



**The 2021/22 VCH Impact Report
features the critical role of health-care
workers during this extraordinary time.**

Highlighting our programs and initiatives, emphasizing the strength of our values and showing our commitment to delivering exceptional care.

We recognize that our places of work and VCH facilities lie on the traditional homelands of 14 First Nations communities: Heiltsuk, Kitasoo-Xai'xais, Lil'wat, Musqueam, N'Quatqua, Nuxalk, Samahquam, shíshálh, Skatin, Squamish, Tla'amin, Tsleil-Waututh, Wuikinuxv and Xa'xtsa. We are grateful to be partners in delivering health-care services on these lands and supporting culturally safe care to Indigenous Peoples.

WHO WE ARE

People at VCH deliver community, hospital and long-term care services to more than one million people in communities including Richmond, Vancouver, North Shore, Sea-to-Sky corridor, Sunshine Coast, Powell River, Bella Bella and Bella Coola. We also provide specialized care and services for people throughout B.C. and serve as the province's hub of health-care education and research.



Dr. Penny Ballem

Vancouver Coastal Health's Board Chair

Message from Vancouver Coastal Health Board Chair

It has been a challenging year and our teams at Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) have continued to deliver safe, quality health care to more than 1.25 million people across the province. With the extensive administration of COVID-19 vaccines, decisive action to address the ongoing opioid crisis and a massive effort to continue to meet diverse health-care needs of VCH residents, several things highlighted in this year's Impact Report offer a sense of hope during these challenging times.

I continue to be in awe of the strength, compassion, skill and dedication of our more than 26,000 staff and medical staff and the countless volunteers who provide unparalleled service in the face of staggering challenges. From the bottom of my heart, I extend my sincerest thanks to every one of them.

In spite of the very significant efforts needed in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the opioid crisis, we have continued to fulfill our commitment to deliver a full continuum of quality, health-care services to the public.

This is only possible through the strength of our many partnerships.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to express thanks and great appreciation to the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and our colleagues in the other Health Authorities in B.C. with whom we work every day. I also offer the sincere thanks to our partners at Providence Health Care and the remarkable community organizations that share our mutual goals and help us care for patients, clients and residents who need our services. The determination and genuine sense of care we experience from all our partners has been extraordinary.

As we continue to manage the impacts of COVID-19, I have a renewed sense of optimism for the year ahead. At VCH, we will continue to do our best to keep our communities safe and healthy. We are grateful for the role all of you play in doing the same. It is an honour for all of us on the Board to serve the people within Vancouver Coastal Health.

Message from Vivian Eliopoulos
President & CEO, Vancouver Coastal Health



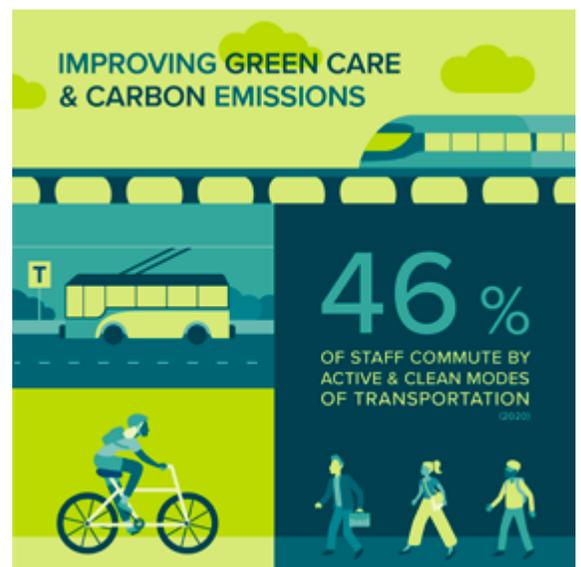
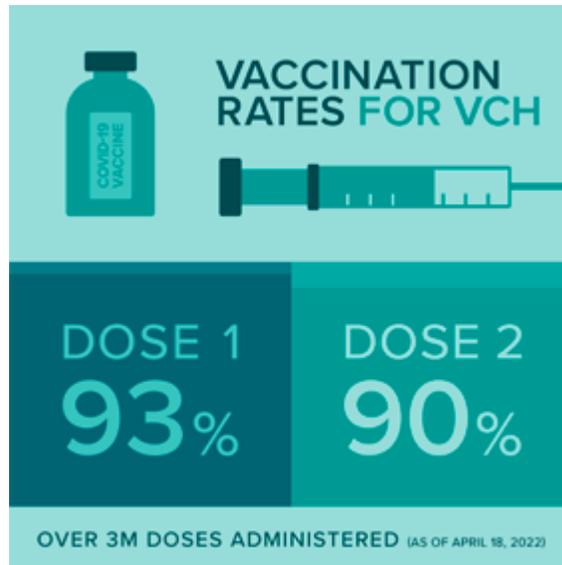
This 2021/22 Impact Report is dedicated to all VCH staff, medical staff, and community partners, who tirelessly worked together over the past year to deliver exceptional care to the communities we serve.

THANK YOU TO HEALTH-CARE WORKERS

The hard work and dedication of health-care workers continue to be appreciated by our patients, their families, the community and VCH's leaders. Sherri Green, a VCH patient who was treated for cancer, shares her gratitude.



REPORT AT A GLANCE





CARING FOR EVERYONE



RESPONDING TO TWO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

While COVID-19 remains top of mind to many, our health-care system continues to face two public health emergencies – the toxic drug supply crisis and the pandemic – and our dedicated people continue to respond diligently to both crises.

Early in the pandemic, public health adopted a targeted strategy to help ensure people living in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside had access to low-barrier services for the prevention and care for COVID-19, including outreach testing, enhanced contact tracing and isolation shelters, with support from health-care providers.

