

# Island Health MLA Update



## September 2015

Welcome to the September 2015 edition of Island Health's MLA Update.

Nothing symbolizes fall more than the bounty of our Vancouver Island fields and gardens that flourished under the sun this past summer. This is particularly evident at Serenity Farm at the Seven Oaks Tertiary Mental Health facility in Saanich where Island Health clients living with mental health and/or addictions challenges are able to participate in gardening, gain confidence and learn new skills.



In addition, the produce helps these clients and other vulnerable residents get free, high quality, organic fruit and vegetables. In its fourth year of operation, the garden at Seven Oaks is a partnership between Island Health, the Integrated Court, John Howard Society and a multitude of other community organizations, funders and volunteers. You can read more about this unique partnership at: [www.feedingourselvesandothers.com/about.html](http://www.feedingourselvesandothers.com/about.html).

Island Health continues to receive awards for our work in achieving greater energy efficiency. When the Fortis BC "Efficiency in Action" awards were handed out recently, Island Health walked away with two prestigious recognitions – the 'Efficiency in Action' award and the 'Achievement in Gigajoules Saved in 2014' award.

This edition of MLA Update provides details about Island Health's plans to partner with an affiliate to deliver day surgeries in a community setting. It also features updates on our plans to double the number of hospice beds; our work to expand services for those living with mental health and substance use; information about the pending influenza season; clarification around patient responsibilities for transfers to and from hospital; and details about community partnerships that are bringing primary care services to educational settings.

Island Health is committed to transparency around our performance on a number of measures including wait times, patient safety and fiscal. These measures are updated twice a year and can be found at [www.viha.ca/about\\_viha/accountability](http://www.viha.ca/about_viha/accountability).

The next edition of Island Health's MLA Update will be issued mid-November and [back issues are posted on line](#). If there is information you would like to see in future updates, for example about a topic your constituents are asking you about, please contact [suzanne.germain@viha.ca](mailto: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 <a href="mailto:valerie.wilson@viha.ca">valerie.wilson@viha.ca</a>
South Vancouver Island:	Suzanne Germain	250-370-8294 <a href="mailto:suzanne.germain@viha.ca">suzanne.germain@viha.ca</a>

### Useful Links

**News:** [www.viha.ca/about\\_viha/news](http://www.viha.ca/about_viha/news). Information about new initiatives, partnerships and programs.

**Facts & Stats:** [www.viha.ca/about\\_viha](http://www.viha.ca/about_viha). Information about Island Health, our populations and our staff.

**Local Area Profiles:** [www.viha.ca/mho/stats/lha\\_profiles](http://www.viha.ca/mho/stats/lha_profiles). Community population and health statistics to support local health and wellness planning.

**Performance Indicators/Accountability:** [www.viha.ca/about\\_viha/accountability](http://www.viha.ca/about_viha/accountability)

**Wait Times:** [www.health.gov.bc.ca/swt](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/swt). Surgical wait times by physician and facility.

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## 1. Community Partnerships Will Help Increase Surgical Volumes

A recent public tendering process (request for proposal) by Island Health to find an affiliate partner to deliver certain day surgery procedures has, again, re-ignited public discussion around the role of private sector partners in health care.



Partnerships with private sector organizations to deliver publicly-funded health care are not new. In Island Health, there are decades-old partnerships with private sector providers in residential care, laboratory services, imaging and allied health. In all these cases, these private operators provide publicly-funded services either for free or subsidized in the same way they would be if Island Health delivered the service directly.

Since 2004, Island Health has successfully contracted with private surgical providers to improve wait times. Over this time, we have performed thousands of publicly-funded day surgeries in affiliate facilities, freeing up operating rooms (OR) in our hospitals for more complex surgeries such as hips and knees. By working off existing public waitlists, with Island Health making the bookings and with Island Health-privileged surgeons performing the procedures, the ORs in the private setting will function as an extension of our hospital ORs.

Surgeries performed in the affiliate facility under the Island Health contract will be publicly funded. Patients are not charged for their procedure and they will be done by the same physicians who would have done them at an Island Health hospital. Also, the surgeries are performed under the same terms and conditions as they would have been, had they been done at an Island Health facility, and are in accordance with the Canada Health Act, the Ministry of Health Services' Patient Service Delivery Policy Framework and the standards and guidelines (e.g. quality, safety) set out by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia's Non-Hospital Medical Surgical Facilities Program.

