

currents

INSIDE ISLAND HEALTH

SUMMER 2021



island health



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With great respect and humility, Island Health acknowledges the Coast Salish, Nuu-Chah-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 I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for each of you who work tirelessly to deliver and support health and care in the Island Health region. I recognize the personal and professional challenges you face as we continue to respond to the pandemic and drug poisoning crisis while delivering a mass immunization program unlike anything we have ever done before and still providing excellent health and care to the people we serve. Not only are you caring for our patients and clients, but you are also caring for each other.

This issue of Currents highlights celebrations from Nursing Week, which was held May 10-16. Nursing Week provides an opportunity to say thank you to Island Health's 8,000 + nurses who deliver and support care in every corner of our health system. This year's theme was "We Answer the Call," highlighting the many roles that nurses play in a patient's healthcare journey. This has been particularly evident during the pandemic where we have become much more aware of the important role nurses play in the community. I am so grateful for everything nurses

do, and I invite you to learn more about the many celebrations that took place this year as you read through this edition of Currents.

Thank you for everything you do every day to lift up and support each other and those we are privileged to serve. As we begin to look towards summer, it is with optimism as we take the time to reconnect with friends, family and our communities.

Sincerely,

Kathy MacNeil
Island Health President & CEO

"As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for each of you who work tirelessly to deliver and support health and care in the Island Health region."

ISLAND HEALTH CELEBRATES NURSING WEEK 2021

Following are a selection of stories about Island Health nurses. These are just a few of the many stories you can read at the Weekly [here](#). Thank you to all nurses for everything you do.

This incredible team of nurses work as a member of the interdisciplinary care team in acute care and is responsible for supporting patient's transition out of hospital — Heidi Taylor, Manager Hospital Liaison & Social Work

They work closely with the patient, family, caregivers and their community health services colleagues to assess care needs and plan a smooth transition back to community. You will often see them leading STR's, family conferences and taking the lead in complex discharges planning. They have knowledge expertise in community based services and Long Term Care and Assisted living care settings.



We are thankful for the work that this teams does, the dedication and care that they demonstrate every day to support our patients

and their families.

With gratitude from Heidi, Christine and Janine.

Stopping racism at her place of work — Nilak, Ironhawk, LPN

"My role at the Sihexun Sun'ts'a' clinic is a LPN, Health Coach". As a First Nations nurse working with my community I try to do my best to stop racism at my place of work by treating all people as one.

What has helped me cope, is knowing that one day we could all be together again as a team. I have learned that I need my whole family in my life to have mental wellness."



"What has helped me cope, is knowing that one day we could all be together again as a team."

Relying on each other's support, nurses are a tight-knit group who are answering the call — Teresa McFadyen, LPN



"I am a LPN who is proud to be a team member at Victoria Hospice. I have been with Island Health since graduating in 2008 and I want to wish all my colleagues happy nurses week," says Teresa McFadyen, LPN

The theme of 2021 nursing week is We Answer the Call to many nurses this means that they are there and available when you need them.

"I am so impressed with the resiliency of nurses throughout this pandemic. Many nurses have put off their retirement and come out of retirement to help with this world wide epidemic," adds Teresa.

While this has been extremely difficult for everyone and especially

nursing and healthcare, nurses have persisted by being there for patients and residents as well as family and friends.

"Nurses are a tight knit group of people who rely on and support each other. Only a nurse can really understand how our day or night goes, the ups and downs, the good and not so good, the happy and the sad, and the ever-changing landscape of a nurse's life. I am so proud to be a nurse and able to have my co-workers there supporting me through the struggles and smiles. A shout out to family and friends as well. I wish you all Happy Nurses Week and hope you are celebrated and can celebrate."



Humbled by the strength and compassion and humour of the Indigenous community, Lisa feels privileged to walk alongside her people — Lisa Greer, NP

"Nu gwa am Lisa Greer. I live, work, and play in the traditional territory of the Kwakiutl people. I work for the Island Health: Indigenous Health Program; providing service to the Kwakwaka'wakw, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw, and Quatsino First Nations around Port Hardy," says Lisa.

I started as a registered nurse with Island Health in Nanaimo in 1997 and completed my Master's in Advanced Nursing Practice to become a Nurse Practitioner in 2013. Working as an NP for just over seven years in Port Hardy, Lisa feels lucky to have a full-scope practice where she supports people, families, and communities on their health journey; from pregnancy to palliative care, and everything in between.

"I have a special interest in supporting people living with chronic illnesses, including treating chronic pain. This past year has brought

challenges that we never thought we would see. It is isolating and has been hard for everyone," adds Lisa. As she reflects upon this time, Lisa believes that she found the strength to carry on as a result of the meaningful relationships that she has been built over the years with patients, community, and allied professionals.

"The best part of my 'job' is the warm welcome, embrace, and trust that I receive from the community. It is a privilege to walk alongside people at their most difficult times; to bring comfort and hope. I am repeatedly humbled and impressed by the strength, compassion, and humour that are key elements of Indigenous resiliency that I witness," says Lisa.

Lisa believes that laughter is good medicine and that the ocean and big trees are great medicine. Being connected is the best medicine.

Gilakas'la



Pivoting to a new responsibility, Diane is vaccinating in the Duncan community — Diane Maille, RN

Diane Maille started working with Island Health in 2006 and, prior to the pandemic, worked as a public health nurse helping new moms transition through the prenatal and the postpartum period. She offered breastfeeding support, connections to community resources, childhood immunizations, as well as newborn and postpartum assessments.

When the pandemic hit, Diane pivoted to vaccinating the Duncan community.

“It feels good knowing that in a time of uncertainty I can contribute in my role as a nurse to help my community stay safe. It is not just the nurses who help make these mass immunization clinics run smoothly, but a team of nurses, admin staff, IMIT, greeters, custodians, security, volunteers — and of course — we can’t forget the vaccine delivery drivers. My gratitude to the whole team for making it all happen,” says Diane.

Even though work is serious, smiles are still needed — Joel Bailey, BSN

Spending the majority of his time supporting school staff to care for children who have diabetes, who have seizure disorders and who are fed via feeding tubes, Joel also volunteers on a regular basis. Since the pandemic began, Joel is busier than ever with his regular job but is also helping with COVID-19 testing and immunizations in his spare time.