Starting in February 2020, VCH launched a vaccination campaign to immunize residents, health-care providers, and service providers. This approach limited the spread of the virus across the community, with a focus on areas where residents had challenges self-isolating.

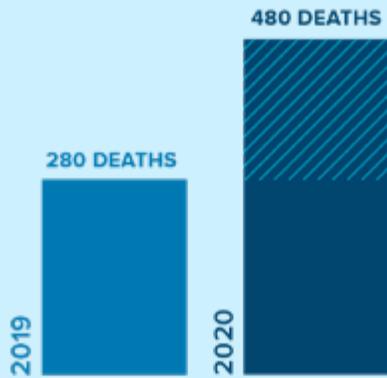
To address the worsening toxic drug crisis during a pandemic, VCH’s public health team worked to re-establish critical services that were interrupted due to the pandemic response, such as overdose prevention sites and in-person addiction treatment.



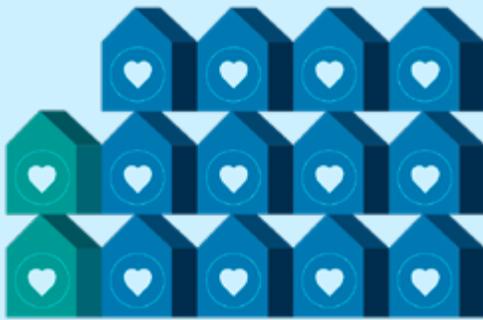
In August 2021, thousands of people throughout B.C. dropped in for Walk-in Wednesday and do their part to get vaccinated for COVID-19.



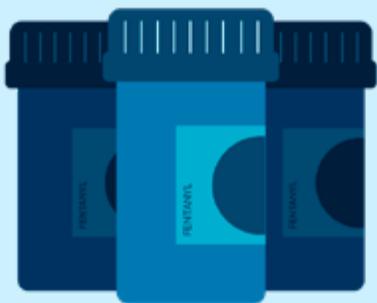
Dr. Bonnie Henry visited VCH vaccination clinic staff at the Vancouver Convention Centre.



In 2020, the VCH region alone recorded 480 deaths due to toxic drug overdose, compared to 280 deaths in 2019.



VCH expanded its harm reduction services in Vancouver and Squamish, which included opening two new overdose prevention sites. VCH operates 14 of these sites across the region to keep people safe from toxic drugs and to connect them to health services.



VCH received funding from Health Canada to launch SAFER, Metro Vancouver's first safe supply model to prescribe medical grade fentanyl to those most at risk of overdose. The evidence from this model will be used in the future to prescribe regulated alternatives to keep people away from the toxic drug supply.



STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS WITH DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Providing easy access to vaccination has been a priority for our people during the COVID-19 vaccination campaign, especially to those most vulnerable to serious illness from COVID-19.

Working with community partners, VCH established vaccine clinics to provide low-barrier vaccination opportunities for Cantonese- and Mandarin-speaking seniors who live alone in high-density single room occupancy (SRO) housing and congregate living settings in Vancouver’s Chinatown and Strathcona neighbourhoods. VCH worked with community partners to provide resources in other languages about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines to address questions and concerns.

As the immunization campaign continued, VCH identified the need to provide more supports to people with low or no English proficiency. We added more clinics in specific neighbourhoods and communicated in multiple languages, so residents with low-English proficiency were met with culturally familiar clinic experiences.



Dr. Matthew Kwok, Emergency Department Physician, Richmond Hospital was one of the many immunizers at VCH’s COVID-19 vaccination clinics.



In 2021, VCH hosted six clinics dedicated to the Cantonese and Mandarin-speaking community living in the Chinatown and Strathcona neighbourhoods, providing 1,714 vaccinations (first, second and booster doses).

This work was made possible through close collaboration with community organizations that help support the Vancouver and Richmond Chinese communities including:

- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
- Vancouver Chinatown Legacy Stewardship Group
- Vancouver Second Mile Society
- Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
- Hua Foundation
- DTES SRO Collaborative
- Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice
- Carnegie Community Centre



CARING FOR OUR NEIGHBOURS DURING THE B.C. WILDFIRES

A heat dome hit British Columbia in late summer 2021 and wildfires forced hundreds of people most in need of support and protection to evacuate from their long-term care homes in the Interior and the North.

With little more than 24-hour's notice in some cases, residents were quickly evacuated from communities like Merritt, Vernon, Armstrong, Salmon Arm and Kelowna to seven sites across VCH and Providence Health.

The response from VCH's teams were swift, efficient and carried out with needs of each resident top of mind. Residents were matched to the best location in the Lower Mainland that would meet their specific needs, including nutrition, medication and equipment.



Residents travelled between five and 15 hours by plane or bus, through heat, smoke and delays caused by road accidents. At the receiving end, health-care workers completed quick medical assessments of the residents as soon as they arrived and moved some to hospital.

The receiving teams worked hard to meet the residents' needs and requests, like a favorite meal or ordering a cable station with their TV show. The staff made a point of getting to know what was most important and possible in the moment.

Staff prioritized creating a welcoming and caring environment for 159 of those residents who left comfort, certainty and familiarity back in their home communities; some who did so without having had a chance to say goodbye to families who were also evacuating.

"We didn't know how long they'd be with us, so we needed to get to know them right away. That's our caring culture at VCH. It's getting to know the individuals among the vulnerable population, not just because they're in long-term care, but because they left with nothing for a new, strange place with unfamiliar people."

Jo-Ann Tait | Executive Director for Long-term Care



EARLY SUCCESS IN PROVIDING CARE TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY, THROUGH ACT TEAMS

Vancouver Coastal Health has been at the forefront of delivering community-based and community-focused care to individuals who require a higher level and frequency of service, due to their vulnerable status, through the services provided by seven Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams.

