

Island Health MLA Update



March 2014

Introduction

Welcome to the Spring Break edition of Island Health’s “MLA Update.” Signs of spring are everywhere around our islands. Our physicians and staff are glad to see this time of year and the better weather it brings, because it encourages everyone to get out more in the fresh air, get some more movement and exercise and reconnect with our neighbours and communities – all activities that are important to improving the socio-economic determinants of health and the general wellness of the population. Island Health is also ‘stepping out’ more – working with local community groups, organizations and agencies to form new relationships and new partnerships to support a shared agenda to improve population health and health awareness. Look for us in your community, and please let us know if you have a wellness event you would like us to be part of as we work together to promote better health.

In this edition of “MLA Update” you will find articles about Island Health’s new patient care model, information about how clients are matched to residential care beds, improvements to end-of-life care in the Comox Valley and how Island Health is supporting good environmental stewardship.

The next edition of Island Health’s “MLA Update” will be issued mid-May. 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. **NOTE:** *New and updated this month.*

Performance Indicators/Accountability: www.viha.ca/about_viha/accountability/ **NOTE:** *New and updated with measures related to the patient care model.*

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

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1. Residential Care: How Clients are Matched to Specific Beds

Island Health has over 5,000 clients living in publicly-funded residential care, assisted living and group home settings. These are a mix of Island Health-owned and operated facilities, and for-profit and not-for-profit affiliate service providers that deliver services on a contracted basis.

Each residential facility is unique, and clients are carefully matched to the facility that can best meet their needs. Clients who may require residential care are assessed by a Case Manager using a standardized tool called [RAI \(Resident Assessment Instrument\)](#). This tool is used throughout BC, across Canada as well as internationally. A client is objectively scored based on evidence-based outcomes and on a risk scenario for the specific client. The risk scenario is based on the perspective that ‘home is best,’ and weighs the risk the client would face if they remained at home and what supports would be required for this to be possible.

Each client’s application for Residential Care, which includes the RAI, is considered by an Island Health leadership team made up by professionals in the field. In British Columbia, clients and their families are required under provincial policy to accept the First Appropriate Bed when seeking publicly-funded residential care. This ensures fairness and appropriateness in bed assignments and the best use of public resources. Under the First Appropriate Bed policy, clients are assigned to first available facility within their chosen geographic area that can meet their care needs. Sometimes the first available facility is not the first choice of the client or their family. In these cases, after a two month settling-in period, the client and/or their family can ask for a transfer by talking to the facility and/or calling the phone number listed on their admission

letter. Naturally, some residential care facilities are more popular than others, and wait lists for these locations will be longer.

Finally, clients and their families should be aware that if they say 'no' to the First Appropriate Bed that is offered, they will no longer be considered as needing residential care. If in the future the client or family decided they did want residential care, they will need to be reassessed. If someone believes their loved one might need additional care or support, they can contact Island Health's Intake Offices:

-South Island: 250.388.2273 Toll-free: 1.888.533.2273

-Central Island: 250.739.5749 Toll-free: 1.877.734.4101

-North Island: 250.331.8570 Toll-free: 1.866.928.4988

For more information about residential services, see www.viha.ca/hcc/residential/.

2. Promoting Wellness through Island Health Magazine

We would like to introduce you to Island Health Magazine, an in-house health and wellness publication for, and about, the residents served by Island Health. Island Health Magazine focuses on promoting an active, healthy lifestyle. It also provides information on the resources and services available from Island Health. Island Health Magazine is one of the ways we are reaching out to improve the health of our residents. The magazine includes articles on healthy living, tips on becoming more active and ideas for eating nutritiously as well as information on disease prevention. It is published four times a year: January, March, June and September and is available at any Island Health facility and online with additional video content at [Island Health Magazine](#)

4. Improvements to End of Life Care on Central and North Vancouver Island

Implementation planning for new hospice beds in the Comox Valley, involving a team of Island Health, St. Joseph's Regional General Hospital, local physicians and Comox Valley Hospice Society representatives is now underway. The establishment of four new hospice beds in the Comox Valley later this year, and three hospice beds in Campbell River by 2017 was [announced by Island Health](#) last November.

