

Island Health MLA Update



November 2015

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



Just ten days after Island Health staff and physicians from Port Hardy to Sooke 'dropped, held and covered' as part of the BC-wide Shake Out exercise to test our readiness to respond to a major disaster (in the Shake Out scenario it was an earthquake), a real-life emergency occurred that necessitated an immediate response by our staff and physicians in Tofino. In the aftermath of the tragic capsizing of the whale watching boat

Leviathan II, personnel at Tofino General Hospital became part of the extraordinary community response to save lives.

We are now more than half-way through the 2015/16 fiscal and reporting year. Island Health continues to prioritize our strategic efforts on: population health and wellbeing; primary care and community-based services; mental health and substance use programs; supports for those living with chronic health conditions; rural and remote care networks; services for frail seniors and timely access to surgical services. More information is available in Island Health's 2015/16 Health Services Plan, [posted on our website](#).

This edition of MLA Update provides information about flu clinics as we head into influenza season. There are also updates on: a new initiative to offer routine HIV testing in Emergency Departments; helpful information about how to request your medical record; updates about parking and food services in the new hospitals coming to Campbell River and the Comox Valley; and a celebration of Island Health's extraordinary effort to garner the most pledges for Change Day BC – part of an international effort to promote personal commitments around making individual changes that support systemic improvement to health care and patients' experiences.

The next edition of Island Health's MLA Update will be issued mid-January and [back issues are posted online](#). If there is information you would like to see in future updates, please contact suzanne.germain@viha.ca.

All the best to you and your teams during the upcoming holiday season.

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. 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. Staff and Physicians Respond to Tofino Whale Watching Boat Capsizing

Staff and physicians from Tofino General Hospital (TGH) were part of the incredible community response that followed the tragic capsizing of a whale watching boat off Tofino on October 25. Tragically, of the 24 passengers and three crew members on board, five tourists died and one remains missing and is presumed dead. In the hours that followed the incident, 18 survivors were seen at TGH.



Because of its rural and remote location, TGH has a well-established disaster response plan, which is practiced often. When the Code Orange (mass casualty) call was made, the hospital's three nursing staff and one emergency physician who were on shift were quickly joined by six additional physicians and six additional nurses. The response was truly a community effort involving members from the Ahousat and Opitsat First Nations, marine rescue, paramedics, community-based social services, RCMP, victim services and others. [Read more](#) (pdf) about TGH's and the community's response.

Image: Dr. Brandan Carr thanks TGH staff at a lunch at Tofino General Hospital

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2. 'Tis the Season – Flu Season That Is!

Influenza vaccination clinics to prevent against the flu are well underway for members of the public and for Island Health staff, physicians and contractors. All British Columbians over 65, children under five and many other categories of adults are eligible for the free influenza vaccine. Every year, influenza kills thousands of people across Canada or causes lost productivity as people get ill.



Extensive information about the flu vaccine is available at www.viha.ca/flu/eligibility.htm, including a section addressing 'Myths and Facts.' A list of public flu clinics is available at: www.islandfluclinics.ca.

Image: Island Health CEO Dr. Brendan Carr doing his part to be a flu fighter, getting his flu shot at the first Island Health flu immunization clinic in October.

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3. How to Access Your Medical Record

Patient's reasons for wanting to get their medical records are as varied as the people making the requests. Under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, patients, residents and clients who have received or are receiving Island Health services can request access to their medical records through a written request made to the facility where they believe their records are held. Before clients can obtain their records, they are reviewed by a Freedom of Information Officer as some information may be confidential (for example, if a family member provides information about their medical history in order for care providers to understand the patient's situation better, this information would be protected from being disclosed). More information about the process to get

medical records is available at:

www.viha.ca/info_privacy/Access_to_Information_and_Records.htm.

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4. Preventing Falls in the Elderly

This month, Island Health is proudly participating in the BC Falls and Injury Prevention Coalition's province-wide public awareness campaign to help prevent seniors from falling. Falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths and hospitalizations for seniors in British Columbia – and yet many incidents are preventable. One in three adults over the age of 65 fall each year, and seniors stay in the hospital twice as long after suffering from a fall. Island Health focuses on identifying patients in our facilities who are at risk as well as on prevention education in the community so that seniors don't fall in the first place. [Read more](#).



Image: Island Health Occupational Therapist Brooken Sayers shows 89-year-old Doreen Wilson how to safely use a walker. Wilson fell in her home several months ago, breaking her leg. She has since returned home and is slowly regaining her independence.

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5. 'Living and Breathing' Mannequins Support Education at RJH



The Royal Jubilee Hospital is now home to a state-of-the-art clinical simulation lab where health care students can gain clinical and interprofessional skills by treating life-like mannequins that breathe, talk, cough and moan in pain. The Centre for Interprofessional Clinical Simulation ('simlab') – a partnership between Island Health, UVic and UBC's Faculty of Medicine – gives future doctors, nurses and midwives real-life medical scenarios they are likely to encounter when treating patients. The lab opened in September. [Read more](#).