ACT is an evidence-based service delivery model that combines treatment, rehabilitation and support services using team-based care as a community alternative to psychiatric hospitalization. These teams provide intensive, specific and continuous services to meet the needs of individuals living with serious and persistent mental health and/or substance use challenges, who have not benefited from traditional outpatient programs.



ACT teams provide intensive, specific and continuous services to meet the needs of individuals living with serious and persistent mental health and/or substance use challenges.

“The ACT teams support clients who may have otherwise fallen through regular pathways and present with different levels of comfort and need when it comes to traditional health settings. Our ability to work from a place of flexibility, community-partnering and responsiveness helps match our services to where the client is at and support them in their transitions in community, inpatient and tertiary settings.”

Kiran Dhaliwal | Vancouver ACT manager



VCH delivers community-based and community-focused care to individuals requiring a higher level and frequency of service, due to their vulnerable status, through the services provided by seven ACT teams.

ACT uses an interdisciplinary team approach to deliver wrap around services. Staff represent a variety of disciplines including nursing, social work, occupational therapy, vocational rehab or recreational therapy, peer support and psychiatry. These roles are identified in the B.C. Provincial Standards for ACT, as is the importance in working with community agencies to provide holistic care. Team members work together with family/ caregivers and the client as active partners to conduct a comprehensive assessment, develop a care plan for the client, and are jointly responsible for implementing and monitoring the plan.

6 ACT Teams IN VANCOUVER



New ACT Team IN RICHMOND

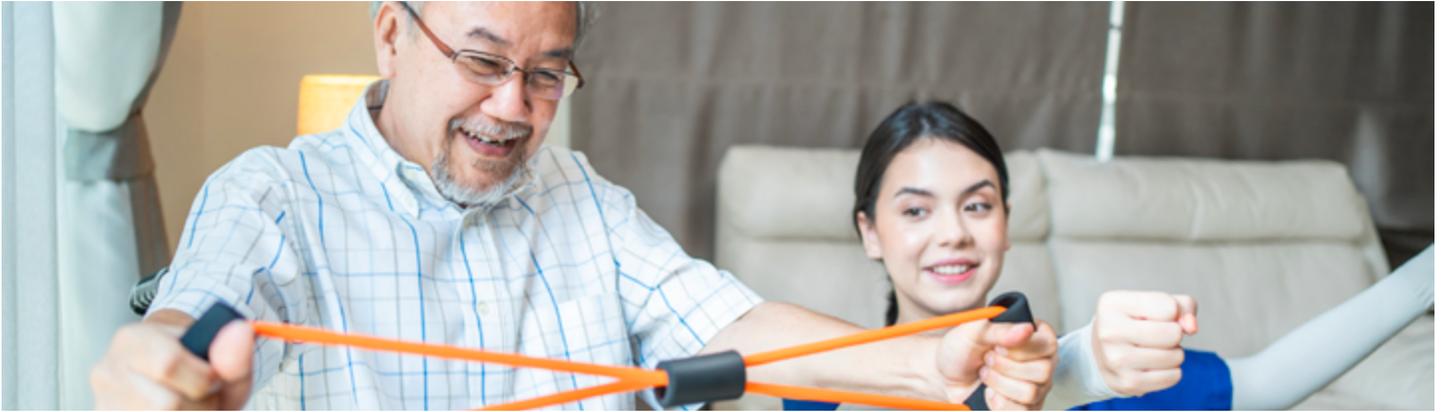


In 2020, VCH received additional funding through the Ministry of Health to operationalize a sixth ACT team in Vancouver and a new ACT Team Richmond. Both of the new teams have the capacity to provide services to clients with mental health challenges who are not engaging in traditional outpatient services despite high acuity/needs, are experiencing absolute or relative homelessness and/or are at high risk of overdose.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the opioid epidemic and a housing crisis, the expansion of VCH ACT services has been instrumental in providing care to some of the most vulnerable people living in our community, being responsive not only to all the needs of clients, but to the evolving needs of their communities as well.



ALWAYS LEARNING



VIRTUAL PROGRAM EXPANDS STROKE REHABILITATION ACROSS THE PROVINCE

About 4,900 British Columbians experienced a stroke last year. After being treated and cared for in hospital, many find themselves faced with what can be the most challenging phase of recovery – going home. Suddenly, basic tasks like brushing their teeth, buttoning a shirt or eating can seem overwhelming. Dr. Janice Eng, Director of the Rehabilitation Research Program at GF Strong and Canada Research Chair in the UBC Department of Physical Therapy, has developed a program that can help.

After a stroke, individuals often experience challenges related to a combination of arm strength and fine motor skills. Dr. Eng has seen these challenges over her 20-plus years of research and caring for patients who have experienced strokes. It's what led her to **develop the graded repetitive arm supplementary program (GRASP)**, a recovery program that's now in use at more than 5,000 sites worldwide.

“There’s an urgency for rehabilitation programs to start as soon as possible, so we typically start in the hospital, when we get people doing about 1,000 movements per day. One of the powerful things about GRASP is that it’s a practical, low-cost program that puts recovery into the hands of patients.”

Dr. Janice Eng



Originally a program designed for community care settings, Dr. Eng and her team adapted the four-week GRASP for a remote, virtual delivery when the pandemic hit. Being able to participate in the program virtually has helped thousands of British Columbians living in remote parts of the province gain access to world-class rehabilitation treatment. According to Dr. Eng, this virtual program allows patients to continue to recover at home while meeting other folks who are in similar situations to them, which can also be quite motivating.

