

currents

INSIDE ISLAND HEALTH

FALL 2024





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With great respect and humility, Island Health acknowledges the Coast Salish, Nuuchah-Nulth and Kwakwaka'wakw cultural families; whose relationship with these lands remains unbroken; whose homelands Island Health occupies. In making this acknowledgement, we commit to walk softly on this land and work to uphold self determination of the health of Indigenous peoples.





FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

As we approach the end of 2024, I reflect on the incredible work that has taken place this year. Whether you're a care provider on the front lines or a staff member behind the scenes, you are an essential part of what keeps our organization moving forward. This issue of Currents celebrates many of you and some of our progress.

Our Island Health community is proud to have members who genuinely demonstrate our C.A.R.E. values in action. Meet Dr. Wei-Ye Song, Department Head of Psychiatry and Executive Medical Director for Mental Health & Substance Use, who was recently awarded Distinguished Life Fellow status by the American Psychiatric Association (Page 4). Read about Shyla Genoway and Fernanda Polanco, Nurse Practitioners whose recent training in addiction medicine is enabling them to provide compassionate care for patients living with substance use disorder (Page 7). And see Hari Krishan Sharma's story – an employee since 2002 and a dedicated blood donor, with over 100 donations to date (Page 19).

To mark the day of National Truth and Reconciliation this year, staff and medical staff had the opportunity to

wear a very special orange shirt – one designed for Island Health by Joslyn Charlie, a Nuu-chah-nulth artist. I am proud of the Indigenous Health, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Brand, Digital Engagement, and Innovation teams for creating this partnership and making this project possible. We are incredibly grateful to Joslyn for sharing her extraordinary gift of design with us. I am filled with hope when I look through the photos from the National Day for Truth of Reconciliation and see so many of you wearing orange shirts (Page 16). On September 30 and every day, we must reflect on the ongoing impacts of colonization, including systemic racism, poorer health outcomes, and barriers to culturally safe access to health care. We are responsible for addressing and repairing these harms, and much work remains to be done.

We are continuously working to improve the ways in which we deliver care to the communities we serve. Learn about the improvements underway at Urgent and Primary Care Centers, where nurses are expanding the type of care they provide by offering several services that patients would traditionally receive from physicians and nurse

practitioners (Page 10). Meet Royal Jubilee Hospital's new Pharmacy Robot, whose modern technology is helping to drive efficiency and customize pharmaceutical care (Page 22). Celebrate with Community Health Services in Port Alberni as they show gratitude for the Alberni Health Care Auxiliary's generous gift of \$30,000 (Page 13).

Safe and high-quality care is the core of what we do. Read about our partners at Health Emergency Management BC and how they help us strengthen our organizational preparedness to ensure reliable and resilient service delivery when unanticipated events challenge our operations (Page 15).

As we reflect on what we have accomplished this year and look forward to what's ahead, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you. Your commitment to providing excellent health and care for everyone, everywhere, every time, makes Island Health the exceptional organization it is. Thank you for all you do.

Warmly,

Kathy MacNeil
Island Health President & CEO



A VISION FOR MENTAL HEALTH: DR. WEI-YI SONG

by Theresa Chaboyer

Dr. Song's journey to Department Head of Psychiatry and Executive Medical Director for Mental Health & Substance Use (MHSU) started as a medical student in China in the 1980s when there was severe poverty and political unrest. The 1989 student movement led him to leave for Montreal until he found his way to the warmest spot in Canada to live. In Montreal, he was fortunate to join McGill University psychopharmacology research unit where he worked under well known psychiatrists, such as Heinz Lehman. This inspired him to become a psychiatrist.

I never thought I'd leave my country right after medical school and I did. I never thought I would become a psychiatrist. I came to Canada and there was a job in psychiatry, and I

became a psychiatrist. Life seems to be full of serendipity!

Dr. Song practises the fundamentals of maintaining good mental health – a sense of purpose and a routine.