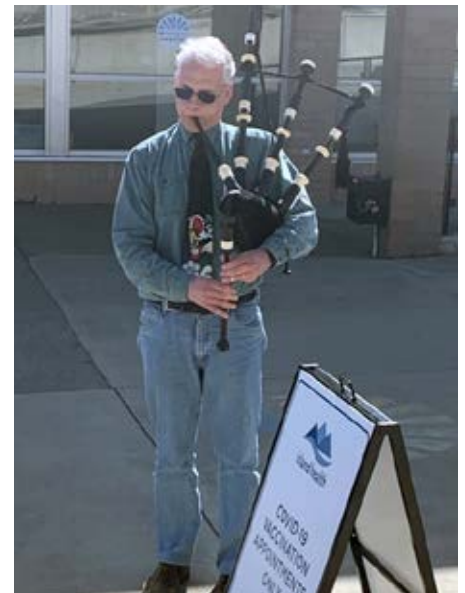
Joel has learned several things about himself during the pandemic — a highly reactive time. He’s learned

that he can handle more change than he had ever thought possible.

“I also learned that simply showing up and taking care of one thing at a time will get him through the day, regardless of whether it’s a big issue that requires long-term planning or the simplest of tasks,” says Joel.

Joel is proud to be on a team that supports each other. And, he hasn’t forgotten how to have fun.

He brings his bagpipes to every COVID-19 clinic and is rewarded by the smiles on people’s faces!



Adjusting to meet the needs of the community — Leslie Cochrane, RN

“I am a community Health Registered Nurse at the primary care clinic (SSC). I have been here for over 14 years, I work with entire life span in the community. What I have I learned about myself in the past year is I feel I am very flexible with my work and able to adjust according to the needs of the community.

How I have coped in the last year is my work family has been my

support network, and yoga and my puppy has helped me get through this past year and supporting my community in a culturally safe way.

“How I have coped in the last year is my work family has been my support network.”

There have been many changes and frontline workers ability to adapt has been second to none — Jennifer Soucy, RN

A nurse in the emergency department at the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (NRGH), Jennifer Soucy has seen significant change in many areas of the ER since the pandemic began but most visibly in operations and safety.

“ERs have historically managed everything from major trauma to simple lacerations but with Covid we saw a major change in the structure and flow of our department in order to ensure our safety and the safety of the public,” says Jennifer.

The changes as a result of Covid have impacted frontline workers in many ways.

“Each nurse has a story and has made sacrifices. The nurses on my team have done an outstanding job and I want to acknowledge all of them. And it’s not just the nurses who have made a difference during these times.

I don’t want to miss out on thanking the others who are on the team such as care aids, housekeepers, supply attendants, NUAs, educators, physicians, and ambassadors. Everyone is contributing to the success in these trying times. **I want to say how proud I am of our team and the cohesiveness of everyone that works in NRGH’s ER.”**



An amazing feeling knowing you’ve made a difference — Loretta Wilson, LPN

“I am an LPN, Health Coach, I work at the Slhexun Sun’ts’a’, and started in 2015. I was part of the teams that helped our community face and get through the pandemic. It is an amazing feeling knowing you have made a difference.

I feel the best part of my job is how connected I am with the community. What I have learned about myself

in this past year is how important being around people actually is for me both in my personal life and work. It was something I missed.

What I am most proud of is continuing to support the community throughout the pandemic during the hardest time of most of our lives. What has helped me get through this past year change expectations of myself, community members and colleagues as everything changes frequently as we are continually learning.

Looking for support from family, work family and by walking — Kimberly Viksush, LPN

“I am an LPN Health Coach at the Slhexun Sun’ts’a’ Clinic at Cowichan Tribes. The best part of my job is our team and community that I work with.

What I have learned about myself is sweating the small stuff will not get you know any where.

I am most proud of my ability to adapt to be flexible during the pandemic.

I cope and look for support from my family, my work family and walking.





NURSING WEEK AT ISLAND HEALTH





Proud to support her community and coworkers — Valerie Jefferd, NP

"I am a NP(F) for Indigenous Health, IH, and I work at the Sihexun Sun'ts'a' Clinic at Cowichan Tribes, H'ulh-etun Health Center for the Halalt/Lyackson Nation and Penelakut Health Center for the Penelakut Tribe.

The best part of my job is the supportive nature of the teams and community members I work with and the community members that I can support in their health

journey in a culturally safe environment. It's bringing health service to the FN peoples.

What I have learned in this past of the pandemic is be open to rapid change(s) and be flexible and adaptable. I am proud to be able to continue to work in the communities and support both the communities and my coworkers. My supporting network is my co-workers there, my work family and my family and friends."



"My team and colleagues from other services and programs have been my safety net throughout the pandemic. We have taken the time to check in on each other at countless meetings, ensuring that everyone feels supported and heard."



Island Health has a bounty of amazing people who really care

— Lisa Saffarek, RN

"I am the director of Virtual Care, which is a wonderfully unique

role for a nurse. Our team has the opportunity to develop solutions that positively impact patients and clinicians, especially during the pandemic. I have been nursing for over 30 years and worked in Island Health for 25 years, starting in ED and moving on to leadership roles, Primary Care and Clinical Informatics before landing in Virtual Care," says Lisa.

Over the last 13 months, I have learned we have a bounty of amazing people working at Island Health who truly care. Virtual Care under went significant growth which gave Lisa the opportunity to work with many new colleagues who do fantastic work every day.

Lisa is most proud of the Virtual Care services that support patients and care providers to receive and deliver care safely from anywhere.

Her team has lots of work to do but a strong foundation to build on.

"I have learned to let go of 'perfect' during the pandemic and go with 'what we can live with now', while maintaining our commitment to quality improvement and strong support. It was really hard to deploy less than optimal solutions quickly; I appreciate the flexibility and patience of so many programs," adds Lisa.

On a personal note, reflecting on her work colleagues, Lisa says, "My team and colleagues from other services and programs have been my safety net throughout the pandemic. We have taken the time to check in on each other at countless meetings, ensuring that everyone feels supported and heard. Outside of work, my family and five dogs have been wonderful with providing unconditional love, especially the dogs!"

