

MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE UPDATE

JANUARY 2025

New Project: Virtual On-Call Psychiatry

The new Virtual On-Call Psychiatry service aims to enhance access psychiatry services to smaller hospitals on the island that are often challenged with psychiatric coverage.

Working in collaboration with rural hospital Emergency Departments (EDs), patients will experience improved response times for psychiatric consultation through this virtual service.



- **Why are we launching the project?**
 - Patients in community and rural hospitals often wait times to see a psychiatrist, especially over weekends, due to lack of access to psychiatry services.
 - Lack of on-call psychiatry support has led to issues like unnecessary transfers, longer than average seclusion stays and unmet urgent psychiatric needs.
 - Improved patient outcomes.
- **What sites will be included in the project?**
 - WCGH: West Coast General Hospital (January 6th, 2025)
 - TGH: Tofino General Hospital (January 6th, 2025)
 - CIHC: Cormorant Island Health Centre (TBD)
 - LMH: Lady Minto Hospital (TBD)
 - PHH: Port Hardy Hospital (TBD)
 - PMH: Port McNeil Hospital (TBD)

POLICY UPDATE:

The Missing Person or Missing Person Under the MHA: Communication Expectations Procedure

The Missing Person or Missing Person Under the MHA: Communication Expectations Procedure has been updated and posted [here](#), on the Island Health Policies and Procedures web page.

This procedure standardizes communication for staff to transfer key risk information to the police to locate and/or safely return the person to the designated facility in the event that there are urgent/emergent risk concerns regarding a vulnerable or high-risk person, or a person under the MHA who goes missing from an Island Health facility, unit, or program.

Please take time to familiarize yourself with these guidelines.

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Program Update: Young Adult Unit

The new Young Adult Mental Health Unit is officially open to the public. In November 2023, Island Health began to reconfigure an existing mental health unit containing 16 beds to be a unit focused on care for young adults under age 26. It has now been formally announced by the Province of BC.

Patient feedback has proved central at every stage of the development of this unit. It was co-designed with the Patient and Caregiver Advisory Committee, comprised of individuals with lived and living experience of acute mental health challenges and peer support. Additionally, improvements have been informed by patient feedback surveys.

The team has participated in bi-weekly Quality Improvement Huddles since September 2023, providing a forum for discussion among direct care staff and clinicians about challenges and opportunities for improvement on the unit.



• Why the butterflies in the entryway?

“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.”

— Maya Angelou

In choosing an arbutus tree with butterflies for the entryway of the Young Adult Mental Health Unit, we acknowledge that transformation is a part of life. Yet the transformative process for patients with mental illness isn't always easy.

In the Young Adult Mental Health Unit, the butterfly also represents possibility – that change for the better can happen, that people can develop new skills to face life's challenges, and that, like butterflies taking flight after emerging from their cocoons, patients can recover and reach new heights in their lives.

This imagery was chosen after consultation with our patient and caregiver partners, and MHSU peer support workers. We hope it serves as a reminder that if nothing ever changed, there would be no butterflies.

highlights

From April 1st to October 15th, 2024 (**6 months**), there has been a total of **115 new admissions**.

Of the **115** patients:

- **41.7%**: 17-26 years old
- **24.3%**: 27-30 years old
- **33.9%**: 31 years old and above

“Quality Improvement huddles are a safe space where we can share, reflect, and be a part of a bigger picture.”

- Staff Feedback on bi-weekly unit QI Huddles