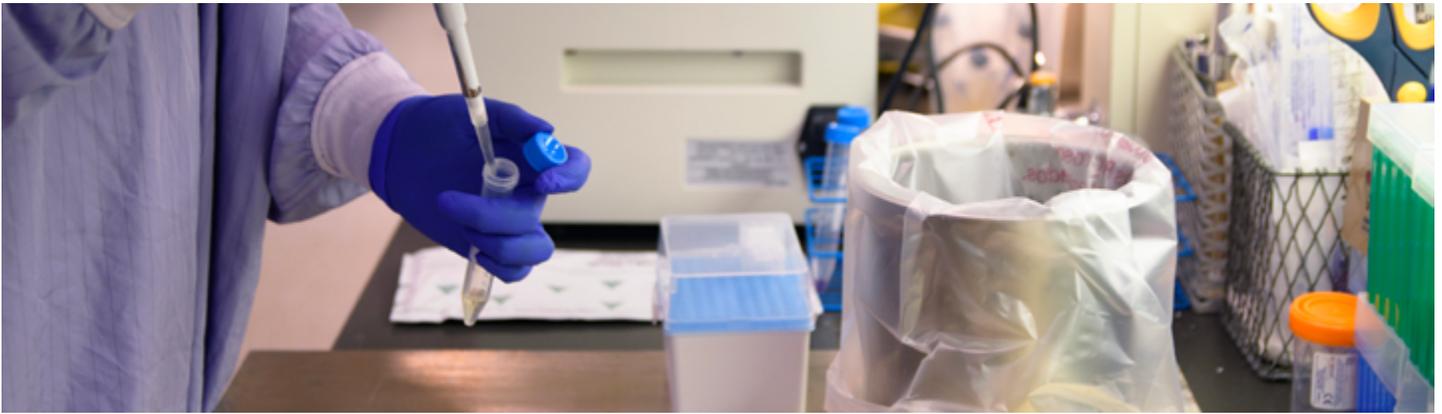


“GRASP is a wonderful adjunct to the typical therapy provided by Occupational Therapists during in-person treatment sessions. It allows clients to build on the skills acquired during therapy and practice – very functional, real-world tasks in a graded way, which has contributed to them achieving their upper extremity functional goals.”

Nancy Forset | Occupational Therapy Practice Coordinator

GRASP videos, manuals and program information is [available on the UBC Faculty of Medicine web site](#).

AMI, a not-for-profit media company, produced a documentary called **“The Road Ahead”**, about patients at VCH’s GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre, which has some of the best spinal cord injury and acute brain injury rehabilitation programs in Canada.



USING COPPER TO FIGHT BACTERIA

Using innovation to keep people safe and healthy is a priority at VCH, which is why we partnered with Teck Resources and TransLink on a first-of-its kind pilot project to test copper's effectiveness in killing bacteria on high-touch transit surfaces.

Phase One of the project confirmed copper could kill 99.9 per cent of bacteria on transit surfaces, consistent with VCH's previous findings in laboratory and hospital settings. Phase Two, which launched in September, further explores how copper – a visible, tangible infection prevention measure – can enhance public safety. This real-world trial and application advances health care innovation and aims to enhance public health and restore public confidence in the safety of our shared spaces.



VCH conducts antimicrobial testing on a copper sample at Vancouver General Hospital's medical microbiology lab.



VCH's exploration of copper as an antimicrobial agent continues. In addition to previous pilots in the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit and the Intensive Care Unit at Vancouver General Hospital, the Emergency Department at Lions Gate Hospital has been reimagined. It now features self-disinfecting copper surfaces installed on high touch surfaces such as IV poles, overbed tables, door handles and toilet seats as well as deep-well infection control sinks, motion-sensor toilets and ultraviolet sensors – all of which complement long-standing cleaning and disinfection measures, providing the safest and cleanest possible environment for patients.

Intelligent infection prevention and control engineering – including copper installations – will be added to the Lions Gate Hospital's new High Acuity Unit and throughout the new Paul Myers Tower.



FIRST ACCREDITED PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT TESTING LAB IN WESTERN CANADA

Pandemic-driven innovation at VCH led to Western Canada's first accredited personal protective equipment (PPE) lab specializing in testing and validating PPE. This lab will help protect health-care workers, patients and frontline workers from COVID-19 by establishing a B.C.-based site to ensure the PPE supplies meet Canadian and international standards.

At the onset of the pandemic, there was increased global demand for personal protective equipment and severely disrupted supply chains. B.C. faced challenges acquiring PPE, particularly N95 respirators, due to limited supplies and prolonged wait times for testing and validating new PPE at labs in North America.

To address this challenge, VCH established the PPE testing lab in just a few months, working in collaboration with the B.C. Ministry of Health, Lions Gate Hospital Foundation, VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation and the Provincial Health Services Authority.

The lab is a sustainable resource with economic benefits for the province and country, as Canadian manufacturers can now access this service to evaluate and validate PPE products and materials, fostering the local industry and bolstering the domestic PPE supply.



Innovation sparked Western Canada's first accredited lab specializing in testing and validating personal protective equipment, to help protect health-care workers, patients and frontline workers.

PPE STANDARDS TESTED IN THE LAB



Health Canada



Canadian Standards Association (CSA)



National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)



Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI)



ASTM International



Testing water resistance:
hydrostatic pressure



A STEP FORWARD TOWARD RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

As a health-care organization, VCH has an important role in advancing truth and reconciliation and addressing the existing health disparities and inequities in our systems.

VCH is committed to continuously working to ensure Indigenous knowledge and expertise is embedded throughout our health authority.

We do this through:

1. Training opportunities and resources.
2. Creating welcoming spaces and supporting staff, medical staff and patients to ensure culturally safe care is provided.