I wake up. My partner and I grind coffee beans to make espresso everyday. I start the day with a good routine. I don't anticipate. I am an inherently positive person.

I was a shy kid, so I forced myself to perform publicly on sports teams to get over my shyness which I realize now is social anxiety. I kept exposing myself and it has gotten easier. I am a doer. It's served me.

Dr. Song recently received the Distinguished Life Fellow status by the American Psychiatric Association for his enduring commitment to the field and his significant contributions, during his 30-year membership. He is proud that he was also the first Chinese Canadian President of the Canadian Psychiatric Association in 2017-2018.

During his 25 years with Island Health, Dr. Song has led the delivery and evolution of mental health services, and he's served as a leader in medical education in psychiatry, while maintaining a busy clinical practice, making a difference one person at a time.

There's no health without mental health. Mental health is essential to our overall health and well-being. Yet, mental health has been underserved; historically, it's been the poor cousin in the house of medicine, something that has been fostered by stigma from individuals and society.

Mental health struggles are often invisible, unlike a broken arm. People tend to suffer in silence. My vision is to elevate mental health care to the same status as physical medical

fields, ensuring everyone has the same access to necessary mental health services.

What have you observed during your tenure?

I've seen many positive changes, including more awareness of the importance of mental health and an increased focus by all levels of government. The work to destigmatize mental health is particularly evident in younger people – who are often more progressive, open, and inclusive.

Where are mental health services headed – the Road Ahead?

Technology, such as virtual care and AI, will continue to impact how we deliver our services and expand our reach.

Our clients currently use virtual appointments far more than any other health service. Studies are showing virtual care is just as good for treatment and follow up, so we will continue to expand virtual services to communities that may be lacking psychiatrists to provide equitable access to people living throughout Island Health's regions.

This year we will expand virtual on-call psychiatry to our smaller remote community hospitals, including Tofino, Westcoast General, Lady Minto, Port Hardy and Port McNeil. We're bringing outpatient psychiatric services online, including the creation

of a virtual Bridging Care adult outpatient treatment program.

Dr. Song's work is not done yet. He's enthusiastic about the emerging field of Interventional Psychiatry and bringing newer treatments, such as repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) and ketamine infusions, for treatment-resistant depression and other hard-to-treat psychiatric conditions. With a plan to establish a dedicated interventional psychiatry clinic to allow better access to these promising treatments and start life-saving treatment, such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) sooner.

One of the ways we can raise psychiatry on par with other areas of medicine is by recognizing neuropsychiatric disorders are no different than medical disorders. In fact, there is intimate interplay between mind and body. One cannot be separated from the other. Hence, there is no health without mental health!

What is the demand for Psychiatrists?

There are more than 100 psychiatrists working at Island Health and demand is growing. As part of a sustainable recruitment strategy, we will increase psychiatry resident training spots. Our track record has shown young doctors who train here often stay, serving communities across the island. Such good retention is due to our focused work to improve department workplace culture.

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How can we make our youth more resilient? *University is a critical time for young adults as it's an impersonal environment, you are on your own for the first time, and reality can hit you hard. Our values, belief system and faith can help with resiliency and recovery, but we really need to better equip young people earlier with the necessary life skills to face and manage failure so they are better prepared to meet challenges.*

I am optimistic about the progress made in mental health awareness and treatment.

WHAT ARE THE KEYS TO MENTAL HEALTH?

- Having a sense of purpose. Many people seem to have lost their purpose, but you must have this even to get up every morning.
 - Structure: You must have a routine and schedule.
 - A healthy, balanced, diet and activity levels.
 - Maintaining social connectedness, ensuring you reach out to others instead of staying at home suffering alone.
 - Being present in the here and now instead of worrying how the future will unfold, particular events you have little control over, or dreading, blaming or feeling perpetual shame over past events.
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BCCSU ADDICTION NURSE PRACTITIONER FELLOWSHIP BUILDS EXPERTISE

by Katie Phelan

Each year, the British Columbia Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU) welcomes dozens of healthcare professionals into an Interdisciplinary Clinical Addiction Fellowship.