How people choose their end-of-life care is a deeply personal decision. Enhanced hospice care will improve access to high level, specialized end-of-life supports for patients and their families during a difficult time in their lives. The new beds are part of a range of community and facility-based end-of-life services throughout Island Health. Island Health is working in partnership with St Joseph's, which operates The Views residential care facility where the new beds will be located, and the Comox Valley Hospice Society which plays a key role in supporting the needs of dying patients and their families in the Valley.

5. Patient Care Model – A new team approach for Island Health

Island Health will be implementing our new Patient Care Model at Royal Jubilee (RJH) and Victoria General (VGH) hospitals in April.

The new team care model is focused on providing better care for our patients, and ensures Island Health has the right mix of health care providers on each unit, as determined by patient needs. Island Health's staffing models (i.e., the mix of health care professions who deliver care on acute care units) has not changed significantly in several decades, while the type of patient in hospital has changed considerably: Patients today are increasingly frail and elderly with complex medical and functional care needs. These patients, who need help with activities of daily living such as bathing, toileting and feeding, are not consistently having these care needs met, and this results in a functional decline during their hospital stay. When in the community (e.g. at home or in residential care), the same patient would often have these functional care needs provided by a Health Care Aide. Island Health is adjusting the care team make-up to support team members to deliver the kind of care each patient needs. Each health care provider will work to their professional designation, skills, education and training. This means that Registered Nurses will carry out tasks such as patient assessments and care planning, and Health Care Aides will assist with tasks such as mobility, bathing, feeding and toileting – tasks that do not need to be done by more highly trained RNs.

Island Health learned some valuable lessons during implementation of the new team model at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (NRGH), and we have adjusted the roll-out in South Island based on the feedback we received from our staff and leaders in Nanaimo.

This means that new Health Care Assistants have been hired and provided specialized acute care orientation over the past several weeks, and new care teams at RJH and VGH are already working together on how the model will best meet patient needs on their units.

Island Health is monitoring implementation of the patient care model in several ways, including monitoring 16 key metrics using an Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Triple Aim approach (health outcomes, patient experience and sustainability) and CDMR-specific measures related to clinical documentation. These measures are publicly posted on the [Island Health website](#). More information about the patient care model is available at www.viha.ca/about_viha/news/new-patient-care-model.htm.

6. Outsourcing in Affiliate Care Facilities

Recently, there has been focus on outsourcing, or contracting out, of staff at affiliate residential care facilities within Island Health. Affiliate facilities are privately owned and operated care settings (both not-for-profit or for-profit), which deliver facility-based services, such as residential care, through service contracts with Island Health. Contracting out is always difficult for those involved and impacted – whether it be the staff affected, the clients and family who are used to a care provider, the operator who has to make a difficult decision, or the community at large that has to deal with change and uncertainty.

In late December 2013, Park Place Seniors Living, which operates New Horizons Care Centre in Campbell River, advised Island Health of their intention to outsource staff. Then in late February, Island Health was advised by the owner/operator of Sunridge Place in Duncan that this facility was being sold; Island Health is aware this sale may affect staff at Sunridge. While difficult, the changes that are occurring at these two sites are not unique; affiliate residential care facilities may make changes like this to their operations. With respect to New Horizons, Park Place is following the process as outlined in the Labour Code and in collective agreements between the employer and the union, which includes provisions for contracting out.

As with any affiliate residential care site, the role of Island Health is to ensure that quality of care for residents is maintained. We will continue to monitor these facilities to ensure any transitions of staff or operator is done smoothly and has no negative effect on patient care. In situations like this, the role of Island Health is to ensure that quality of care for residents is maintained. Service levels and funding for publicly-funded residential care services are set in contracts that are negotiated between Island Health and the private providers. Providers are required in these contracts to provide a certain level of service and maintain a safe and secure environment for residents.

3. Surgical Wait Times

Island Health is aware that some patients are contacting MLAs because they are concerned about their surgery wait time. Unfortunately, Island Health's operating room capacity in the South Island has been affected for a number of months by a shortage of anesthesiologists. Anesthesiologist vacancies – generally in the range of 3 FTEs – have existed in Victoria since 2013 due to multiple medical and maternity leaves and several physicians reducing their hours of practice.