"This year, Sheilah has learned that she is a resilient person with an ability to buckle down when the situation calls for it. "I am extremely proud of the team I work with and thank them for all their support and encouragement this year."



Working closely together to support each other during this difficult year — Sheilah Frost, RN

A nurse manager of clinical research at Island Health, Sheila has worked with our organization for the last 21 years in various areas such as neurology, emergency and clinical research.

"This year, while learning my new role as manager, I had to stop and pivot a team of clinical research nurses and coordinators to focus on COVID-19 research studies. Through our Provincial connections and the Canadian Critical Care Trials group, we were provided an opportunity to work with the World Health Organization on the CATCO study. This enabled our team to provide treatment options for our Island Health residents," says Sheilah.

Building on this opportunity, Sheilah's team mentors a number

of ICU nurses in Nanaimo Regional General Hospital to become research nurse coordinators in order to implement the CATCO study in Nanaimo.

"The Nanaimo team have worked hard to learn about the complexities of clinical research along with all the regulatory requirements. Currently three studies are enrolling in NRGH ICU. The South Island and Central Island teams are working closely together and continue to support each other during this difficult year."

This year, Sheilah has learned that she is a resilient person with an ability to buckle down when the situation calls for it. **"I am extremely proud of the team I work with and thank them for all their support and encouragement this year."**

Offering a lifeline of help and hope to people of the community
— David Wignall, LPN

David Wignall works as an LPN in Community Access as an Intake Clinician. You may have spoken to David or one of his colleagues when setting up wound care, home supports or equipment assessments.

Community Access is composed of a team of RNs and LPNs who work collaboratively together for 365 days a year.

"The most important thing that I have learned while working at Community Access is that nursing does not need to be face to face. A nurse can be just as professional, caring, and effective practicing in remote ways," says David.

Proud of his department, David operates mostly by phone and offers a lifeline of help and hope to many people in the community and especially to the elders who have endured such a tremendous isolation and uncertainty in the last year.



RJH Surgical Daycare — Dina Belusic

Hi there, my name is Dina, I work at RJH Surgical Daycare and I also work in the Preadmission Clinic at RJH and VGH. I've been a nurse for 10 years, and a hospital employee for 21 years. My mom worked at Royal Jubilee, and my daughter works here as a HCA and clerk. I have been blessed with a wonderful job and absolutely AMAZING coworkers.

I would like to give a big shout out to my coworkers as we are a very busy unit with things changing daily and having to adjust during these covid times.



We are like a big family. I want to say thank you to all my coworkers for being so supportive, absolutely

wonderful and upbeat during these times where our faces are breaking out.

"I would like to give a big shout out to my coworkers as we are a very busy unit with things changing daily and having to adjust during these covid times."



Just being there for one another is a valuable contribution in these trying times — Jennifer Coulombe, BSC

Jennifer Coulombe, a project coordinator in the Overdose Prevention Service in Courtenay has been with the new service since opening the doors in September of 2020. Jennifer is excited about her new position and the new service.

"In July of 2017, I moved from Vancouver and joined Island Health. Pleased, that in spite of everything, we have been able to continue to offer this valuable service. **In recent months, I've learned that people have an incredible ability to adapt**

to the unexpected and just being there for each other is one of the most valuable ways we can contribute," says Jennifer.

Jennifer is proud of her colleague Danny who always manages to wear a smile on his face and has so much compassion for the people who use the service.

"My puppy Nova has been a huge source of comfort to me during these times and we have enjoyed lots of walks in the forest by my house."

"In recent months, I've learned that people have an incredible ability to adapt to the unexpected and just being there for each other is one of the most valuable ways we can contribute."

We are the nurses of the Outpatient Antimicrobial Therapy Clinic (OPAT)!

These amazing ladies are not only my co-workers.

Jackie, Sara, Dolores, and Andy are the best team I could ever ask to work with. They are the reason I continue to LOVE my job! They have all become my friends over our years together, but more importantly, I consider them my family.

Like every family, we have had some ups & downs, but I know that I can count on these ladies in my best times and in my worst times. We have each personally experienced some difficult times during our years together and this family has always shown up. We laugh and joke with each other. We definitely know how to have fun! We have cried together, been frustrated together. We support each other.



From left, Diana Reitsma (in OPAT since 2011); Jackie Phillips (in OPAT since around 2007); Andy Fraser (in OPAT since 2016); Dolores Cordner (in OPAT since around 2015); and Sara Mottl (in OPAT since around 2014)

These ladies are the definition of a nurse - patient, kind, caring, committed trained professionals who focus on the needs of others; super

heroes. I am so grateful and blessed to have these ladies in my life.

We will show up, we will work hard... #we answer the call.

"These ladies are the definition of a nurse – patient, kind, caring, committed trained professionals who focus on the needs of others; super heroes."



Showing adaptability and resilience
— Carolyn Johns, RN

"It's really been a challenging year to be a nurse; it's been stressful, but we've really learned a lot. I'm proud of how my team rose to the challenge.

"We've done an amazing job of holding each other up under tremendous amounts of stress. It hasn't been easy, and there have certainly been moments where every one of us has struggled.

That being said, I feel my colleagues and myself have shown how adaptable and resilient we can really be."

A PLACE OF HEALING: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AS WE BUILD A NEW COWICHAN DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Those who have been following the **Cowichan District Hospital Replacement Project** journey or working with our care teams will recognize how Indigenous participation in health care and service planning is positioned at the forefront of our work.

"The health disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations are preventable," noted Alice Gelpke, executive director, Cowichan Valley region.

"Island Health remains committed to eliminating discrimination, increasing the cultural safety of our services, and improving health outcomes by working in partnership with First Nation, Métis, and Indigenous people, and taking actions to heal the impacts of colonization and systemic racism."

During recent milestone events for the new hospital, Cowichan Tribes Councillor and Elder Albie Charlie shared how hospitals and institutions have been places where Indigenous people have felt unwelcomed and unsafe, drawing parallels to the Residential School experience, which eroded trust in these institutions.