This is the largest program of its kind in North America, with multiple Fellowship streams. The goal of a BCCSU Fellowship is to build expertise and capacity across the health system to effectively and compassionately, screen, assess, and treat people with substance use disorders. Nurse Practitioners are eligible to apply and are accepted into the program from a range of clinical and academic backgrounds.

Nurse Practitioners (NPs) are experienced registered nurses who have also completed advanced education at a master's level. As primary care providers, who also take on speciality roles, NPs possess a unique skillset that combines the practice of medicine with the practice of nursing. Although NPs are licenced to practice autonomously and without supervision, collaboration with other providers, team members, and specialists is commonplace.

In our province, NPs typically work in one of three streams: family, adult, or pediatric. From diagnosing medical conditions and prescribing medication, to ordering tests and initiating specialist referrals, NPs can, and do, function as the primary care provider for an increasing number of British Columbians, including those with substance use disorders.

Shyla Genoway and Fernanda Polanco are family NPs and recent graduates of the BCCSU Addiction Fellowship. We recently caught up with Shyla and Fernanda to discuss their Fellowship experience, as well as their professional objectives now that they have completed this immersive and interdisciplinary training.

Before Fernanda applied to the Fellowship, her experience as a community-based NP meant that she had some familiarity assessing



“The Fellowship was such an important add to my experience—it allowed me an opportunity to understand opioid use disorder now, which is different from opioid use disorder 5 years ago.”

and treating people with opioid use disorders. But, as Fernanda explained, the landscape of substance use changes quickly: “The Fellowship was such an important add to my experience—it allowed me an opportunity to understand opioid

use disorder now, which is different from opioid use disorder 5 years ago”. Changes in supply, potency, adulterants, as well as changes to treatment options, necessitate nimble and dynamic responses from addiction medicine specialists.

Post-pandemic, Shyla’s work in two South Island school districts was changing too; youth mental health assessments were constituting the greater percentage of her practice, but Shyla realised she needed to hone skills in assessing and diagnosing substance use disorders, too.

Both NPs applied to the Fellowship recognising that client needs weren’t always being met in their respective realms of practice. As primary care providers, Shyla and Fernanda play a key role in supporting youth through substance use disorder assessment and treatment. Fernanda works as part of an intensive case management team for youth with severe substance use disorders at Victoria’s Foundry. “There was just such a massive need—these young people require, and deserve, specialist knowledge”, she says. Both NPs reference their Fellowship rotations as helping to bolster their breadth of knowledge in addiction medicine. From private recovery centres to outpatient perinatal programs, inpatient detox programs, supervised consumption sites, and injectable opioid agonist treatment clinics, both Shyla and Fernanda witnessed screening, assessment, and treatment across the continuum of care.

Another Fellowship component that deeply impacted both NPs was journal club—a monthly get together where Fellows analyse primary studies in the realm of addiction medicine. Unsurprisingly, these deep dives often paved the way for a more compassionate and thoughtful approach: “When you question if a treatment method is good for a patient—and if it’s safer than an alternative—you are forced to ask if it actually works, or if we’re doing it like that because we always have”, says Shyla. Her research into flexible opioid agonist treatment during her Fellowship occurred in near tandem

with BC's decision to loosen guidelines around take-home doses, or 'carries'.

Although the Fellowship ended in June, the experience continues to inform how both NPs practice. For Fernanda, staying on top of new treatments and care is an essential component of her work. Harm reduction incorporates a spectrum of strategies, including safer supply models: "One of the unique things about addiction medicine is that we don't always have a massive bank of data and systematic reviews to rely on. Often, we rely on the expert opinion of people who use drugs and the successes that they have had with novel treatments to decrease their consumption of illicit substances".