Island Health is in the process of negotiating a contract with the affiliate surgical services provider. We hope the new facility will be open on the South Island by the middle of next year. Once open, it will provide thousands of general surgery, orthopedics, plastics, vascular and dental surgeries for patients.

The public announcement can be read at:

[www.viha.ca/about\\_viha/news/news\\_releases/serviceprovider\\_daysurgery\\_24aug2015.htm](http://www.viha.ca/about_viha/news/news_releases/serviceprovider_daysurgery_24aug2015.htm).

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## 2. Unit Dose Distribution to Reduce Medication Errors

As part of Island Health's ongoing work to put in place a complete electronic health record that crosses sites, programs and services, we are also establishing a closed-loop medication system. This system will be enabled through unit-dosed and bar-coded medications that will assist in the overall reduction of adverse drug events and medication errors which are, unfortunately, a reality in health

care systems around the world.

Unit-dose, bar-coded medication packaging is an integral part of Island Health's overall medication safety strategy and will improve the quality, safety and consistency of patient care.

The unit-dosed medication distribution (UDMD) project will include the establishment of unit-dosed and bar-coded medication production facilities, equipment and distribution capacity – i.e. new medication packaging and dispensing processes. Medication storage locations within each acute and residential care facility supplied by an Island Health pharmacy will be renovated with new storage solutions.



UDMD is a multi-year initiative just getting underway. Work has begun at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital/Dufferin Place, with the entire UDMD project scheduled to be completed throughout Island Health by October 2018.

In the near future, administration of a physician-ordered medication will require the scanning of both the patient and the bar-coded medication before the electronic medication administration record will give the green light for the medicine to be given to the patient. This ensures the right medication, in the right dose, is being given to the right patient at the right time.

In rural hospitals and remote health centres, automated dispensing cabinets will be deployed. These will ensure the secure control and access to medications as well as support inventory management.

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### **3. Island Health Supports Recruitment of Family Physicians to our Region**

There are family physician shortages in communities across Canada, so Island Health is being proactive to support and encourage family physicians to make Vancouver Island the place they choose to live and practice.

Island Health's Physician Recruitment & Retention Team oversees a comprehensive recruitment program. We use websites, medical journals, exhibit at family practice conferences, social media, and we meet with medical students and family practice residents from UBC and from universities across Canada.

Our team works with the provincial recruitment agency Health Match BC to reach physicians internationally. Vancouver Island Divisions of Family Practice, in partnership with local communities, host visiting Family Physicians and their families to showcase both the practice and lifestyle opportunities available. They also support the newly-recruited physician and family to settle and integrate into the local and medical community.

Through UBC, graduating doctors are doing family practice residencies in Victoria and Nanaimo, and many are choosing to stay and set up practices on the Island. This year, a new residency is being added in Strathcona. Two BC programs are helping internationally-educated physicians to complete

training and attain licenses to practice in BC, and our recruitment team helps match these physicians to our communities of need. These programs are starting to have a positive impact in some of our most remote and rural locations across Island Health.

As many of our family physicians near retirement, we can expect more opportunities to arise. Luckily, Vancouver Island remains a very desirable location destination for physicians and their families. Island Health will continue to work with our partners to help attract and retain an increasing number of family physicians to our region.

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#### 4. Influenza Season is Fast Approaching

Influenza causes more deaths annually than all other vaccine-preventable diseases combined. You protect yourself and others by getting vaccinated. Last year vaccination rates for health care workers were the highest on record – helping to protect them, their families and the vulnerable patients they care for.



The flu vaccine is safe and, except in infrequent years when there is a mismatch, effective at preventing influenza. When used in conjunction with other infection control practices, such as hand washing and remaining home when sick, the flu shot continues to offer the best protection against influenza.

In BC, flu shots are free for high-risk groups such as children, seniors, pregnant women, Aboriginal people, individuals with underlying medical conditions and chronic health conditions, and those who work with or come in close contact with higher-risk groups.

Island Health and other BC Health authorities are once again taking measures to prevent the spread of influenza in health care facilities. Health care workers are required to be vaccinated or wear a mask when in patient care areas. The policy takes effect December 1st. As with last year, we are also expecting visitors to be vaccinated or wear a mask visiting a health care facility during flu season. To support this policy, the flu vaccine is free to those who are planning to visit a health care facility.