"In the past, we experienced racism. We were set aside. [The Residential School system] took away a lot of our families and separated them from their children; some never came back," said Charlie. "But through this project, and the opportunity to participate, and through nautsa'maat (a Hul'qumi'num term meaning, 'working together with one common goal'), we are going to develop trust and reconciliation. Our people will now call this hospital, Hulitun Lelum ('Healing Home'), a place for healing, not a place of fear."

To deliver on our promise to create a place of healing, the Indigenous engagement manager for the project worked with the communities to convene an Indigenous advisory committee during business planning. The committee included Elders and other

community leaders from Cowichan Tribes, Ditidaht, Penelakut, Halalt, Stz'uminus, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Lyackson, Malahat and Pacheedaht First Nations, the Métis Nation and youth and adult participants from Hiiye'yu Lelum - House of Friendship, which serves the urban Indigenous population in the region.

A research grant from Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funded travel and participation for in-person meetings in Duncan; language and cultural education sessions with Cowichan Tribes Elders and knowledge holders; visits to each community (pre-pandemic); and a full-day virtual engagement session for Island Health Indigenous staff in February 2021.

Through this foundational work, we continue to gain understanding

"Island Health remains committed to eliminating discrimination, increasing the cultural safety of our services, and improving health outcomes by working in partnership with First Nation, Métis, and Indigenous people, and taking actions to heal the impacts of colonization and systemic racism."

“I truly believe if we follow the lead of Indigenous partners to create safe places of healing, we will improve health and care for everyone,”

around values and protocols for respectful engagement, health and wellness priorities for the communities and ways to improve our current and future services delivery and our workplace environments.

Members of the Indigenous Advisory Council Committee and Indigenous staff will continue to inform key aspects of the project and local service delivery as we move forward on the hospital and Cowichan Valley Health and Care Plan.

Dovetailed with these activities is the commitment to ensuring

everyone on the CDH Replacement Project is able to practice Cultural Safety and humility. Courses are available to all who are working on the build, from planners to architects and tradespeople, and external consultants hired to support the project, to ensure the build complements the ongoing cultural safety training underway across local care teams.

Reflecting on a conversation with Councillor Charlie and CVRHD Chair Aaron Stone during the land transfer ceremony in March, our

President and CEO Kathy MacNeil summed up our vision for the future. “I truly believe if we follow the lead of Indigenous partners to create safe places of healing, we will improve health and care for everyone,” said MacNeil.

“This process has been guided by a genuine desire to reconnect and an understanding that this connection is part of healing,” said CVRHD Chair Aaron Stone.

For more project news, visit www.islandhealth.ca/newcdh or email the project team at newcdh@viha.ca.



Video: Join Cowichan Tribes Councillor Albie Charlie, Cowichan Valley Regional Hospital District Chair Aaron Stone and Island Health President Kathy MacNeil at the land transfer ceremony for the new hospital.



HARM REDUCTION STAFF SHARE THEIR HEARTFELT THOUGHTS

Island Health employees Griffin Russell (seen right with his boys) and Sheena Campbell (shown above) share their heartfelt thoughts.

“Substance use is a health care issue, often occurring alongside other health issues, such as loneliness and isolation, homelessness and poverty, pain and trauma, racism and stigma. People who use substances are all someone’s beautiful child—their baby boy, their baby girl—and they matter.” — Griffin Russell



Griffin Russell works for Island Health as the Regional Harm Reduction Coordinator for Central Island. He has been in this position since October 2014, working throughout the entire drug poisoning crisis.

Russell has over 20 years' experience in mental health and substance use services, and he is both deeply passionate and fiercely committed towards safe access to health care for all people, believing that it is the greatest responsibility accompanying the beautiful privilege of working in health care.

At times there is a pain in my chest, a weight making it difficult to breathe; the weight is often accompanied by a lump in my throat and watering in my eyes, making it difficult to see.

The gravity of the enduring drug-poisoning crisis on Vancouver Island, and across British Columbia, is with me regularly. I have shed many tears at my desk, in my truck or while sitting near the ocean, wondering how it is possible for this tragedy to continue on in the ways it has.

The pain is deeply personal. I cry for my dear friend who lost her brother. I cry for the mothers whom I have sat with in their pain, a pain as a parent I hope to never know. I cry for the people I hold dear who are no longer here. I cry for the passionate people trying their damndest to signal safety, to build trust, and to offer anything and everything of value to people living this tragedy out.

I cry for all the children who have lost a parent, a grandparent, an aunt or uncle. I cry for those who watch helplessly as their friends and community die these preventable deaths. I cry as a man, knowing this crisis is killing four men every day in British Columbia. I cry as a father for fear my twin boys will suffer in such ways. I cry because some days it seems like it will never end.

Substance use is a health care issue, often occurring alongside other health issues, such as loneliness and isolation, homelessness and poverty, pain and trauma, racism and stigma. People

who use substances are all someone's beautiful child—their baby boy, their baby girl—and they matter.

I could hardly imagine another health care crisis where five people dying a day (in BC) would be allowed to persist for this long in our country. Yet, because this is about substances, the crisis continues to be plagued by ignorance and misunderstanding, and perpetuated by 100+ years of drug policy rooted in prohibition.

How many of us understand the history of Canadian drug policies or the racist motivations underpinning them? How many of us understand the historical underfunding of substance use services, resulting in a scarcity of specialized resources, an over reliance of non-profit organizations, volunteer-based 12 step programs, and fee-for-service treatments?

How many of us understand the prevalence of trauma driving this health care issue, the stain of stigma propagating the public's perspectives in much the same hateful and harmful ways as systemic racism? Stigma and shame around the use of substances was and continues to be a major driver in this crisis.

Three years ago, I sat on a panel at the University of Victoria, alongside a prominent epidemiologist who had worked at the highest spheres of public health, supporting a Provincial Health Officer. We were asked what the hardest part of our careers had been.

This wise, solid, and esteemed man got a quivering in his lower lip, a misting in his eyes, and he said something along the lines of, "The hardest part for me has been to witness time and time again people separating themselves from social issues, like the overdose crisis, as though the people who are suffering such social ills somehow deserve it, like they made the wrong choices, as though the social determinants of health don't matter, as though access to health care, gender, pain, poverty, race, stigma and trauma don't matter. They matter. These people matter. Context and circumstances matter."