Shyla's longitudinal QI project exemplifies how an Addiction NP Fellowship aims to address substance use disorders in our local communities. Working with Sam Elder of Youth H.O.P.E. Mission, Shyla is committed to a youth-training-youth naloxone program. For Shyla, learning harm reduction and overdose prevention strategies are first aid skills, no different from learning how to use an EpiPen: "Naloxone training doesn't only apply to people who use substances themselves. You might be at work one day and someone experiences an overdose in the bathroom. You might be walking down the street, or at a party, or have a friend or family member who is using—we are working hard to remove the stigma around harm reduction education".

Shyla shares a sobering reminder: "Overdose is the leading cause of unnatural death in BC in people between the ages of 10 and 59, so this is not an adult-only problem. 9 out of 10 substance use disorders develop in adolescence". Prioritizing evidence-based responses to the opioid crisis is an imperative. For Shyla's youth population, that means



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focussing on education and prevention. "Because" she concludes, "we know that open conversations with youth about harm reduction strategies are more likely to lead to safer use, and less use."

*If you are a physician, nurse, nurse practitioner, social worker, pharmacist, or researcher interested in learning more about the BCCSU Addiction Fellowship, please visit **bccsu.ca** or email **fellowships@bccsu.ubc.ca***



NURSE-LED CARE SUPPORTS PATIENTS AND HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AT SOUTH ISLAND UPCCS

by Shawna Cadieux

VICTORIA – Nurses at South Island Urgent and Primary Care Centres (UPCCs) are expanding the type of care they provide by offering several services that patients would traditionally receive from physicians and nurse practitioners.

“People in the community might not be aware of just how much nurses can do, which not only supports physicians and nurse practitioners, but also opens up opportunities for patients to access care,” said Jennifer Hoffman, a Downtown Victoria UPCC (DVUPCC) nurse with certified practice who also has a background in substance use disorders.

“Our physician colleagues encourage us and trust that we are going to listen to patients, advocate for them when they need it, and act as a sounding board to answer their questions.”

Nurse-led appointments often allow nurses to do a deep dive into a patient’s concerns and collect important information for physicians and nurse practitioners.

“Because we have the time, we can unwrap the layers and help to figure out the root of the problem, allowing patients to feel seen, heard and understood,” said Chau Nguyen, a DVUPCC nurse who enjoys family care. “These relationships help us to relay potential patient benefits to our primary care providers and really provide that wrap-around care.”

Julie Grant, a nurse at the DVUPCC agreed, explaining how her ability to assess, diagnose and treat certain conditions frees up appointments with primary care providers at the clinic.

“I have more time in my schedule to spend with patients and build connections,” she said. “We want people to know that they can come to us with their concerns, and we will do our best to help them navigate the health care system and empower them to take control of their health through patient education.”

Patient education often extends to sexual health services, like those offered by Devan Cooper at the Esquimalt UPCC (EUPCC).

“As a registered nurse with certified practice, I can independently provide sexual health education, assessment, testing and treatment,” she said. “I

enjoy creating a rapport with patients and helping to remove some of the stigma around sexual health.”

Jaclyn McDonough has worked at the EUPCC since it opened in 2021. As one of the first nurses with certified practice at the site, she finds working to her full scope to be incredibly rewarding.

“One of my favourite things about my role at the UPCC is the opportunity to work autonomously where I can follow someone’s health care journey while they are a patient at the clinic,” she said. “People seem so grateful that nurses can provide that kind of support,” she said.

In addition to offering services like wound care, suture and staple removal, and injections, EUPCC nurse Christy Morris also enjoys helping patients to better manage their own

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health through special nurse-led projects. This includes a preventative screening program that began at the Gorge UPCC and was also launched at the EUPCC earlier this year aimed at patients over the age of 40 without a primary care provider.

“When people come in for an appointment at our clinic, nurses determine if screening for certain types of cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes is due. We also provide patient education about why screening is important,” she said. “Giving people skills through health promotion, education and disease prevention helps them maintain better health over their lifespan.”

