
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2023HLTH0022-000339
March 16, 2023

Ministry of Health
Island Health

New integrated health-care centre coming to Sooke

Updated March 16, 2023

SOOKE – People living in Sooke and the surrounding area will benefit from a new integrated health-care centre offering team-based services in the heart of Sooke village.

The new centre is the latest in a series of investments over the past six years to build capacity and improve health-care services for residents in Sooke.

“Improving access to health-care services for people in B.C. is a key priority for our government,” said John Horgan, MLA for Langford-Juan de Fuca. “This centre will be critical to meeting the health-care needs of people living in Sooke and surrounding areas, now and in the future, and I am proud that people in the region will soon benefit from being able to access the care they need, close to home.”

The new facility will combine the community health centre (CHC) and urgent- and primary-care centre (UPCC) at a future development planned for 6671 Wadams Way.

Once open, the CHC/UPCC centre will consolidate local primary-care services from West Coast Family Medical Clinic and other local community services into a single location, making it easier for people to access the health services they need. This will be done by better connecting more people to integrated health-care services in the community, such as primary care, culturally safe supports and mental-health and substance-use services.

“This new integrated health-care facility will connect people in the community to a range of health-care services, including primary care, urgent care and community health services all under one roof,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. “Integrating physicians into a community-based primary-care model means more time for patients, more patients accessing health-care services and less administrative burden for practitioners. This is part of our continuing work to build increased and improved access to primary health care for people in Sooke.”

The team of clinical providers is expected to include family physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, mental-health and substance-use workers and other allied health providers. The new staff will supplement the existing staff working at West Coast Family Medical Clinic.

The ministry is also providing funding to hire an Indigenous cultural safety liaison to support the project while planning is underway.

Over the past six years, government has made significant investments in building health-care service capacity to support growing demand and the high-use rate of health services in the Sooke region. Investments include increased mental-health counselling and home support services, \$1 million in funding to further support team-based care and \$600,000 in funding to

expand and improve the West Coast Family Medical Clinic, and \$10.5 million to establish the Western Communities Primary Care Network. These investments were made based on significant local engagement.

The new facility will be community-governed and operated by the Sooke Region Communities Health Network and is expected to join the provincial rostering system to ensure patient care continuity and attachment initiative announced in 2022 as part of the new payment model for family physicians.

Quick Facts:

- The new centre will be part of the Western Communities Primary Care Network and provide extended hours for urgent and non-emergency health care and better same-day access to primary care to help meet community demand.
- The team of clinical providers is expected to include family physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, mental-health and substance-use workers and other allied health providers.

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 health human resource strategy, visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022HLTH0059-001464>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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What people are saying about the Sooke Region CHC/UPCC

Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions –

“People need access to high-quality mental health and addiction care close to home. With the opening of the new blended community health centre, and urgent and primary care centre, more people in Sooke and the surrounding area will now be able to connect to the local mental-health-and-addiction supports they need and deserve.”

Leah Hollins, board chair, Island Health –

“We are delighted that the first-ever community health centre/urgent- and primary-care centre in the Island Health region will be owned and operated by the Sooke Region Communities Health Network. The Sooke CHC/UPCC will increase access to same-day, team-based primary care to residents of the Sooke region.”

Mary Dunn, president, Sooke Region Communities Health Network –

“For many years, we have been collaborating with the District of Sooke, the South Island Division of Family Practice, the West Coast Family Medical Clinic and other local organizations to establish a community health centre in Sooke. We are excited to have the opportunity to expand community health services for everyone in the Sooke region.”

Dr. Anton Rabien, West Coast Family Medical Clinic –

“Approval of the proposed community health centre/urgent primary care centre is fantastic news for Sooke! The proposed health centre will undoubtedly increase access to primary-care services for people living in Sooke and the surrounding communities. A big thanks to Mayor Maja Tait for initiating discussions between the District of Sooke, Island Health, the Sooke Region Communities Health Network, and the Sooke family physicians that ultimately led to the development of this proposal; to the volunteers of the Sooke Region Communities Health Network who did all the hard work in drafting the proposal; and to the Honourable John Horgan, who was willing to listen to our concerns and advocate on our behalf for improving the delivery of primary health services in Sooke.”

Dr. Randal Mason, board co-chair, South Island Division of Family Practice –

“The Sooke Region CHC/UPCC is a great example of advocacy and collaboration between government and community organizations. The unique nature of a blended CHC/UPCC will provide access to urgent medical services, while focusing on longitudinal needs of individuals and the broader community. Community governance will allow the people of Sooke to develop, deliver and adapt services that reflect the needs of the community. The Sooke region

CHC/UPCC will be a much-needed resource within our broader Western Communities Primary Care Network. The South Island Division of Family Practice is grateful for the opportunity to provide support and input in planning and development of the centre.”

Maja Tait, mayor of Sooke –

“Today’s announcement is a culmination of the work of many people who remained steadfast to ensure the residents of Sooke have access to the health-care services they deserve. Thank you to all project partners, including the Province of British Columbia, Island Health, the Sooke Region Community Health Network, the Primary Health Care Service Working Group, and the doctors and care providers of the West Coast Family Medical Clinic, who, through collaboration and innovation, are working together to ensure our residents have access to medical services closer to home.”

Rose Dumont, administrative health co-ordinator, T’Sou-ke First Nation –

“Building a new health-care facility such as the Sooke CHC/UPCC is more than just bricks and mortar. It’s an opportunity to forge new relationships with us as First Nations neighbours through collaboration, mutual respect and enhanced services. By working together, we all can create a welcoming, culturally sensitive environment that promotes healing, wellness, and improved health outcomes for all members of our community.”

Alix Arndt, interim CEO, Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of B.C. –

“Nurses and nurse practitioners of B.C. 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 urgent- and primary-care clinic in B.C.”

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