Sheena Campbell was Island Health's original Harm Reduction Coordinator. She's rejoined the team as Regional Harm Reduction Coordinator, North Island. Along with her experience with Island Health, Campbell also brings a wealth of experience from her time as a Harm Reduction Coordinator with Vancouver Coastal Health.

I have worked in the field of Harm Reduction in both Vancouver and on Vancouver Island and have watched drug use cycles in our communities for the last 25 years.

I don't see this as simply an overdose crisis—overdoses have consistently happened amongst people who use substances. What is happening today is an unrelenting drug poisoning crisis.

Today, people reliant on substances must assess the likelihood of being fatally poisoned by their substances. As soon as we learn how to manage one contaminant (Fentanyl), a new, cheaper contaminant is used, many with heinous results (e.g., Etizolam). As service providers, we try to adjust, but we can't contend with the current reality—an unregulated and unpredictable supply chain.

The results are obvious—we are in year five of an emergency response. Despite our best efforts, people whose substances are illicit continue to die at an alarming rate.

We need a safe supply that meets the needs of the patient/client. The research related to pharmaceutical alternatives to the toxic drug supply is overwhelmingly positive. Key social determinants of health are addressed and people's lives are markedly improved.

We have choices that many do not, so we must use our voices to raise this issue. I hope you will join me in using your voice to compel our governments to move forward with the policy changes and actions needed to provide a safe supply and to decriminalize drug use.



NALOXONE & HARM REDUCTION INITIATIVE

It's easy to forget that our communities are dealing, simultaneously, with two health crises - COVID-19 and the opioid crisis. In the last month alone, Island Health reported five deaths to opioid overdose.

Currently, those who are at greatest risk are men (40 years +) who use alone and are occasional users - often not easily identified as substance users.

The Nanaimo Home Support team and the NRGH Harm Reduction

Team have collaborated again to provide Harm Reduction education and training to frontline Community Health Workers who have shown an interest.

This is not the first time our CHWs have advocated for the education

and training to support the people they encounter on the frontlines, as well as in their own personal lives. We completed sessions in 2019, in both Nanaimo and Oceanside, with an overwhelmingly positive response and interest from staff.

CHWs are often required to enter homes and neighborhoods where active substance use is occurring. Our CHWs have reached out and expressed a desire to have additional supports and tools, in the event they encounter someone in distress.

This education and training was voluntary, and is not an expectation of the role for our CHWs. As an important piece of harm reduction, and in an attempt to help reduce stigma around the population that uses substances, we are working diligently to spread information that helps to meet the needs of this population.

The hope is that, with proper education and training, staff who encounter a person in distress will feel comfortable with intervening and calling for help.

A huge shout out to Julie Speers and Janice Mills, from our NRGH Harm Reduction Team, who have dedicated themselves to this incredibly worthy cause, and who always bring their passion to these sessions. Thanks, also, to all those working behind the scenes to support these incredible initiatives.

Finally, a big THANK YOU to the CHWs who advocated for, and requested, this training, and to all of you who have signed up and brought your great questions and enthusiasm to the team.

KUDOS!

A big thank-you goes out to our new BC government sponsored Health Care Access Program students for supporting and organizing a successful week celebrating the nursing team at Saanich Peninsula Hospital in Long term Care.

The effort demonstrated what team rapport is all about. The wonderful poster boards of kind words from residents; the resident drawing the name for the beach day basket; and the pictures of smiles and happiness touched everyone's hearts. The residents were so excited the HCAP students involved them in being part of supporting the celebrations. The HCAP students made the residents feel valued and part of the family at SPH in LTC. The whole team at SPH are thankful to have you as part of our staff. Well Done!

Sandra Dawson
Manager
Saanich Peninsula Hospital
Long Term Care



A RIOT OF READING: READING TO BABIES WHO STAY IN THE NICU

In December of 2018 the NICU at Victoria General Hospital launched a program called The Little Warriors' Library. Not technically a lending library, the intention was to gift a book to the families of our patients to support both the bonding of parent and child and the cognitive development in the area of language of our premature and sick newborns. Just over two years on, we have given away more than 600 books!

It is well known that pre-term and other high-risk infants have a much greater chance of having poorer cognitive outcomes. Interventions to improve academic achievement of children are much more effective when begun in the preschool years. To that end, simply, we wish to gift a book, to be read aloud, by the parents ideally, to each baby during their admission of four or more days. If still with us at 30 days of life, another book and so on at 60, 90 etc. Based on the admissions of the past several years, this amounts to an average of 250 such babies annually.

We have been fortunate that a 'veteran' family (their child was admitted for several weeks the year before we launched) passionate about the NICU and literacy, seeded the project with 136 books. Almost all of the books we have received for the program are the



result of donations of books or money. We use local companies where possible to purchase books and some of these, ORCA Books for one, give us a discount so the dollars go further.

Often the donors are 'graduates' or veterans of the NICU much like the instigators of the program in 2018. Most recently we received \$1,000 in beautiful new books from one such family. Ephraim was born 2

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and a half months early to Mom, Amber Van der Mark, a teacher, and Dad, Scott Prad. In Amber's own words, "Of all the information we received in those first weeks, this was the one I could relate to the most. Well, not only did I choose a book from the "library" there, I then went out and bought many more. Each day I looked forward to reading Ephraim a story or two while I got to hold him; this is something we continue to this day.

"With all that was done for Ephraim in the NICU I wanted to give something back. I loved the idea of the Little Warriors Library and so I decided that I could maybe help by donating some books. I sent emails to my friends at work telling them my idea about collecting books and about a month later when a friend came to visit me, she brought a basket of books for the NICU. This started the ball rolling. I had plans to continue the book drive the next year and to make it a yearly thing."

After a total of 69 days in the NICU here at VGH and later in NRGH, Amber and Scott were able to take their son home. Then the restrictions of the pandemic descended upon us all. But Amber didn't give up.

"Not only did I get my school involved, but I also messaged

family and friends and before I knew it, I was receiving books and/or money to buy books. I held this drive for 1 month and in that time not only did I achieve my goal, but I doubled it. In the end, we collected enough money and books to have a grand total of 204 books.