While the EUPCC is becoming known for its sexual health services and partnerships with Island Sexual Health and the Vancouver Island Women’s Clinic, the DVUPCC has also implemented several nurse-led programs including Opiate Agonist Therapy, an HIV prevention initiative, and a refugee clinic.

“It’s rewarding to know we have that impact and voice – we will often identify that there is a community need and bring it forward to the team for consideration,” said Alison MacLaggan, a clinical nurse leader who helps to identify and implement nurse-led programs at South Island UPCCs. “It’s a very grassroots approach to service delivery by determining which programs are most needed in each individual community.”

South Island UPCC nurses are passionate about exploring benefits to both their patients and the larger team of caregivers by continuing to suggest and support unique, patient-centred programs and services.

“Patients appreciate the time that the nurses are able to spend with them and the kindness that they show,” said fellow clinical nurse leader, Estephania U. Acebedo. “I am very proud of the compassion, commitment and perseverance that UPCC nurses bring to our clinics each day.”

Other health care providers are also grateful for the services being offered by nurses at the UPCCs, which have become known for their integrated team-based care model that includes physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, mental health and substance use consultants, and medical office staff.

“Our clinic offers dozens of independent nursing appointments per day, allowing patients access to high quality primary care,” said Dr. Paul Sawchuk, a physician at the DVUPCC. “Physicians like me benefit from being able to share the workload with trusted colleagues, while nurses find it rewarding to fill such an important role in our health care system.”

Nurse-led appointments for a variety of conditions at South Island Urgent and Primary Care Centres can be arranged by calling 1-833-688-8722 and selecting a UPCC in your area from an automated list.



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WCGH AUXILIARY SUPPORTS PORT ALBERNI COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES WITH GIFT OF \$30,000+

by Alison James

The Alberni Health Care Auxiliary asked Community Health Services Port Alberni for a patient care and comfort wish-list and went on to fund every item on the list. Community Health Services recently hosted a recognition tea for the auxiliary and a tour of their site so the Auxiliary could see some of the items they purchased and have the impact of their gift recognized.

“Our team is very much about celebrating successes and very much about gratitude and appreciation,” said Alisha Pauling, Manager, Clinical Operations. “We wanted to really recognize the Auxiliary in a good way.”

Items the Auxiliary purchased for Community Health Services included a new bed for hospice, and a low air loss mattress with a specialized surface that is used to support clients remaining at home for palliative care or chronic health conditions.

The Auxiliary also funded a new treatment chair for Community Health Services’ Ambulatory Care Clinic, a number of new oho Cushions that reduce pressure and alleviate pain when sitting.

The Alberni Health Care Auxiliary was founded in 1913 (then called the Women's Auxiliary to the West Coast General Hospital) and is a thriving group with over 100 members. The Auxiliary runs the gift shop at WCGH as well as popular thrift store The Attic. Funds from these two revenue streams support hospital equipment, patient care items, and bursaries for students graduating high school and seeking careers in health care.

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"We have huge community support," said Alberni Health Care Auxiliary Vice-President Patti Butler. "I feel

proud to be a part of the organization. We're all volunteers, and it's amazing to me the work that we're able to accomplish with all volunteers."

Patti joined the Auxiliary ten years ago after retiring from her career as a nurse with Island Health. She is very familiar with the patient care and comfort needs of Community Health Services, and when the Auxiliary had a strong revenue year, they were excited to reach out to CHS to see what they could help with. The Auxiliary also recently supported the purchase of a vaccine refrigerator

and coolers for vaccine transport for the Port Alberni Health Unit.

Community Health Services offers a range of supports to those facing challenges living safely and independently at home, including assistance with daily tasks like bathing and dressing, specialized nursing care, and support with physical rehabilitation. No doctor's referral is needed. Contact details for North, Centre, and South Island intake can be found **here**.

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’NAAČ’NAAČA AND EARTHQUAKE RESILIENCE: EMERGENCY PLANNING IN ACTION

by Vanessa Howard

The Indigenous people who have stewarded this land since time immemorial have important knowledge of our hazards, including earthquakes and tsunamis. Some of this knowledge is shared through stories, song, dance and art such as this image of ‘Earthquake Foot’.

