
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

New urgent and primary care centre opens in Cowichan

DUNCAN – People living in Duncan and surrounding communities will have increased access to team-based primary care through the new Cowichan Urgent and Primary Care Centre (UPCC).

“People in B.C. deserve timely, high-quality care that they and their families can depend on,” said Josie Osborne, Minister of Health. “This new UPCC is vital for rural communities in the area and means people living throughout the Cowichan Valley will have increased access to same-day primary health care closer to home.”

The Cowichan UPCC, which opened Monday, Oct. 20, 2025, will provide urgent care and, eventually primary-care attachment using a team-based model. Access to the Cowichan UPCC is by appointment only and is based on need, with a nurse or clinician assessing patients over the phone to ensure they receive the right care at the right time.

“This new UPCC is great news for people living in and around Duncan,” said Debra Toporowski (Qwulti’stunaat), MLA for Cowichan Valley and parliamentary secretary for rural health. “It is especially significant for the Cowichan Tribes, Penelakut Tribe, Halalt, Lyackson, Stz’uminus, Malahat, Ts’uubaa-asatx and Ditidaht First Nations, who will have access to care that’s closer to their homes and communities.”

As hiring progresses, people will be cared for by more than 30 full-time-equivalent health-care providers, such as family physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, mental-health clinicians, administrative staff and others.

“We are excited to open this new urgent and primary care centre in the Island Health region,” said Leah Hollins, board chair, Island Health. “This UPCC represents a significant step forward in enhancing primary care for Cowichan residents, offering comprehensive services and wraparound supports from a dedicated team of health-care professionals.”

People who need access to urgent primary care can call between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., seven days a week, to book at appointment at the Cowichan UPCC, located at 940 Government St. in Duncan. Additionally, patients who are attached to the primary-care team through the Health Connect Registry will be seen between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday to Friday.

“The opening of an urgent and primary-care centre in the heart of our region is fantastic news for the Cowichan Valley,” said Kate Segall, chair, Cowichan Valley Regional Hospital District. “Unfortunately, many people still don’t have a family doctor and accessing health services has been extremely challenging for many of our residents in recent years. This investment will provide a new opportunity for people to access medical services, including specific support for mental-health and addiction, which is so critical for our communities.”

The Cowichan UPCC is in a new building operated by Island Health. The space includes a multi-cultural room, 12 patient-examination rooms and five patient-consultation rooms for mental-health and substance-use support, as well as social worker support.

The Province has committed to ongoing operational funding of as much as \$6.9 million and startup funding of \$860,000. Additionally, the Province is funding \$5.4 million for tenant improvements, with the Cowichan Valley Regional Hospital District contributing \$2.8 million.

This UPCC marks the 42nd UPCC to open in the province since 2018, which have delivered more than three million patient visits. Planning for eight more UPCCs is underway, with the goal of establishing 50 UPCCs throughout B.C. This work is part of B.C.'s Primary Care Strategy, which is bringing more team-based primary-care services to people in B.C.

Quick Facts:

- People who need urgent access to primary care can call 1 833 688-8722 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., seven days per week, to book an appointment.
- Including Cowichan, 10 UPCCs are operating in the Island Health region, along with two primary-care access centres in Campbell River and on the Saanich Peninsula.
- The Cowichan UPCC is expected to handle more than 77,000 visits per year.
- BC Primary Care Strategy funding for the Cowichan Primary Care Network includes funding for family physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, a pharmacist and social workers.
- More than 83% of these funded positions have been staffed.

Learn More:

To sign up to be matched with a family doctor or nurse practitioner on the Health Connect Registry, visit:

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-connect-registry>

To learn more about the Province's Primary Care Strategy, visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018PREM0034-001010>

To learn about the Province's Health Human Resources Strategy, visit:

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

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