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6. Creating a Safe Environment for First Nations

Island Health's [Cultural Safety program](#) serves to help create an environment in which our Aboriginal clients and families feel welcomed and culturally safe when seeking health care. Significant disparities exist between access to health care services for Aboriginal members of our community and between socioeconomic health determinants (that is, factors such as income level and quality of housing) and health outcomes for these groups. Through truly listening and learning together in a way that maintains the dignity of each individual, an authentic relationship of trust, respect and collaboration will ensure improved access to health care services, improved health outcomes and healthier working relationships.

The Cultural Safety program offers on-going workshops, available to all employees free of charge. These one-day workshops are usually held at a regional First Nations facility and offers insight through group participation, engagement with elders and various topics of discussion. Island Health's goal is to increase knowledge, enhance self-awareness and strengthen skills of those who work directly and indirectly with Aboriginal people. A key action identified in the Aboriginal Health Plan is to maximize the number of employees taking cultural safety training each year.



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7. New Referral Processes in Port Hardy and Port McNeill EDs

Changes in referral process for patients with non-urgent medical conditions will ensure patients who come to the emergency rooms at Port Hardy and Port McNeill hospitals get timely care in the most appropriate setting. Earlier this fall, based on triage of patients coming to Emergency, those with non-urgent conditions are being referred to local community clinics. This 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. [Read more.](#)

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8. North Island Hospitals: Employment, Parking and Food Services Updates

Hospital construction in the Comox Valley and in Campbell River is a major employer on central/north Vancouver Island. Over the summer, the number of people working on the hospitals' construction exceeded 500, with local labour making up two-thirds of those employed. Over 100 apprentices are working and learning on the job in the areas of plumbing/mechanical, electrical, carpentry, walls and ceilings. Read more: <http://nihp.viha.ca/2015/10/north-island-hospitals-project-employment-and-skills-training-reaching-new-heights>.



Food services in hospitals are always a topic of great interest to patients, family and staff. And with good reason as high-quality food plays a key role in patient recovery. Island Health has confirmed that unionized food services staff at the new Comox Valley and Campbell River Hospitals will be Island Health employees. No job loss is anticipated as staff shift to new locations and new roles. The new hospitals are being built with stand-alone, full production kitchens with food pantries located near clinical units to service patients better.

No one likes to pay for parking, and Island Health understands this completely. Despite this, we have confirmed that, like other health care jurisdictions in BC and Canada, there will be pay parking at the new Campbell River and Comox Valley Hospitals. Revenue from parking helps offset the costs associated with building and maintaining parking lots and parkades. As is the case at other Island

Health facilities where pay parking is in effect, there will be free parking and discounts available to certain types of patients. Volunteers and family caregivers will continue to receive free parking.

[Read more.](#)

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9. Routine HIV Tests Available in some Island Health Emergency Departments

**KNOWING
is better**

Knowing is better! As part of an effort to make more people aware of their HIV status and to normalize and de-stigmatize HIV testing, Island Health is introducing routine HIV tests in hospital emergency departments. So far, the voluntary, confidential tests are available at West Coast General Hospital in Port Alberni and in Campbell

River Hospital. The test will be introduced in Nanaimo later this year and the rest of Island Health's Emergency Departments next year. [Read more](#) and read about the STOP HIV program at:

www.viha.ca/mho/disease/hiv-aids/stophiv.

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10. Island Health Led Change Day BC Pledges

October 15, 2015 was Change Day in BC, an initiative led by the BC Patient Safety and Quality Council. Island Health joined our health care partners across the province to celebrate pledges made by our employees to make a change, whether personal or to better health care delivery in our regions. We're happy to report we exceeded our goal of 1000 pledges, coming in at over 1200 and that count put us in first place of all BC health authorities as of the tally on October 15.



Pledges were inspiring and thought-provoking. The entire initiative led teams across Island Health to engage in their own ways, sharing their stories, developing creative displays and even taking part in a [Change Day song](#). Pledges can be viewed at www.changedaybc.ca.

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11. United Way Campaign – Island Health is a Key Partner



Each year generous Island Health employees support the United Ways of Greater Victoria, Central and Northern Vancouver Island and Cowichan Region with their time, energy and donations. United Way offers opportunities and resources to improve the social conditions and the well-being of individuals, families and neighbourhoods throughout Vancouver Island. This year's national theme, "Together, we are Possibility" aligns with United Way's goal of bringing people together to change lives and build strong communities. This theme also ties to the

CARE values we share here at Island Health.

Island Health employees are already stepping up and raising funds through fun events, like “Soup Day” and a Bocce tournament. The campaign got underway in October and to date, Island Health has raised \$247,367.00.

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12. New Attendance Promotion Program at Island Health

The health and wellbeing of all employees is important to Island Health, and key to providing quality care to our patients. Island Health is committed to supporting employees to be healthy and attend work on a regular basis.

Island Health implemented a new Attendance Promotion (AP) Program on October 30th, 2015, to bring awareness to employees of their personal sick time and patterns, and provide them with information, support options, and individual case management if needed. The program will notify employees if there is a pattern of absences over the past year, and provide a variety of resources and support contacts.

This information is intended to give employees the information they need to identify and address any ongoing health issues and get support if needed from the Enhanced Disability Management Program (EDMP).

All employees are valuable members of the Island Health team, and their health and wellbeing are important. The Attendance Promotion and Enhanced Disability Management programs are here to help employees attend work more regularly, and support those who need help in safely returning to work.

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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.