British Columbia is the most seismically active area in Canada, with the communities served by Island Health as those most at risk for a major earthquake and tsunami. Through Indigenous knowledge, historical events, and seismic modeling tools we can understand what we should anticipate.

The word *n’aač’n’aača* and its meaning is shared with us by Tim Paul, a Hesquiaht artist. He described it as a way of seeing the world and knowing what is coming, or foresight. *n’aač’n’aača* gives us the knowledge we need to be able to prepare ourselves, our families, and our Island Health community so that we have

the resilience to withstand the impacts of an earthquake and can plan for how we can lead ourselves and our teams through a major disaster.

Aligned with Island Health’s vision of excellent health and care for everyone, everywhere, every time our leadership team engaged with an evidence-based earthquake scenario presented by Health Emergency Management BC to explore the key planning actions Island Health will prioritize as we build our Island Health resilience. Foundational to our resilience is three key areas of focus: personal staff preparedness, program and team planning, and whole of Island Health operational planning.

Every emergency regardless of how large, begins as a local emergency. Your personal preparedness directly affects how you and your family are impacted by the event and how you will be able to stay connected during a disaster. Small actions that you take today will help you stay safe, confident, and able to help others during an earthquake. Every person should know their risks, make a family plan, and build an emergency kit and a grab and go bag.



HEMBC EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS –
RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Health Emergency Management BC’s Island Health program will be offering each Island Health leadership team a personalized emergency management training and coaching session. The initial phase of this project will be to plan for how each program will respond during the early phases of an emergency in a whole of Island Health response.

Then, over the next several months we will be planning our response priorities for a sustained event such as an earthquake.

We are creating a framework that leaders will use during a major disaster to guide their decisions. This will allow leaders throughout Island Health to keep their attention

on providing empathetic leadership and clear direction to their teams during a major event. n̓aačn̓aača helps us prepare, and this preparation will grow our resilience to withstand, respond to, and recover from all emergencies.

"We all need to be aware of the seismic risk Island Health is exposed

to. The leadership exercise highlighted to me how important this work is; emergency preparedness planning will help us lead with compassion and empathy during a major disaster." James Hanson, VP Clinical Services, Acute Care North & Community Services."

Small actions that you take today will help you stay safe, confident, and able to help others during an earthquake. Every person should know their risks, make a family plan, and build an emergency kit and a grab and go bag.

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION ACROSS ISLAND HEALTH









L-R: Catherine Claiter-Larsen, Vice President of Strategy & Chief Information Officer at Island Health; Hari Krishan Sharma; and Leah Hollins, Chair for the Island Health Board of Directors and previous Chair of the Canadian Blood Services Board of Directors.

100 PINTS OF HEROISM

by Tayanna Linden

Hari Krishan Sharma has a lot to bloody celebrate: on September 14, 2024, he reached a major milestone of 100 blood donations!



"I promise that as long as I'm alive, I will keep on donating. If I can - I will," says Hari.

Hari, a Technical Analyst with IM/IT, has worked at Island Health since 2002 after moving to Canada from India. His recent appointment at Canadian Blood Services marked 36 years of giving blood on a regular basis, but Hari still remembers his first donation with a special fondness.

"I donated for the first time on January 9, 1988, which was a day before my elder son Neeraj was born in Chandigarh, India. It was expected

to be a C-Section. The doctors in India advised me to donate... it was their way of ensuring a good supply of blood."

Hari and his wife share a blood type, meaning his donation would help to safeguard her during the procedure if she required a transfusion.

"Since then, I have been regularly donating every few months. My routine has been to at least donate

Hari Krishan Sharma, Technical Analyst at Island Health; and Jamie Braman, Vice President of Communications and Partnerships at Island Health.



Neeraj (left) celebrates with his father Hari as he donates blood for the 100th time.