Video: VCH staff and medical staff across the region demonstrated their commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples through special cards displayed at various sites.

Signs of support for Indigenous people at Bella Coola General Hospital

The staff and medical staff at Bella Coola General Hospital and across the region participated in a reconciliation activity that included the creation of orange hearts with messages in remembrance. This is displayed in the waiting room of the hospital's emergency department.

Evolving health care for Indigenous Peoples

It's been more than a year since the release of the [In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous Specific Racism and Discrimination in BC Health Care](#) report and there have been many changes at VCH since that time.

A team of new Indigenous Health directors has been hired to lead in all priority areas of Indigenous health to transform the way care is delivered. This includes Indigenous Cultural Safety and Education; Indigenous Engagement and Inclusion; Indigenous Design and Projects; Indigenous Patient Experience and Professional Practice; Strategic Partnerships and Performance; Indigenous Research and Evaluation; Indigenous Mental Health and Wellness; and Indigenous Women and Family Health, a new area of focus.



Lori Quinn
Director, Patient Experience, Professional Practice and Quality



Brittany Bingham
Director, Indigenous Research and Evaluation



Chris Mullen
Director of Performance and Partnership



Bree Beveridge
Director, Indigenous Inclusion and Engagement



Dr. Don Wilson
Medical Director



Dr. Toma Timothy
Medical Advisor



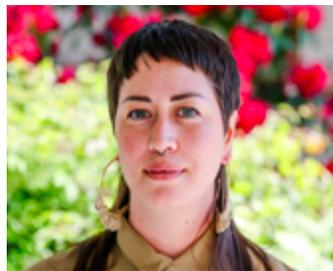
Janice Wardrop
Director, Indigenous Cultural Safety and Education



Miranda Kelly
Director, Indigenous Women and Family Health



Shannon McCarthy
Executive Director and Director, Indigenous Mental Health and Wellness



Tiffany Creyke
Director, Indigenous Design and Projects



Leslie Bonshor
Vice President, Indigenous Health



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STRIVING FOR BETTER RESULTS

2



NEW INDEPENDENCE FOR GEORGE PEARSON CENTRE RESIDENTS

The redevelopment of the 114-bed long-term care home for adults with complex medical needs is underway, and in 2022, the first group of 44 residents will move to their new homes in Cambie Gardens in condominiums on the same land. The 70 remaining residents will continue to receive full care at George Pearson Centre until they have transitioned to new homes, and the centre closes.

Construction of the new development began in 2018 to create a community-based home that would offer more independence for residents. Residents have provided feedback throughout various stages of the project, including through resident council meetings and as part of a planning committee.

The new homes at Cambie Gardens are based on an innovative model of supported housing, which was created in partnership with residents, their families and community advocates. Residents had opportunities to provide feedback on specific design features, such as automated doors and flooring and some were able to tour semi-completed homes in the development.



George Pearson Centre



Opened in 1952



A long-term care home that serves as a community for residents



More independence for residents



Work on a renaming of the site, more aligned with values of diversity and inclusion



COMMUNITY DIALYSIS EXPANSION IN POWELL RIVER WILL SERVE MORE PATIENTS, REDUCE TRAVEL

In January 2022, Powell River General Hospital unveiled their community dialysis unit expansion, providing essential care to more people in a pleasant, comfortable setting. Dialysis is a life-saving procedure for patients with kidney failure and replaces the kidneys' function of filtering waste products and excess fluid from the blood. When the previous unit experienced more demand, some dialysis patients had to travel far three times a week to receive treatment.

There are seven dialysis stations in the new unit, doubling capacity. Having more dialysis stations in Powell River increases access to essential care and helps ensure people in the community can receive treatment closer to home.

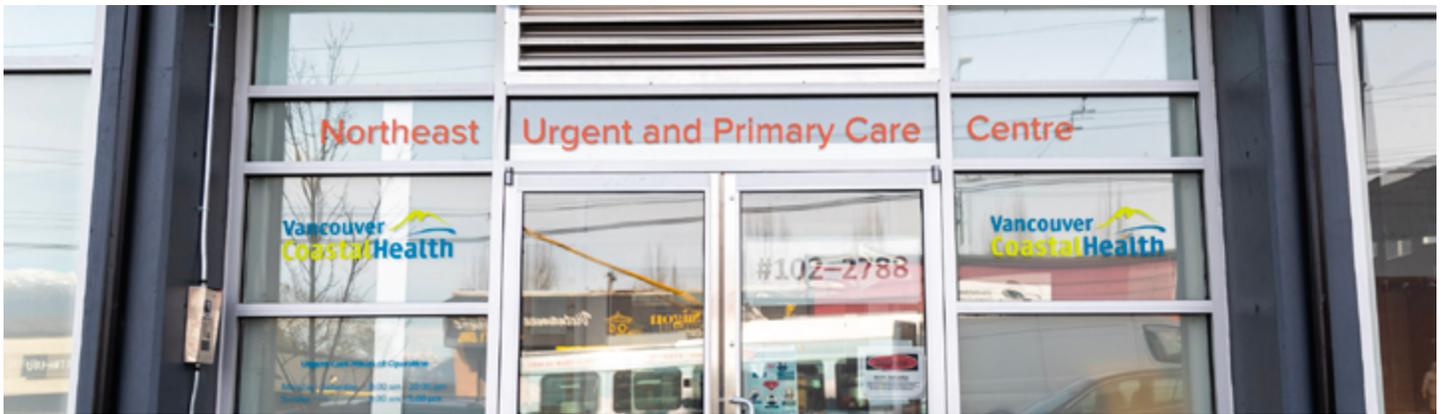
Community dialysis units are operated by Providence Health Care in partnership with VCH. There are seven community dialysis units in the Vancouver Coastal Health region in Powell River, Sechelt, Squamish, North Vancouver, Vancouver and Richmond.