"When I started this drive I spoke with my friend Devon who is the school librarian (of course she loved this idea), well she got in touch with Mulberry Bush Bookstore in Qualicum Beach and they were able to give us a discount on all the books, which (enabled us to purchase many more. It also turns out that one of the employees there was a preemie as well; small world! At the start of this book drive I thought that 100 books was an achievable goal; though I have to admit with COVID I was worried it would be hard to collect them; of course I was proven wrong. Those who did not feel comfortable going to stores to buy books donated money, and many people donated more than one book. My plan is to make this a yearly drive, though next year I think my goal will be 200 books. :) "

We are grateful for the support of local families and book stores in keeping this good news story rolling.



"After a total of 69 days in the NICU here at VGH and later in NRGH, Amber and Scott were able to take their son home."



"With all that was done for Ephraim in the NICU I wanted to give something back. I loved the idea of the Little Warriors Library and so I decided that I could maybe help by donating some books"



HAWAIIAN DAYS AT NANAIMO DIALYSIS UNIT!

The staff and patients at Nanaimo Community Dialysis unit dressed up and decorated the unit for Hawaiian days last week. The event gave a COVID-friendly opportunity to feel like they were on vacation without having to get on a plane! Every patient at NCDF had twinkles in their eyes and a few came in their favourite Hawaiian attire.

CASE & CONTACT MANAGEMENT, SURVEILLANCE - SUNSHINE OF THE WEEK



The CCMS team would like to recognize the incredible efforts of their multi-disciplinary team. To do so they have created a Sunshine Committee that is centered on adding moments of positivity into all aspects of work; from grounding moments where words of affirmation are read during morning huddles, to a trivia question to end every day.

One of the most notable efforts is the Sunshine of The Week nominations, where staff can nominate peers who have gone above and

beyond or just deserve a little extra recognition.

The winners are announced weekly and all team members nominated receive the kind comments submitted by their colleagues.

Here we would like to highlight the CCMS Sunshines from April 2021:

| | |
|------------------|------------|
| Kelly Kenning | Front Line |
| Katie Keleher | Leadership |
| Krystal Crighton | Front Line |
| Diane Lee | Front Line |
| Jani Urquhart | Leadership |
| Kaz Takeuchi | Front Line |

COWICHAN DISTRICT HOSPITAL: EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE, EXTRAORDINARY MOMENT

One day in May, the boiler at CDH went down, leaving the entire site at Cowichan District Hospital without steam; a critical component to sterilizing surgical and clinical equipment within medical device reprocessing, significantly impacting the surgical activity within the site and resulting in patients potentially being delayed or cancelled for their surgeries.

Through many logistical changes, flexibility, adaptability and many people coming to the rescue to ensure that we could continue to care for Cowichan Valley patients, the site was able to continue to run all planned activity without any impact to patient care.

This required a herculean effort from the site, and the support of NRGH and VGH MDRD departments. It enabled our team to obtain a fleet vehicle van, load all of the equipment needed, transport it to NRGH and VGH and run a graveyard shift through the night in order to bring the sterilized equipment back to CDH, ready for the patients in the morning.

While all of these extraordinary efforts were taking place, Jeff Carder

and the FMO team went to incredible lengths to commission a temporary boiler from the lower mainland and get it situated and connected at the site. The entire FMO team worked late into the evening to ensure we had steam to the facility, to get us back up and operating.

"Thanks to everyone up and down the Island who helped support MDRD to make it happen so quickly and relatively seamlessly. A big shout out to FMO who worked around the clock to get the boiler in, running and inspected. As always the MDRD team put their heads down and got to work - I am so thankful for the great people I work with every day." Carol Lambert - MDRD Supervisor, CDH

There are many people up and down the Island to thank who made this happen, however none more so than the MDRD and FMO team at CDH. Thank you for showing how much you care for the patients of this community and the lengths that you will go to in order to ensure that we can provide the care that the community needs and deserves.

We are so proud to work with the absolute best! As we look forward to the replacement of the new hospital, we recognize the extraordinary efforts that will be made now and into the future to "keep the old gal going" (CDH Medical Director, Dr Robert Anderson). We are such a strong and extraordinary community and this week reinforced that.



CELEBRATING 65 YEARS OF PROVIDING CARE AND COMFORT TO THE CAMPBELL RIVER HOSPITAL 1956-2021

The Campbell River Hospital Auxiliary was founded by seven members at a meeting on May 25th, 1956. Initially, it began its fund-raising by sponsoring dances and mobile cart services. The way that monies are raised, however, has changed substantially over the last seven decades. In 1962 the Auxiliary opened its first Thrift Shop. After renting numerous locations for many years, the members decided it was finally time to construct their own building. Thanks to the dedication of five visionary members who took out personal loans to finance the build, the current Thrift Shop opened its doors at 415-2nd Ave. on February 23rd, 1968. Thanks to community support and strong sales, it took only two years to repay the loans instead of the previously estimated time of five years. Nine years later, the Auxiliary opened the Hospital Gift Shop.

The Auxiliary's mission statement is *"To provide care and comfort to everyone who utilizes the Campbell River Hospital"*.

Volunteers in the Wellness Centre show patients the way to their appointments, offering them a cookie and a beverage. The Auxiliary supports both a music therapy program for patients and an education fund. The fund provides bursaries for hospital staffs' professional development and to secondary school students hoping to enter the field of medicine. In 65 years, education bursaries have totaled over \$100,000.00.

More than \$5,000,000.00 dollars in equipment has been donated to the hospital by the Auxiliary. Equipment such as wheelchairs, bladder scanners and vein finders have made especially substantial differences in the care of patients. Recently, the Auxiliary donated a Phototherapy UVI Light Booth for treating patients with skin conditions. Things such as the state-of-the-art Mammography Unit, ultrasound machine and portable ultrasound machines have also made a notable difference in the care of patients. All of this helps the dedicated hospital

staff to provide patients with the best of care and the most current modern equipment.

The Campbell River community, by supporting the Hospital Gift Shop and Thrift Shop and by donating gently used items that can be sold in the Thrift Shop, has been instrumental in our success. The Auxiliary is completely operated by volunteers. It receives no financial grants and no support through the provincial Gaming Fund.