"I donated for the first time on January 9, 1988, which was a day before my elder son Neeraj was born in Chandigarh, India. It was expected to be a C-Section. The doctors in India advised me to donate... it was their way of ensuring a good supply of blood." — Hari Krishan Sharma

on all my families' birthdays. If it saves the life of someone in need, this is the best donation which I can think of."

Hari was joined by Island Health Leadership at Canadian Blood Services in Victoria, on Saturday, September 14, to celebrate his achievement.

"What Hari is demonstrating here (through this donation achievement) is what I've seen in him since 2002 — a calling to serve. He is committed to helping others in his role at Island

Health, and also in his community. There's something in the people who choose to work in healthcare — or for whom this work has chosen them. It's a compulsion to be part of something — to serve others and give back. I'm so proud to see Hari make that connection to our work through his ongoing commitment to donating blood." — Catherine Claiter-Larsen, VP of Strategy & CIO

"Canadian Blood Services needs donors and those donors are

essential to our patient care. We all need to help ensure people have access to the blood and blood products that they require when they get care from us. We see the back end of what happens — but when we connect those dots, we see how important this partnership is. Without the Canadian Blood Services, we couldn't give the care we provide." — Leah Hollins, Island Health Board Chair (and former Board Chair of Canadian Blood Services)

"My dad's 100 blood donations are a testament to his unwavering commitment to helping others. His selfless acts of kindness have touched countless lives, and I am incredibly proud of his dedication to making the world a better place. His journey is an inspiring reminder of the profound impact one person can have through the simple act of giving." — Neeraj Prashar

It was also a proud day for both of Hari's sons, Neeraj and Nishant – the latter of whom is a Cardiologist working in California and recognizes through his own work in healthcare what an immense gift it is to give blood.

"One hundred blood donations. A century of compassion. Dad, your selfless act of giving back to society inspires us all. We're incredibly proud of your dedication and commitment to making a difference."

— Dr. Nishant Prashar

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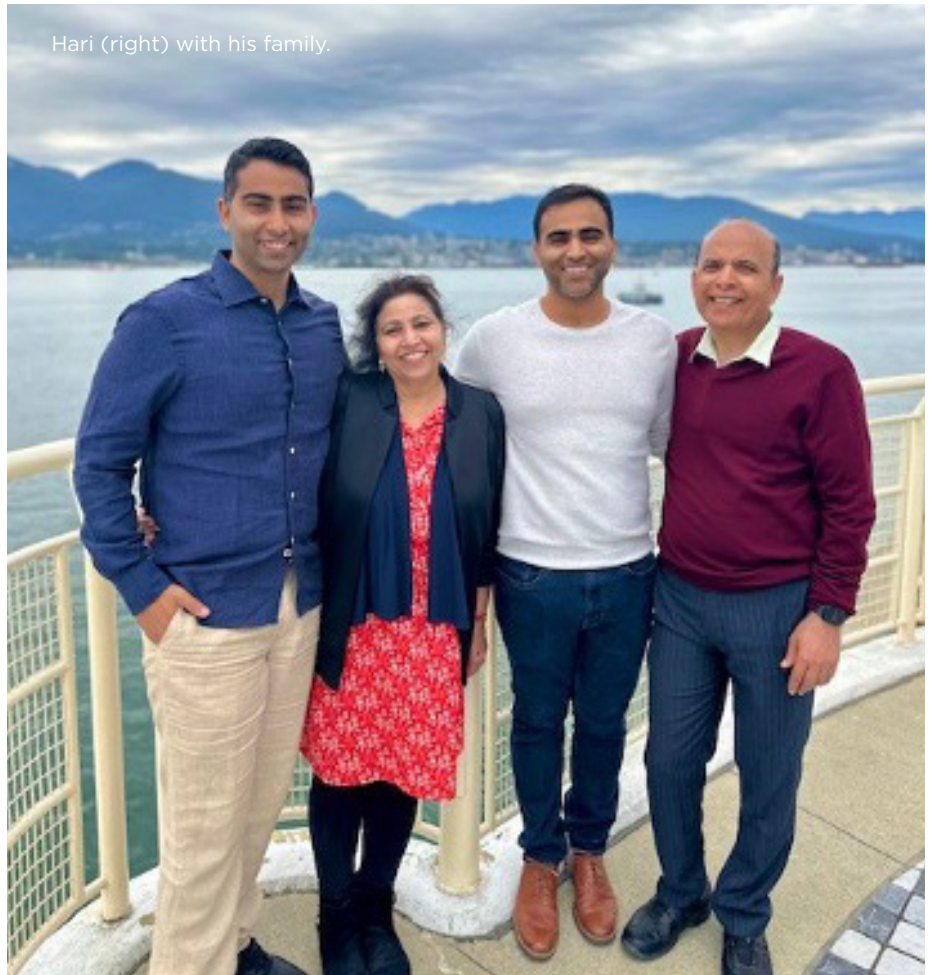
— Neeraj Prashar