The expanded community dialysis unit at Powell River General Hospital was designed to be pleasant and comfortable.



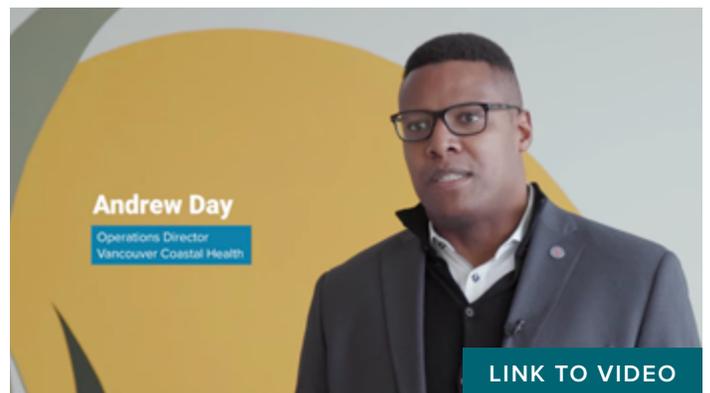
There are seven community dialysis units in the Vancouver Coastal Health region.



NEW URGENT AND PRIMARY CARE CENTRES

Several communities in VCH now have more options when seeking care for non-life-threatening illness or injury. Two new **urgent and primary care centres** (UPCC) opened, offering care to residents in nearby neighbourhoods. The UPCCs help to prevent unnecessary trips to emergency departments and allows people without a family doctor to receive high-quality, reliable care.

In February 2021, the Northeast Urgent and Primary Care Centre (UPCC) opened at East Hastings and Kaslo Streets in Vancouver, increasing access to same-day care close to residents of the Hastings-Sunrise, Renfrew-Collingwood and Cedar Cottage neighbourhoods. The team onsite includes family doctors, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, social workers and dieticians who work together to meet community care needs.



Video: take a virtual tour of the Northeast Urgent and Primary Care Centre in Vancouver.

“When the person comes through the door to ask for care, we are either able to meet their care needs that day, or facilitate referral and connection to community services”

Angela Remocker | Nurse Practitioner

The most urgent patients are seen and cared for first. Examples of injuries and illnesses treated at UPCCs include: sprains and strains; cuts, wounds or skin conditions; high fever; infections, including chest, ear and urinary tract; asthma attacks; new or worsening pain; dehydration/constipation; and less serious child illness and injury.

In April, Richmond’s first UPCC opened at an interim location at Alderbridge Way and Lansdowne Road. Like the Northeast UPCC, the Richmond UPCC does not replace family physicians for non-emergency care, but works in conjunction with other care options in the community. It also does not replace emergency care at Richmond Hospital, but helps reserve capacity at the hospital’s emergency department for patients with life-threatening illness or injury. In 2020, there were more than 15,000 visits to the hospital’s emergency department, and many were for non-urgent conditions that could have been managed in a primary care setting, like a UPCC.

“As a physician, I know how important a service like this is for our community. We’ve worked hard to keep people safe during the pandemic, but also need to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of a growing community like Richmond.”

Richard Chan | Medical Director, Richmond UPCC

There are six Urgent and Primary Care Centres in the Vancouver Coastal Health Region:

- [Richmond Urgent and Primary Care Centre](#)
- [City Centre Urgent and Primary Care Centre](#)
- [North Vancouver Urgent and Primary Care Centre](#)
- [REACH Urgent and Primary Care Centre](#)
- [Northeast Urgent and Primary Care Centre](#)
- [Southeast Urgent and Primary Care Centre](#)



Richmond Hospital expansion

Richmond Hospital will be adding a new nine-floor, acute care tower. The Yurkovich Family Pavilion will include a new emergency department; an intensive care unit; a fully equipped medical imaging department; a pharmacy; and short-stay pediatrics. This will give Richmond, with its growing and aging population, the acute care it needs moving into the future. Additional improvements include redevelopment of the South Tower to create new inpatient psychiatry and psychiatric emergency units. The Milan Ilich Pavilion will also be redeveloped and be home to the Cancer Care Clinic





MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

From extreme heat and wildfires to flooding and landslides, we are directly experiencing the impact of climate change, and VCH is ready.

Climate change is expected to impact facilities, service delivery and health outcomes. The related risks need to be identified and managed strategically over the short- and long-term. This is in addition to the work of protecting health during extreme climate events.



VCH's dedication to creating a more sustainable and adaptable health-care system is evident by the recent appointment of Dr. Andrea MacNeill as Regional Medical Director, Planetary Health. She will play a role in shaping the planetary health roadmap within VCH and will allow VCH to meet the evolving needs of communities and the environment.

Examples

- VCH's collaboration with Fraser Health and UBC to identify Lower Mainland communities that may be most impacted by extreme weather events – including heat, wildfire smoke, flooding and ground-level ozone.
- This considers factors beyond the weather event, such as population age and physical characteristics of neighbourhoods. This knowledge will be useful when working with municipalities to develop appropriate and measured response plans to protect residents during extreme climate events.

Even before the effects of climate change became more apparent across the province this past year, **VCH was taking action on reducing the environmental footprint of our health-care facilities and operations.** VCH’s Energy & Environmental Sustainability team is working to become regional leaders in energy and environmental sustainability by:

Richmond: installing electric vehicle (EV) charging stations

Richmond Hospital is home to a large installation of electric vehicle charging stations, with 30 stations now in operation. Benefits include:

- Significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- Direct reduction in air pollution in the community
- Helping to clean the air for residents with asthma, lung cancer and cardiovascular disease and other conditions.



