
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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May 13, 2022

Ministry of Health

New primary care centre opens in Chilliwack

Updated May 14, 2022

CHILLIWACK – More people in the Chilliwack and Fraser Health Rural region will have better access to quality, team-based health care with a primary care centre opening May 17, 2022, at 7955 Evans Rd. in Chilliwack.

The Chilliwack and Fraser Health Rural Primary Care Centre is called Momíyelhtelaxwt, which means “helping one another.” The centre replaces the Chilliwack Primary Care Clinic, which was located at Chilliwack General Hospital.

“Today represents a significant step forward for health care in our province. Opening a primary care centre servicing Chilliwack and surrounding rural communities means more patients, including First Nations, and those with complex needs, will have increased access to comprehensive primary care,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. “We are continuing to ensure that people across British Columbia receive the health-care services they deserve closer to home.”

The centre serves the communities of Chilliwack, Agassiz/Harrison and Hope as well as communities in the Fraser Canyon. Service extends to Boothroyd and also includes regional Indigenous communities, Sunshine Valley and Manning Park.

It is a collaboration between Fraser Health, the Ministry of Health, the Chilliwack Division of Family Practice and other community partners. It operates as part of the North Chilliwack, South Chilliwack and Fraser Health Rural primary care networks.

This centre will serve three purposes:

- provide increased opportunities to get same-day health care on weekdays so that people in need of complex care management can get timely access to the comprehensive care they need;
- people in need of mental-health and substance-use supports will have better access to the right care from the right provider with improved connection to specialized services provided by health authorities, including opioid agonist treatment; and
- more co-ordinated and culturally safe primary care support for Indigenous Peoples.

The clinic will work in conjunction with the Chilliwack Division of Family Practice to attach patients with a regular primary care provider. The centre will also provide ongoing wraparound care for unattached patients on an interim basis while they arrange for patients to be connected to other local practices.

When the centre opens on May 17, approximately 40 full-time-equivalent staff, including family

doctors, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, clinical pharmacists, traditional wellness mentors and other allied health professionals, will work as a team at the centre.

“People need access to high-quality mental-health and addictions care – it is a vital part of our health system,” said Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. “This new primary care centre provides the health care that people in Chilliwack and surrounding communities urgently need.”

The Fraser Health Intensive Case Management mental-health and substance-use program is also located at the centre. This will provide further opportunities for integration of services.

In addition, the centre provides culturally safe care by incorporating traditional wellness mentors, as well as integrating resources that reflect traditional teachings by Indigenous communities.

Patients accessing care at the Chilliwack Primary Care Clinic will have the opportunity to be supported and cared for at the new centre on Evans Road. The centre’s hours of operation are Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.

The Ministry of Health will provide approximately \$11.5 million in annual funding to the Chilliwack and Fraser Health Rural primary care networks once they are fully established, as well as \$5,356,462 in capital costs. The Fraser Valley Health Care Foundation contributed \$1 million for the centre.

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BACKGROUND 1

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What people are saying about Chilliwack's new primary care centre

Chief Angie Bailey, Aitchelitz First Nation, Ts'elxwéyeqw Tribe –

“I am grateful that the primary care centre is offering this new site to support health and wellness services within our community.”

Dan Coulter, MLA for Chilliwack –

“It’s great that the centre will promote better access to health care for people in Chilliwack and surrounding areas, including those with complex health-care needs and those who have challenges or face barriers, such as mental health and substance use.”

Kelli Paddon, MLA for Chilliwack-Kent –

“It’s important that over the next four years and across the three primary care networks, approximately 28,250 people who do not have a primary care provider in the region will be attached to one. These networks will also provide team-based and culturally safe care to residents.”

Dr. Victoria Lee, president and CEO, Fraser Health Authority –

“We are pleased to partner with the Chilliwack Division of Family Practice and other community and Indigenous partners to bring more co-ordinated, patient-centred health services closer to home for people living in Chilliwack and our rural and Indigenous communities. By attaching people to consistent care teams, we can help patients and their families manage a range of existing health conditions, avoid unnecessary hospital visits and remain healthy and independent as long as possible.”