[More information about influenza](#) is available at [www.viha.ca/flu](http://www.viha.ca/flu). Flu clinics will begin in late October. You can find information about [where to get flu shots](#) or at [www.islandfluclinics.ca/](http://www.islandfluclinics.ca/).

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## 5. Vancouver Island Welcomes UBC Pediatrics Residency Program



Victoria General Hospital and other Vancouver Island health care facilities are new training locations for the University of BC Faculty of Medicine's pediatrics residency program. The new training sites will improve access to pediatric services delivered by physicians, help physicians build lasting relationships on Vancouver Island, and hopefully encourage these specialists to continue to practice on Vancouver Island. Read more:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015HLTH0069-001321>.

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## 6. Patients' Role in Getting To and From Hospital

In British Columbia, patients are responsible for the cost to and from medical care. A provincial framework for patient ground transfers is in place to make sure patients get to and from hospital by the most appropriate type of transport based on their care needs and to ensure equity, consistency and fairness in terms of patient charges for transportation. Island Health staff work with patients and family to support them to arrange the most appropriate form of transportation and to make sure they are aware of the various costs, including when the transportation is publicly-subsidized.



Most transfers should be by private transport, which the patient or their family is responsible for organizing. There may be occasions where BC Ambulance or an alternate service provider (e.g. Medi-Van) are required. Transfers by BC Ambulance are limited to patients requiring active medical care during transport, and transfers by an alternate service provider are for patients who cannot transfer via private vehicle, wheelchair taxi, handy dart, etc.

For more information, see: [www.viha.ca/visit/fees/patient\\_transportation\\_fees.htm](http://www.viha.ca/visit/fees/patient_transportation_fees.htm).

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## 6. Responding to overdoses from fentanyl and other drugs in Island Health

Fentanyl-related overdoses occurring in the lower mainland and elsewhere across B.C. and Canada have been making headlines. On Vancouver Island, fentanyl has been found as an adulterant cut into drugs like cocaine, crystal meth, heroin and oxycodone. In the Vancouver Island region, fatal overdoses have been occurring primarily among people who habitually use drugs. Island Health public health staff continues to work closely with community partners, contracted service agencies, the RCMP, BC Coroners Service and others to address this issue. This includes the distribution of "Alert" posters and flyers at places where people who use drugs regularly access services, as well as education and awareness for Island Health staff.

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In celebration of National Breastfeeding Week, you are invited to participate in the Annual Quintessence Global Breastfeeding Challenge



Saturday,  
October 3, 2015  
10:30 a.m. Story Time  
11:00 a.m. Latch On!  
All families  
welcome!  
Visit:  
[www.viha.ca/children/  
baby\\_and\\_you/](http://www.viha.ca/children/baby_and_you/)

*Breastfeeding and work...  
Let's make it work!*

## 7. Keep Calm and Latch On

Island Health will once again host an Island-wide Breastfeeding Challenge in locations across the Island. This includes story time and a 'latch-on' count at 11 am on Saturday October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Last year there were over 160 moms and babies who participated. For more information on dates and times: [www.viha.ca/children/baby\\_and\\_you/](http://www.viha.ca/children/baby_and_you/).

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## 8. Triage changes in Mt. Waddington

Changes to the referral process for patients with non-urgent medical conditions will ensure that patients who come to the emergency rooms at Port Hardy and Port McNeill hospitals get timely care in the most appropriate setting.

Effective immediately, patients who come into the Port Hardy and Port McNeill emergency departments will be assessed by a nurse and if their condition is non-urgent they will be referred to their local community clinic. In Port Hardy, that is the Primary Health Care Centre; in Port McNeill, it's the Port McNeill Medical Collaborative Clinic.

Referring patients with non-urgent conditions to the community clinics allows hospital staff and physicians to provide emergency care to those in immediate need, while clinic staff and physicians can efficiently care for patients with less urgent medical problems. A future planning process will look at the possibility of expanding clinic hours to further enhance patient care.

In the case of emergency room diversions or rapid access appointments, patients will need to see the first available physician at their community clinic. The Port Hardy and Port McNeill clinics have a full complement of doctors, but not all physicians are available at all times. For regular appointments, patients may continue to book in with the physician of their choice.