North Shore: increasing cooling capacity at acute care and long-term care sites

When the heat dome hit B.C. in 2021, early work to prepare some of VCH’s acute care and long-term care sites for warmer weather was already under discussion. Cooling system upgrades are now underway at all VCH’s long-term care sites to increase cooling capacity and ensure residents are comfortable for future heat waves.

- In 2021, the LGH Cooling Plant Strategy was completed to begin reducing natural gas consumption, by recovering heat, and to ensure the campus has sufficient cooling capacity for future heat waves.
- In 2022, the first phase will be complete which will enable these savings in future years.

“To ensure we can meet our peak cooling demand at LGH in the future, we are sizing replacement equipment based on climate projections rather than historical weather trends”

Sam Orr | VCH Director of Facilities Infrastructure

Vancouver: monitoring indoor air quality

Evaluating the role that air quality plays both indoors and outdoors is a growing field of study for VCH and key partners such as the BC Centre for Disease Control.

Before the wildfire season arrived in 2020, this team of partners began researching the effects that poor outdoor air quality might have on indoor air quality and patient health. The research involved measuring air quality and examining the unique aspects of three pilot sites in order to help prepare for future climate emergencies.

Early results appear beneficial, identifying recommendations that staff at the pilot facilities can act on in the event of future wildfires or other events that may affect air quality. This new area of study is intended to inform and shift how VCH designs and operates buildings, helping to better understand how smoke infiltration can be reduced in healthcare facilities.



Thick smoke at Third Beach in Vancouver, combined with heat, made for poor outdoor air quality in August 2021.

Richmond: building better to meet the environmental challenges

Richmond Hospital's new nine-floor acute care tower, the Yurkovich Family Pavilion, will be earthquake-safe and constructed above the flood plain. The new tower also is planned to be 100 per cent carbon neutral.



An artist's rendering of the new nine-floor acute care tower in Richmond.

Reducing reliance on fossil fuels

VCH is committed to reducing energy consumption and reliance on carbon-producing fossil fuels, supporting projects that provide environmental health benefits to our staff and our community. Moving away from vehicles that burn fossil fuels significantly reduces air pollution and the associated negative population health impacts. EV charging station installations supports staff and community members in the transition to more sustainable transportation options, such as electric vehicles.



An electric vehicle charging station at Richmond Hospital.



39 per cent of staff plan to own an electric vehicle (GreenCare survey 2021)



The provincial government passed legislation in May 2019 that requires every new car sold in B.C. to be a zero-emission vehicle by 2040



The EV installation was made possible by funding from the Carbon Neutral Capital Program and the B.C. Ministry of Health in alignment with the provincial CleanBC climate strategy



CULTURALLY SAFE CARE



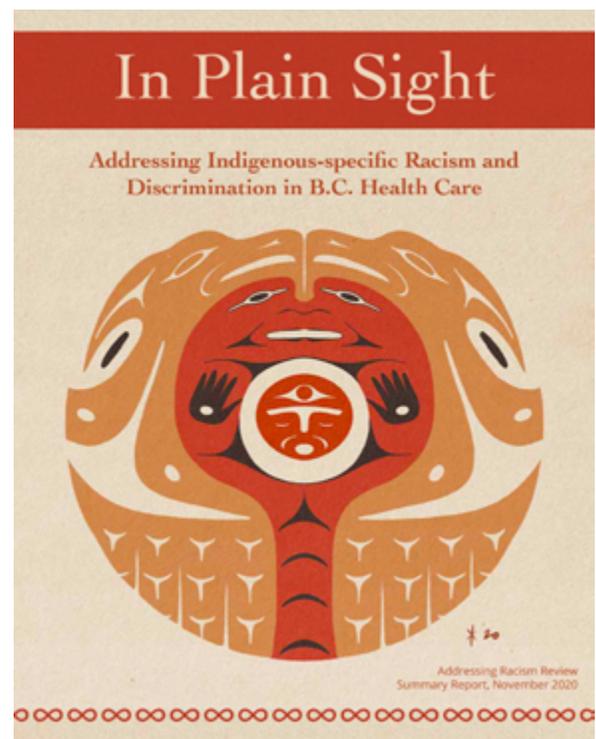
INDIGENOUS HEALTH TEAM EXPANDS

In the fall, Vancouver Coastal Health introduced a new Indigenous Health leadership team following recommendations outlined in the [In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care](#) report.

Leslie Bonshor, now Vice President, Indigenous Health with VCH, is leading the expanded team and her role aligns with the In Plain Sight report recommendation that B.C. government health service organizations, providers and facilities recruit Indigenous individuals to senior positions to oversee and promote needed system change.

Leslie’s work helps ensure Indigenous Health supports and informs the calls to action in the Truth & Reconciliation Commission report and helps to uphold and enable the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous People and the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and supports the recommendations in the In Plain Sight report.

This compelling report focuses on the B.C. health-care system and collaborates with leaders across the health-care system to partner with the First Nations, Inuit and Métis in our region as well as partners such as Métis Nation B.C., First Nations Health Authority, First Nations Health Council and the First Nations Health Directors Association.



“As an organization, VCH has acknowledged and accepted the findings of the In Plain Sight report and will act on all 24 recommendations. I am proud to be a part of a health-care organization that is leading the way. Our Indigenous Health team is unlike any other, ensuring Indigenous knowledge and expertise is embedded from the leadership level to front-line services across our health authority.”

Leslie Bonshor | Vice President, Indigenous Health



BUILDING TRUST WITH NEW PATIENT EXPERIENCE TEAM

As director of the Indigenous Patient Experience Team, Lori Quinn—a nurse for over 20 years—says the Indigenous nursing pod program has been key to improved vaccination rates in First Nations communities since it was launched.