Richard Jock, CEO, First Nations Health Authority –

“The First Nations Health Authority is pleased to have partnered on the development and funding of this new primary care centre that offers culturally safe, team-based primary care and wellness programs and supports for regional Indigenous communities, including our urban and away-from-home First Nations population in the Fraser Region. Traditional teachings and traditional healing are a distinct feature of the First-Nations-led primary care initiative. We look forward to an initial total of 15 First-Nations-led projects in partnership with communities and the Ministry of Health across B.C.”

Dr. Dominic Black, Chilliwack Division of Family Practice –

“The Chilliwack Division of Family Practice is excited to partner with Fraser Health in the development of the primary care centre at Evans Road: Momíyelhtelaxwt ‘Helping one

another.’ We are honoured to plan this centre on the land of the Stó:lō people, and specifically Athelets (Aitchelitz First Nation). The services are designed to help meet the health-care needs of our communities, across a unique demographic and vast geography including 22 Indigenous communities in the Chilliwack and surrounding area. With the expected recruitment of 39 new clinicians, including several family physicians and nurse practitioners at the centre, we hope to provide improved access to primary care, including increased opportunities for patients to access team-based and integrated care. This new centre will help support our community members, build capacity in our local health-care system and increase access to primary care providers.”

Elizabeth Harris, executive director, Fraser Valley Health Care Foundation –

“Fraser Valley Health Care Foundation works with the community to support the local hospital, facilities and programs run by Fraser Health. Through our generous donors, the foundation was able to provide a gift of \$1 million towards the new primary care centre that will help provide those living in Chilliwack and Fraser Health Rural with increased access to care. If you would like to support projects like this in your community, please visit: www.fvhcf.ca.”

Dr. Ramneek Dosanjh, president, Doctors of BC –

“We look forward to the integration of the Chilliwack Primary Care Centre in hopes it will strengthen primary care in the community. Doctors of BC has a strong interest in ensuring people have access to the health-care services they need. We also emphasize the importance of measures that strengthen the long-term relationships between patients and their family doctor. These relationships have been shown to improve health outcomes, help avoid preventable illness and reduce the cost of health care.”

Michael Sandler, CEO, Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC –

“Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC are pleased to see that the knowledge, skills and expertise of the entire health-care team will be utilized to improve access to health care for all British Columbians through urgent and primary care clinics. We believe that this approach will be pivotal in ensuring B.C. families can access health-care services, and we are excited to see the opening of another primary care clinic in B.C.”

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BACKGROUND 2

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Chilliwack and Fraser Health Rural Primary Care Centre

The Chilliwack and Fraser Health Rural Primary Care Centre is opening on May 17, 2022, at its permanent location at 7955 Evans Rd. in Chilliwack.

- It will feature improved access to care.
- For people who do not have a primary care provider, the centre will also facilitate attachment at the clinic or in local practices.
- A team of family physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, clinical pharmacists, Traditional Wellness Mentors, and allied health professionals will provide interdisciplinary, team-based care through the centre.
- There is highest prevalence of the following chronic conditions in the Chilliwack Local Health Area: Hypertension, mood disorders, asthma, diabetes and osteoarthritis.
- Regular access to primary care service, such as those being offered in the new primary care centre, can reduce unnecessary emergency department visits. Approximately 32% of visits to the Chilliwack General Hospital's emergency department in 2020-21 were triaged as relatively low acuity.
- Total capital costs for the new primary care centre are estimated to be \$5,356,462.
- The primary care centre will be approximately 1,208 square metres (13,000 square feet) and includes a reception and waiting area, exam rooms, counselling rooms, office spaces, group therapy room, two multipurpose rooms and a sacred space. The Fraser Health Intensive Case Management mental-health and substance-use program is also located at the centre.
- Primary care centres are part of a comprehensive provincial strategy to transform B.C.'s health system by bringing together and co-ordinating teams of health-care providers, services and programs to make it easier for people to access care, receive follow-up care and connect to other services they may need.

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