



Updated: February 2013

MT. WADDINGTON HEALTH SERVICES COMMUNITY UPDATE

The Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) is pleased to update residents on progress to date to enhance health care services in Mount Waddington.

A Local Working Group, comprised of community, First Nations, physician and VIHA representatives was established in the fall of 2011 to develop a community-led plan to strengthen and stabilize health services in Mount Waddington. The LWG submitted its report and recommendations to VIHA in May 2012, and VIHA responded to the recommendations in July 2012.

To read the report and VIHA's response letter visit:

http://www.viha.ca/about_viha/community/mt_waddington.htm

To read the news release visit:

http://www.viha.ca/about_viha/news/news_releases/nr_mtwaddington_funding.htm

PROGRESS TO DATE HIGHLIGHTS:

- VIHA has provided the Local Working Group with \$100,000 in funding to develop an implementation plan for the priority recommendations outlined in its report, including facility planning for two integrated Primary Health Care sites, as recommended by the LWG. Service model planning sessions were held in October.
- A series of community engagement sessions in February and March 2013 with First Nations and municipal representatives as well as the public seek further input on improvements to health care delivery in northern Vancouver Island.
- VIHA has provided \$30,000 to help recruit three new doctors to Port Hardy. The LWG and VIHA Physician Recruitment are working collaboratively with a recruitment agency toward this goal. Further talks are planned with several physicians who have been identified as fitting the profile of a potential North Island practitioner — someone who has experience in rural health or aboriginal health, or who prefers working in smaller communities or in areas with outdoor recreation potential
- Physician recruitment successes include a new physician to Port Hardy. Dr. Linny Lin began practicing at the Port Hardy Medical Clinic in August 2012.
- A second physician, Dr. David Whittaker, has been recruited to Port McNeill and began practicing August 2012 at the Port McNeill Medical Clinic.
- Dr. Charuka Maheshwaran is also a new member of the health care team at Port McNeill Medical Clinic.

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- In addition, VIHA is continuing to work alongside physicians, the LWG and community members to develop a long-term recruitment and retention strategy for medical professionals for Mt. Waddington.
- Two new primary health care nurse practitioners have been recruited to Port Hardy. Chaundra Willms moved from her role in Mental Health and began practicing in early August 2012. Kelvin Bei also began practice in the fall. Both nurse practitioners are located at the Port Hardy Medical Clinic. Mental Health nurse practitioner Katie Scoular began practicing in clinics and outreach settings in September. Nurse practitioner Tanya Petryk returned from maternity leave in November to work with First Nations communities. There are now four nurse practitioners practicing in the community.

OTHER SUCCESSES:

- January 2012: Recruitment of Aboriginal Liaison Nurse Margaret Wilson to provide services at Port Hardy and Port McNeill hospital sites.
- November 2012: Addition of a full-time Social Worker Peter Carter to work at the three Mount Waddington acute care sites.
- October 2012: Admitting clerk coverage at Port Hardy and Port McNeill Hospitals was increased to include evenings, weekends and statutory holidays. This gives nursing staff more time to look after patients.
- A 12-hour LPN shift was added at Port Hardy Hospital to offset Emergency Department workload demands.

ONGOING EFFORTS:

- There is increased focus on physician recruitment to make the Mount Waddington region a priority for international medical graduates and other recruitment initiatives such as working with medical schools to develop Family Practice Resident programs.
- VIHA Medical Affairs continues to work with the physicians in Port McNeill and Port Hardy on the option of compensation under service contracts.
- A multi-pronged strategy is being developed to support recruitment and retention of registered nurses as well as other health care providers such as lab/x-ray technicians and physiotherapists to Mt. Waddington communities. This includes production of a video to demonstrate the rewards of working and living in the North Island.
- Strategies are being developed to ensure potential and newly recruited-physicians to Mt. Waddington communities feel welcome and that their work/life balance is respected.

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- Telehealth services in Mount Waddington have improved access for North Islanders to care and specialists. TeleCardiology consultations are now enabled with electronic stethoscopes available at some sites. TelePsychiatry has also been introduced to the region. There is continued support for TeleThoracics, TeleRenal and TeleOncology services.
- Strategies are being developed to support individuals living in Mount Waddington communities to be responsible for their own health and wellbeing and to make healthy choices.
- VIHA's annual funding of \$60,000 to the Mt. Waddington Health Network continues through a contract with the Mt. Waddington Regional Hospital District.