Emily MacLeod and Brandi Dan are two long-time nurses who responded to the invitation to self-identify as Indigenous and become part of the Indigenous nursing pod program to deliver vaccines to First Nations, often between their nursing shifts.

Alongside others on their teams, they have set up over 20 clinics that put the needs of community members first like scheduling a vaccination day on a day when key Indigenous Elders are available to participate.

For Brandi, a member of the Bonaparte First Nation in the interior of BC, putting on her distinctive team vest means a lot. She recalls a community member who was scared and resistant to receiving a vaccine, but eventually came to a clinic with her support worker and a therapy dog.



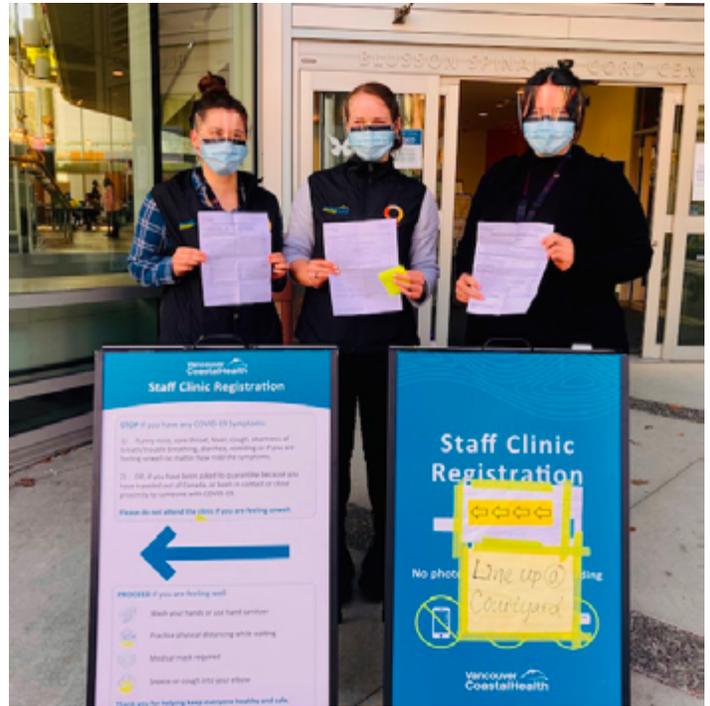
The Indigenous Patient Experience Team at Vancouver General Hospital.

“I had time to talk with her, answer all her questions; we played with her dog, and then she was ready. It’s just one vaccine, but they’re all ‘just one’ vaccine, and it matters.”

Brandi Dan | Nurse

Lori Quinn says she sees the value of teams like these being available for deployment in other crises such as floods, wildfire or even for staffing shortages in specific communities. “I’m grateful to be part of VCH addressing the TRC Calls to Action in a tangible way,” she says.

Brandi sums up the personal importance to every nurse involved: “Having the privilege to help Indigenous communities like mine stay safe has been very fulfilling,” she says.



“This feels like the circle of all things.”

Lori Quinn | Director, Patient Experience



STAFF EDUCATION AND SUPPORT TO FOSTER CULTURALLY SAFE SPACES

Members of the Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS) and the Indigenous research and evaluation teams have partnered with Vancouver General Hospital’s emergency department to develop an Indigenous cultural safety initiative to improve the experience of Indigenous peoples accessing emergency services.

The year-long initiative will provide education and support to emergency department staff to help ensure Indigenous people have access to a care environment where they feel safe, respected and acknowledged, and are able to talk about their satisfaction with their care experience.

“Indigenous cultural safety training provides a strong foundation to support staff in their journey towards reconciliation and helps ensure we are providing culturally safe care. We are excited about the opportunity to partner with the Indigenous Health team to provide this meaningful and impactful education for emergency department and medical staff.”

Lori Korchinski | Emergency Department Operations Director



Members of the Indigenous Health team deliver an Indigenous Cultural Safety training session at Vancouver General Hospital Emergency Department.

Health outcomes of Indigenous peoples are statistically lower in many areas compared to non-Indigenous populations and effective culturally appropriate care is essential to reduce these inequities.

Findings from the recent **In Plain Sight** report have noted high levels of Indigenous-specific racism within B.C.’s health-care system, which severely affects the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples. Members of the region’s First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities as well as patients from all over B.C. access the VGH Emergency Department.



LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR THE HEALTH OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND FAMILIES

VCH is evolving the way Indigenous women receive care in the health-care setting. The [In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care](#) report, shared lived experiences and data highlighting the disparities in seeking and receiving health care in the province for Indigenous women. In response, VCH's Indigenous Health team has developed a strategy to affect positive change for Indigenous women, leading to easier access to culturally safe care and better health outcomes.



“Indigenous women are leaders and matriarchs. If we uplift women, we uplift entire communities. VCH has assembled a team of Indigenous women leaders to address systemic barriers, racism and marginalization of Indigenous women, guide conversations and make recommendations that lead to solutions. Our approach here is a unique and an innovative response, grounded in Indigenous world views, to remedy these systemic issues.”

Leslie Bonshor | Vice President, Indigenous Health

VCH has established an Indigenous Women and Family Health team and together they work across the health authority to ensure Indigenous knowledge and expertise is embedded in all Indigenous women's and family health-related matters, including gender equity and inclusivity, reproductive justice, perinatal health, infant and child health, and anti-violence and anti-racism in health care.

This work is guided by:

- **In Plain Sight** report recommendations
- The **Declaration of Commitment on Cultural Safety and Humility in Health Services**
- The **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**
- The **Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada**



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