"For the past 50 years I have enjoyed being part of a group of enthusiastic and hard-working volunteers dedicated to bettering patients' lives in our hospital. Being a member has been personally rewarding as our service is so beneficial to the Campbell River community. Memorable moments have included funding projects such as The Birthing Room, the original helicopter pad, the extended care van for patients, the secure observation room and the Wellness Centre," said Past President Sharon Helina.



DONATED 2020-2021
\$785,316.00 IN HOSPITAL
EQUIPMENT
THANK YOU, AMAZING
VOLUNTEERS!



ISLAND HEALTH RESEARCH DIRECTOR CINDY TRYTTEN RECOGNIZED FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

The Canadian College of Health Leaders recently announced the recipients of the 2021 Chapter Awards for Distinguished Service naming Cindy Trytten among its national regional winners.

The Chapter Awards for Distinguished Service provided an opportunity for chapters to recognize locally and nationally the individuals or corporate members who have made a significant contribution to their chapter.

The recipients have been selected by their respective chapters in recognition for their involvement in College activities and for their leadership in educational programming, member recruitment or other areas of voluntary contribution.

Cindy has been a member of the Vancouver Island Chapter since 2015.

Since being involved, Cindy has taken a leadership role on the Vancouver Island Chapter Executive. She is the Chapter's lead for the Certified Health Executive (CHE) program.

"Even after Cindy's term on the Executive passed, Cindy remained as the CHE lead for our Chapter," said her nominators. "We are very fortunate to have her support as she provides guidance to participants as they navigate the learning journey.

"Cindy played a key role in the Speaker Series initiative that our Chapter provides to our members. Cindy was able to recruit a number of engaging and thoughtful speakers to provide presentations before the workday began. These events provide great value to our members to learn from people

from a variety of different areas connected to the health sector.

"Since 2012, Cindy has been the Director of Research at Island Health. Through this work, Cindy is responsible for strategic planning, partnership development, capacity building and operations for research and knowledge translation at Island Health.

"Cindy is well deserving of this Chapter Award for Distinguished Service for 2021. Her positivity and passion to help others are imperative to making a difference. Cindy Trytten is a difference maker and an excellent advocate to the Canadian College of Health Leaders."

"Cindy is well deserving of this Chapter Award for Distinguished Service for 2021. Her positivity and passion to help others are imperative to making a difference."

NANAIMO PHYSICIAN RECOGNIZED BY THE QUEEN FOR ADVOCACY IN DROWNING PREVENTION

In a virtual presentation, Dr. Steve Beerman, a Nanaimo physician who retired from family practice in March 2021, was recognized by The Queen for a lifetime of outstanding National and International leadership in the drowning-prevention field.



Dr. Beerman was presented with the King Edward VII Cup, awarded every two years in recognition of outstanding contributions to drowning prevention.

The Queen is a patron of the Royal Life Saving Society, which works across 30 Commonwealth nations to eliminate preventable death from drowning, promote water safety, and deliver lifesaving and lifeguarding education. Drowning remains one of the greatest causes of preventable death in the world today, with an estimated 235,000 deaths every year.

"Her Majesty shared memories of achieving her own lifesaving qualification and award as a young girl, and praised Dr. Beerman for his 40 years of work."

During the call, Her Majesty shared memories of achieving her own lifesaving qualification and award as a young girl, and praised Dr. Beerman for his 40 years of work drawing attention to drowning as a major public health issue, including his work with the United Nations to adopt a Resolution on Drowning Prevention.

The Resolution sets out specific actions for Commonwealth countries to take to prevent drowning, and introduces an annual 'World Drowning Prevention Day', which will be marked for the first time this year on July 25, 2021.





HEALTH CARE HEROES

Presented by the Health Employers Association of British Columbia (HEABC), the BC Health Care Awards recognize individuals and teams who work to ensure that BC's health care system remains among the best in the world, by providing outstanding care or contributing to improved practices. Awards are given in six categories to projects improving health care delivery through innovative and collaborative approaches and to people making a positive impact and inspiring those around them. Island Health was the recipient of a number of awards.

DIANNA MAH-JONES AWARD OF EXCELLENCE IN PERSON-CENTRED CARE

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM OF RESEARCH: MOBILIZING PERSON-CENTRED CARE AND PATIENT-ORIENTED RESEARCH IN MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

Island Health's Scholar in Residence (SIR) program is building the organization's research capacity by engaging patients as partners to answer the health care questions that matter to them, with the broader aim of improving health systems. With overdose deaths at crisis levels across the province, the SIR program team

is working with people with lived experience to learn how best to reduce stigma so people feel safer and more willing to access care and services when they need it the most.

TOP INNOVATION

OPEN HEART SURGERY SURGICAL SITE INFECTION PROGRAM (OHS SSI) ISLAND HEALTH

The rate for open heart surgery wound infections in Island Health was well above the average in Canada, resulting in patient care concerns and costing the organization \$900,000 dollars per year. Recognizing that improvements were needed, the multidisciplinary Open Heart Surgery Surgical Site Infection (OHS SSI) Prevention and Reduction program was created. The work of the OHS SSI program has resulted in a significant reduction in infection rates and has reduced organizational costs by \$500,000 per year. Patient experience has improved significantly, decreasing the length of hospital stays and restoring confidence for future patients.

WORKPLACE HEALTH INNOVATION

Investigation into the Cleaning Methods of Smartphones and Wearables from Infectious Contamination in a Patient Care Environment (I-SWIPE), Royal Jubilee Hospital, Island Health

Visit BCHealthCareAwards.ca [Twitter.com/BCHealthAwards](https://twitter.com/BCHealthAwards) [Facebook.com/BCHealthCareAwards](https://facebook.com/BCHealthCareAwards) [YouTube/BCHealthCareAwards](https://youtube.com/BCHealthCareAwards) or to learn more about the 2020 award winners.





PINK SHIRT DAY





CDH THANK YOU!

Grade 8 students show support for CDH. After a 45-min walk, Grade 8 students and their teacher from Quamichan School arrived at CDH to show support to all the staff. You can hear cheers and screams and thank you's coming in through the windows!

It means a lot to the students when staff step outside and wave at them – the impact is then felt on both sides.

A sign, a yell of thanks and clapping, even by one person, means a great deal to others.