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## 9. Hospice Care Continues to Expand on Vancouver Island

Island Health's plans to double the number of hospice spaces from 32 to 64 by 2020 are well underway. In July, the four hospice beds at The Views residential care facility in **Comox** opened to the public. The hospice service in the Comox Valley provides end-of-life care and supports to patients and their families in a warm, inviting and compassionate environment. Read more about the new hospice in the Comox Valley at: [www.sighcomox.ca/](http://www.sighcomox.ca/).

In **Oceanside**, renovations are in full swing to open a new five-bed hospice space in Trillium

Lodge. The hospice space in Oceanside will open in the coming weeks. Read more about the Oceanside hospice service at: [www.viha.ca/about\\_viha/news/news\\_releases/nr-hospice-trillium-17aug2015.htm](http://www.viha.ca/about_viha/news/news_releases/nr-hospice-trillium-17aug2015.htm). Meanwhile, in the **Cowichan Valley** community-involved planning and engagement is getting underway to plan for a seven-bed hospice service, targeted for opening in the 2017/18 fiscal year.

These hospice spaces are a partnership between Island Health, local hospice societies and other community organizations. Island Health's end-of-life plan is available at: [www.viha.ca/NR/rdonlyres/C5CDC971-A3B6-4899-AF88-ECBB1A4601A5/0/ENDOFLIFEPROGRAM\\_01Aug14\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.viha.ca/NR/rdonlyres/C5CDC971-A3B6-4899-AF88-ECBB1A4601A5/0/ENDOFLIFEPROGRAM_01Aug14_WEB.pdf).

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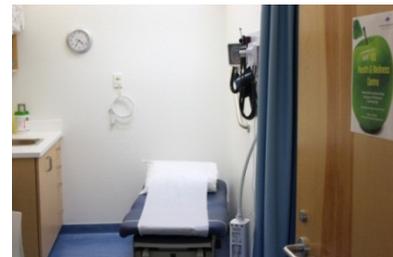
## 10. Health and Wellness Centres in Educational Institutions

Island Health is pleased to be part of several new partnerships to provide health and wellness services for students at Vancouver Island educational institutions.

In the south island, active planning work is underway with School District 62 to provide youth-focused services in the newly-opened Belmont Secondary School.

In Nanaimo, wellness centres for students are now open at John Barsby Community School and at Vancouver Island University. The John Barsby Wellness Centre is a safe space designed for students, offering access to nurses, doctors, (GPs and specialists), vaccinations, nutrition services, sexual health education and mental health and substance use services.

The VIU Health & Wellness Centre officially opened on Sept. 4, but has been open to students since May. The Centre offers a wide range of medical services to registered students in its mid-campus location, as well as access to counselling, advising, disability services and financial aid. See more about the VIU Health and Wellness Centre at [www.viu.ca/news/viu-celebrates-opening-new-student-health-clinic-nanaimo-campus](http://www.viu.ca/news/viu-celebrates-opening-new-student-health-clinic-nanaimo-campus).



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## 11. Amethyst House Supportive Recovery for Women Opens in Comox



Women who need treatment for substance use have expanded access to publicly-funded, non-acute withdrawal management and supportive recovery beds thanks to the tripling of spaces at Amethyst House, funded by Island Health. Operated by the Comox Valley Transition Society, Amethyst House offers 12 beds and associated support services for women living with substance use challenges. Read more:

[www.viha.ca/about\\_viha/news/news\\_releases/nr-ni-amethyst-house-opens-jul20-2015.htm](http://www.viha.ca/about_viha/news/news_releases/nr-ni-amethyst-house-opens-jul20-2015.htm), and for more information about the Comox Valley Transition Society, see <http://cvts.ca/>.

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## **12. More Mental Health and Substance Use Supports Coming to Port Alberni**

Residents in Port Alberni living with mental health and substance use challenges will soon have access to short-term residential recovery support and stabilization in the community. Through a Request for Proposals process, Island Health is seeking a partner to provide a home-like, supportive, structured care environment for up to five people at a time. The beds will be staffed 24 hours per day, 365 days a year and will improve access to substance use services for those in the early phases of recovery. Read more: [www.viha.ca/about\\_viha/news/news\\_releases/nr-pa-rfp-24jul2015.htm](http://www.viha.ca/about_viha/news/news_releases/nr-pa-rfp-24jul2015.htm).

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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](mailto:suzanne.germain@viha.ca) or 250-370-8294.