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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2020HLTH0283-001740  
Sept. 15, 2020

Ministry of Health

### **Transforming primary care in Oceanside**

PARKSVILLE – Government is transforming everyday health care for people living in the Oceanside region by establishing a primary care network, which will bring additional resources and strengthened support to the region.

“As part of our government’s primary care strategy, we’re making life healthier and better for everyone in B.C. Through primary care networks, we are providing team-based health care and are giving people a seamless patient-centred experience that is responsive to the unique needs of each community,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. “The primary care network in Oceanside will bring meaningful change in the communities by helping more local residents access the comprehensive care they need and deserve, closer to home.”

The Ministry of Health will provide approximately \$4.6 million in annual funding to the primary care network once it is fully operational.

Over the next four years, residents of Oceanside will benefit from more than 23 full-time equivalent health providers who will provide better access to primary care. This includes nurse practitioners, family physicians and allied health professionals such as registered nurses, social workers, occupational therapists and a clinical pharmacist

The Oceanside primary care network will see community partners working together to ensure thousands of people have access to comprehensive, co-ordinated and team-based primary care services for all of their day-to-day health-care needs in the region.

The network will provide a full range of accessible, everyday health services that will better support patients and providers and will service Parksville, Qualicum Beach and Oceanside rural that includes Errington, Coombs to Bowser.

The network was developed to better meet the specific needs of the community and to strengthen services identified as high priority. These include:

- better access to chronic disease and chronic pain management;
- improved access to mild- to-moderate mental health and substance use services;
- better co-ordinated services for families and seniors who are frail and people with complex health issues; and
- culturally safe care for Indigenous peoples.

For people and families, it means getting faster, better access to their primary care team or provider, even on evenings and weekends, as well as being connected to appropriate services and supports in the community.

Over the next four years, the Oceanside network will work to attach 11,950 patients to a consistent primary care provider in the region, while also providing team-based and culturally safe care to local residents.

In addition, a traditional knowledge keeper and mental health and substance use social worker will be recruited in support of Indigenous health. For Indigenous peoples, this will mean more co-ordinated and culturally safe primary care support.

“Although Oceanside innovated on acute-care emergencies, residents without a family doctor have struggled to get easier access to primary health care services,” said Sheila Malcolmson, MLA for Nanaimo. “Through the new primary care network in the region, more health-care providers will be recruited and will work as a team to provide improved and increased access to care to residents in Oceanside.”

The Oceanside primary care network is a result of a partnership between the Ministry of Health, Island Health, the Oceanside Division of Family Practice and Qualicum First Nation and Snaw-Naw-As First Nation.

**Learn More:**

To learn more about the Province’s primary health-care strategy, visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018PREM0034-001010>

To learn more about the Province’s strategy to increase the number of nurse practitioners,

visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018HLTH0034-000995>

To learn more about the Province’s strategy to recruit and retain more family medicine

graduates, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018HLTH0052-001043>

Two backgrounders follow.

**Contacts:**

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## BACKGROUND 1

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### **Facts about the Oceanside primary care network**

According to BC Stats data, the communities that the Oceanside primary care network will serve have a combined population of 50,720. Services will be available in Oceanside and Errington.

Primary care networks mean that patients:

- who do not have a regular primary care provider - a family doctor or nurse practitioner - will be able to get one;
- will have an ongoing relationship with their primary care provider, which is important for their life-long health;
- will get access to faster, more convenient care from their doctor or nurse practitioner and the care team;
- will be provided and connected with a range of appropriate and accessible services and supports;
- will be informed about all aspects of their care in community; and
- will know where to go to get the care they need, even on evenings and weekends.

New resources being allocated include:

- seven Full-time equivalent (FTE) nurse practitioners
- three FTE family physicians
- 1.5 FTE physician group contracts
- six FTE registered nurses
- one FTE social worker
- two FTE occupational therapists
- one FTE clinical pharmacist
- two resources in support of Indigenous health
  - one FTE traditional knowledge keeper
  - one FTE mental health and substance use social worker

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## BACKGROUND 2

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### **What people are saying about primary care networks (PCNs)**

#### **Leah Hollins, board chair, Island Health –**

“It takes a village to establish a primary care network and we are grateful to our partners, including the Qualicum First Nation and Snaw-Naw-As First Nation, who have been offering valuable guidance and advice during the formation of the Oceanside PCN. Primary care networks are a testament to the value of teamwork both while the PCN is being developed and once services are provided.”

#### **Evelyn Clark, executive director, Central Island Division of Family Practice –**

“The Oceanside PCN will allow people without a primary care provider to now be able to find a caregiver in the area without having to travel out of town. It is an exciting opportunity for primary care providers to offer team-based care that may include a registered nurse, a social worker and/or a pharmacist to care for frail and elderly patients and other members of our community.”

#### **Brennan MacDonald, executive director for Vancouver Island, First Nations Health Authority**

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“The planning, design and provision of culturally safe care in the primary care networks by and with First Nations is key to improving health outcomes and tackling systemic racism. The First Nations Elders, traditional practitioners and healers embedded in this network will be critical to the success of this approach to inclusive, culturally relevant team-based care.”

#### **Dr. Kathleen Ross, president, Doctors of BC –**

“The best health-care systems in the world have strong primary care and we hope that the primary care network initiative provides additional needed resources to doctors serving their community, especially those that strengthen longitudinal care in these pandemic times. A primary care network will collectively increase a community’s capacity to provide greater access to primary care for those who need it, especially for vulnerable patients and those with complex health conditions.”

#### **Michael Sandler, executive director, Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC –**

“The Association of the Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC is pleased that the knowledge, skills and expertise of the entire health-care team will improve access to health care for British Columbians through the new primary care network. We believe that this approach will be pivotal in ensuring B.C. families feel connected to their health-care team and we are excited to

see the launch of primary care networks in B.C."

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