While operating room (OR) capacity is down at VGH and RJH between five and ten percent, emergency surgeries are not affected and urgent surgeries continue to be prioritized. We are very pleased to have recruited four new anesthesiologists late last year, all of whom will start this summer. We very much look forward to resuming normal activity levels in our South Island surgical program once they are all in place by August 2014.

Using locum coverage, we have been able to re-open some OR time in the South Island and as we are able to secure additional locum coverage, we will continue to reopen additional OR time. We have also worked on some creative solutions to reduce the impact on patient care, for example opening an OR for surgeries that can be appropriately performed with local anesthetic, such as carpal tunnel, varicose veins and hernias.

Between mid-January and mid-March, Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (NRGH) has also faced a staffing shortage that resulted in some reduction in OR capacity. Island Health is actively recruiting for OR nurses at NRGH and we are making every effort to fill vacancies due to maternity and paternity leaves, illness and nursing opportunities at other facilities. We have recruited several OR nurses, and several more OR nursing students have expressed a desire for full-time work once their training is complete. We do not anticipate any further postponements of surgical slates at NRGH.

Our surgical services team continues to work closely with the medical leads in each of the surgical areas to make sure that OR time is allocated most effectively according to need. It is the patient's physician who determines the urgency of their surgery based on an assessment of their condition. If one of your constituents has a concern about their wait-time because their medical condition has changed, please have them contact their physician so they can be reassessed and the urgency of their surgery reviewed. General information about access to surgery in Island Health is available at: www.viha.ca/surgery/surgical_waitlist/

7. Mount Waddington Update

The building permit application for the new [Port Hardy Primary Care Centre](#) adjacent to Port Hardy Hospital was made on February 27. The building will include 16 patient/clinic rooms and provide space for physicians, nurse practitioners, allied and support staff and visiting specialists to offer a range of services. Norkan Construction of Port McNeill has been selected through a Request for Proposal process to act as construction manager for the project.

Two new nurse practitioner positions have been approved for Port McNeill through the [NP4BC initiative](#). The new NPs are expected to start May 1, 2014. They will join the four NPs who are already serving the Mount Waddington region.

The [Mount Waddington Health Network](#) hosted a successful public forum in Port McNeill on February 26. About 80 people attended the event as close to 20 agencies and organizations provided useful information on topics including diabetes, gambling, employment opportunities, blood pressure, the crisis line and services for seniors and youth.

8. Saving Energy and Energy Costs at Island Health

The healthcare sector is one of the largest producers of greenhouse gases in BC. Island Health is very committed to reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and has been recognized as a BC Hydro Top 10 Power Smart Partner, as well as a top energy conserver.

At **NRGH**, retrofits and upgrades to the ventilation and heating systems will save 3,500 gigajoules of natural gas and 180 tonnes of greenhouse gases each year. NRGH's new Emergency Department (ED) is a green building that has reduced enough energy to power 107 homes for a year! The new ED, which opened in October 2013, has green features including light wells that allow daylight to filter in; courtyards that flood hallways and nursing stations with natural light; treatment rooms with opaque glass for inner walls providing both natural light and privacy; and low flow water fixtures that reduce water use by 25%. BC Hydro, as a generous funder of many environmental upgrades, has recognized Island Health's commitment to energy conservation with a plaque that will be mounted in the NRGH ED.

The Patient Care Centre that opened at **RJH** in 2011 also meets high environmental standards: Cisterns collect a total of 270 cubic metres of water for use in landscape irrigation; water retention stops direct runoff into a nearby creek; a green roof houses plants and filters rainwater; and landscape irrigation pumps are 'off-grid,' generating electricity from low-velocity

wind turbines in the building's ventilation system.

At VGH, environmentally-focused upgrades include heat recovery chillers and boiler efficiency improvements which will save 4,500 gigajoules of natural gas and 220 tonnes of greenhouse gases.

Island Health estimates that since 2010, the cumulative energy costs avoided as a result of retrofits amount to \$3.8 million. Find out more at: [www.viha.ca/about viha/environment.htm](http://www.viha.ca/about_viha/environment.htm).

Excellent care for everyone, everywhere, every time.

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