Are YOU ready to book a donation appointment? Visit Canadian Blood Services to find a date/time that works for you.

"One hundred blood donations. A century of compassion. Dad, your selfless act of giving back to society inspires us all. We're incredibly proud of your dedication and commitment to making a difference."

— Dr. Nishant Prashar

Hari (right) with his family.



Hari cheers on Jen Morgan, Director of Internal and Leadership Communications at Island Health, as she donates blood for the first time.



RJH PHARMACY RECEIVES A DOSE OF INNOVATION

by Tayanna Linden

In a heartfelt goodbye, the Royal Jubilee Hospital (RJH) has laid to rest their Pharmacy robot, TODD, after 19 years of service. TODD – affectionately dubbed “Temperamental Oversized Drug Distributor” – was a longtime member of the pharmacy team, helping to pick and package medications in accordance with the 4,500+ orders that the RJH Pharmacy receives daily. While considered top-notch technology in his heyday, TODD had begun showing his robot age in the recent years. As mechanical issues escalated, staff found themselves experiencing frequent disruptions in workflow, stopping processes to troubleshoot and tend to TODD’s needs.

“When TODD was in a good mood, boy, did he make our lives so much better – however, TODD was

temperamental at best. He was prone to throwing tantrums and needing lots of TLC from the

Pharmacy Technicians to get out of a sulk and start working again. TODD’s issues became worse as the years

wore on,” shares Clare (Clarene) Ho, Pharmacy Site Coordinator at RJH. “We found ourselves tending to TODD many days of the week in the past couple of years. This led to Pharmacy Technicians scrambling to manually fill medications for patients.”

Recognizing that an upgrade was necessary to continue to meet patient care needs, TODD was lovingly retired this summer and replaced with a new, modern technology. “Our new machines (PacMed), while not as flashy as TODD, are simpler and much more dependable!” explains Clare.

The new PacMed machines offer highly customizable options for dispensing and labelling oral medications, including the ability to print patient care information directly on the packaging – a feat TODD was incapable of, and a move that will help to improve and simplify pharmaceutical care for the patients at RJH.

On the day of his retirement, Pharmacy staff bid farewell to TODD, marking the moment he was powered down for the last time, expressing gratitude for his service, and looking forward into an innovative future.



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PROTECT ME, PROTECT YOU. GET IMMUNIZED FOR THE FLU.

Influenza and COVID-19 Community Immunization Clinics are happening now. All BC residents 6 months and older can get a free flu and/or COVID-19 vaccine.

Once you receive your invite via email or text, you can book an appointment at a pharmacy or Island Health community clinic using the booking link. You can also call the contact centre at 1.833.838.2323

Everyone, including children, must be registered. If you've ever had a COVID-19 vaccine, you are already registered. If not, register at getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca

Vaccines will also be at some doctors' offices.

For more info, visit islandhealth.ca/immunizations or open your phone's camera/QR reader to scan the code.