Having a whole class come and share their time, energy and thoughts with you is something very special. Remember that you and your work are not forgotten!

"I CANNOT EXPRESS HOW MUCH ADMIRATION AND GRATITUDE I HAVE FOR EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU."

A Port Hardy man is thanking Port Hardy Hospital staff, the air ambulance flight crew and a surgeon and staff at Royal Jubilee for the care he received after a life-threatening attack in April.

"I'm writing this letter to to express my sincere gratitude and to commend the staff at the Port Hardy Hospital," Darryl Millar said in an April 22nd letter to the North Island Gazette.

According to police, Millar was assaulted in a trailer park after a confrontation with a neighbor. Their investigation continues.

"To all of you who helped me when I needed it most, thank you," Millar wrote in his letter. "Last Monday (April 12), I was involved in an incident that left me with severe injuries resulting from a Gurkha knife (a Nepalese army machete) attack.

"I had severe lacerations to the neck, right hand, right shoulder blade, left tricep, and a broken left ulna. I was bleeding severely and was obviously in a state of shock when a heroic citizen/witness delivered me to the emergency ward at Port Hardy District Hospital.

"My emotions at this time progressed to being in fear for my life. I have never before felt uncertain that I would survive any injury or incident I had experienced in my life up until this point. I remember praying to God to make sure my heart was right with Him.

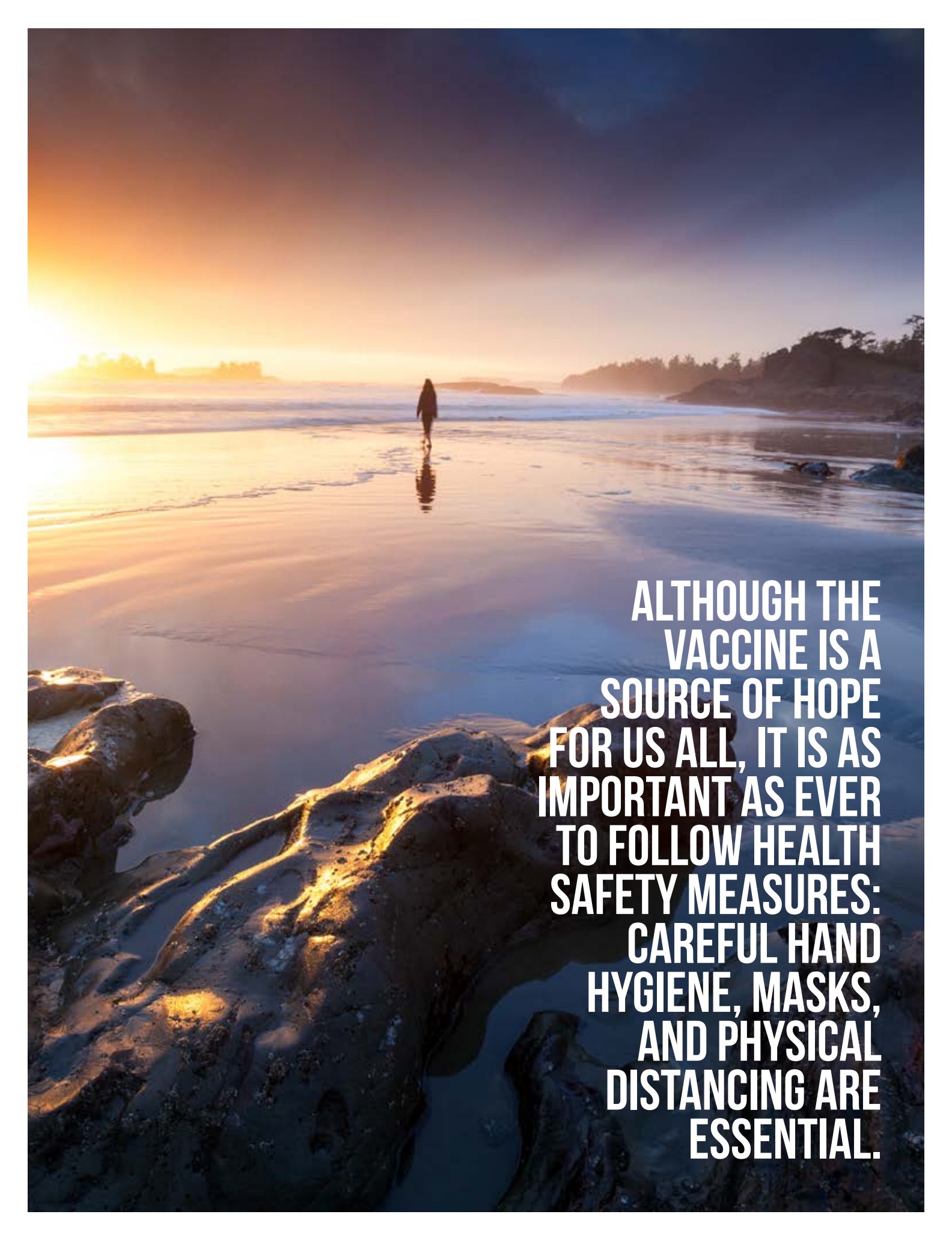
"The staff on duty that day were tremendous. From the empathy of the nurse, Jenna, who was attending to me, to the professionalism of the doctors and all those who took part in stapling me back together, patching me up and sending me off in air ambulance to Victoria, to the flight crew that delivered me to the surgeon at Royal Jubilee Hospital, I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

"Your reassurance that I was going to survive was a comfort to me I'll never forget. Your physical care ensured that I did survive. I'm going to make a full recovery, not just physically, but emotionally."

"I cannot express how much admiration and gratitude I have for each and every one of you."

Thank you.

"Your reassurance that I was going to survive was a comfort to me I'll never forget. Your physical care ensured that I did survive. I'm going to make a full recovery, not just physically, but emotionally."

A person is walking away from the camera on a wide, sandy beach at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow that reflects off the wet sand and the ocean. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a dark blue at the top. In the foreground, a large, dark, textured rock formation is partially visible, with some light reflecting off its surface. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

**ALTHOUGH THE
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SOURCE OF HOPE
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AND PHYSICAL
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