available on line – that helps patients from rural and remote communities prepare for going to hospital and returning home again.

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9. Island Health Wins Three Excellence in BC Health Care Awards

Island Health and St. Joseph’s General Hospital received a total of four awards at this year’s Excellence in BC Health Care Awards ceremony.

Island Health’s occupational health and safety teams were recognized for the fifth year in a row for improving workplace safety.

The *WorkSafeBC Duration Reduction project team* was a Gold Apple Winner for their work to help employees return to work to work sooner after an injury (an average of 29 day days sooner).



The *Online Ergonomics Assessment project team* received a Workplace Health Innovation award for their Online Ergonomic Assessment tool which decreased timeframes for ergonomic assessments from 6-12 months to one day.

Marguerite Rowe, Executive Director for Continuing Health Services, received the Health care Hero award for Island Health. Marguerite was recognized for her commitment to client-centred care and her work to improve services to frail and



complex patients.



Jill Blacklock, an oncology nurse working in the Cancer Care Clinic at St. Joseph's General Hospital, received a Health Care Hero award for her dedication to her profession, her compassion for her patients, and her support for her colleagues, as well as her kindness and compassion.

A big congratulations to all the winners from across BC.

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10. Community Partnership gets Budding Chefs Growing in the Classroom

Get 'em while they're young" – that's the theory behind *Growing Chefs!*, an organization that gets kids involved in growing their own food, then learning to cook delicious, healthy meals with what they have grown. The goal of the program is education and awareness to "create a healthier future with healthier kids making healthier food choices."



Local chefs Andrew Paumier, Ceri Barlow and Chris Hammer worked with students in Ms. Pat Carrico's Grade Three class from Vic West Elementary School. Over the course of several months, the chefs visited the classroom every two weeks, helping students plant and tend to indoor vegetable gardens. Chefs engaged the students in games, lessons, and activities focusing on plant growth, local and urban agriculture, sustainability, and nutrition. The students then harvested their vegetables, and the chefs showed them to how to cook what they've grown.

Growing Chefs! is a Vancouver-based charitable organization that provides urban agriculture lessons to schools throughout BC. This is the first time for *Growing Chefs!* has been piloted in the Greater Victoria region. It has been running in the Comox Valley since 2012 and there are plans to make this available in more island classrooms next year.

The Victoria *Growing Chefs!* pilot represents a partnership between the [Islands' Chef Collaborative](#) (ICC), Island Health and Vic West Elementary school. In addition to the volunteer chefs, Tracy Cullen, community nutritionist for Island Health, provided volunteer coordination and was on hand for most of the lessons. "It was so fun to see the kids test out some of the more unusual vegetables," said Cullen. "By the end of one lesson, the kids were eating parsnips, kohlrabi and arugula and loving it!"

Next year, the partners hope to offer *Growing Chefs!* to three schools in Greater Victoria as well as other regions throughout Island Health. To find out more about *Growing Chefs!* on the island, contact tracy.cullen@viha.ca.

Growing Chefs! aims to increase nutritional awareness, reduce childhood obesity and improve physical health among children by providing them with the hands-on experience of growing, cooking and eating healthy food. The program also addresses food security issues in our community by providing children who may not have access to healthy food at home with firsthand opportunities to grow, harvest and cook nutritious foods.

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11. Embracing innovation

Advances in technology are changing the landscape of health care dramatically, offering the potential to improve patient care and safety. Island Health is a leader in B.C. in harnessing innovation that helps our health care providers give even better care.

Further to our May 2014 MLA update, Island Health is in the process of implementing a region-wide bar-coded unit dose medication system. An RFP was issued in May to identify the infrastructure needs for the system. The 'closed loop' medication system will use a bar-code scanning system, linked to the patient's electronic health record, that ensures the right drug, in the right dose, is given to the right patient at the right time. In this system, medications are distributed to health care providers, such as Registered Nurses, through automated dispensing cabinets in packaging that is ready to be administered to patients. Unit dose medication packaging will reduce the chance of medication errors and increase accuracy and efficiency of medication delivery. For more information, see the [News Release](#) and the [Medication Safety website](#).

A new microbiology lab automation system will be installed at Royal Jubilee this fall that enhances patient safety and care, and helps patients get home sooner. The \$4.3-million project, cost-shared by Island Health and the Capital Regional Hospital District, will identify the cause of infections quickly to make sure patients receive the best treatment. The automated lab system will take digital photos as cultures grow, allowing staff to identify bacteria sooner so the patient can be put on the right medication quickly or taken off a drug they don't need. The equipment will also reduce errors and staff workload by standardizing and automating the process used to grow the cultures. For more information, see the [News Release](#).

These new systems will be integrated with our new IHealth electronic medical records, giving health care providers the tools they need to give our patients the best care possible.

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Excellent health and care for everyone, everywhere, every time.

For more information, or if you wish to be removed from our distribution list, please contact Suzanne Germain via: suzanne.germain@viha.ca or 250-370-8294.