
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

Province strengthens community-based primary-care services

VICTORIA – The Province is launching an assessment of its primary-care system to ensure it is effectively supporting community-based solutions, including in rural areas, and providing everyone in B.C. with timely access to primary care.

“We are working to ensure that everyone has access to primary care when and where they need it,” said Josie Osborne, Minister of Health. “With a close connection and deep understanding of the people they serve, community health centres are a critical part of this by providing team-based, high-quality services. Collaboration is key to making progress, and I look forward to finding ways to further strengthen community-based primary care.”

Under the Cooperation and Responsible Government Accord 2025, the B.C. government and BC Green caucus committed to:

- assessing all elements of B.C.’s primary care system;
- providing \$15 million to assist the creation of new or support for existing community health centres (CHC); and
- establishing targets for the opening of new publicly funded CHCs.

The assessment is underway, led by a working group co-ordinated by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Green caucus. The working group will engage with key stakeholders to receive input and feedback during the assessment.

“This assessment is a necessary step, and we expect it will lead to real action on the deep challenges in B.C.’s health-care systems,” said Jeremy Valeriote, MLA for West Vancouver-Sea to Sky, and interim leader, BC Greens. “Community health centres are crucial for delivering team-based, person-centred care for the full spectrum of needs, but access is a major barrier. Fixing primary-health care is essential to improving health outcomes in this province.”

An initial report will be completed and released publicly in summer 2025. It will set priorities for the use of \$15 million to support existing and new CHCs, and also consider options for funding models.

A final report will be completed and released publicly in fall 2025. It will address the barriers that exist for health professionals and communities that want to establish CHCs and establish data-driven processes for identifying priority communities for CHC expansion in 2026.

CHCs are community-governed, not-for-profit organizations with services tailored to meet the unique health needs of the community they serve. This includes:

- providing access to complex medical and social services, such as for people with chronic

illnesses and for underserved populations, such as immigrants and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community;

- integrating team-based programs and services in primary care, health promotion and community well-being; and
- addressing the social determinants of health.

Primary care is a foundational element of health care and is often the first point of contact between a person and B.C.'s health-care system. Generally delivered by a family doctor or nurse practitioner, primary care is focused on the overall well-being of patients throughout their lifespan. Primary-care providers develop strong, long-term relationships with patients and offer a range of care, including educating and promoting healthy lifestyle choices, managing chronic conditions, and diagnosing and treating illness and injury.

In 2018, the Province launched its primary-care strategy to increase patient attachment and access to quality, comprehensive, team-based, culturally safe and person-centred primary-care services throughout the province.

Quick Facts:

- Since the launch of its primary-care strategy in 2018, the Province has provided support for:
 - more than 90 primary-care networks to connect health-care teams with community organizations that work together to streamline and co-ordinate patient services and address the unique primary-care needs of each community;
 - 50 urgent and primary care centres, with 41 already open and delivering services;
 - 15 community health centres, with 12 already open and delivering services; and
 - 15 First Nations primary-care centres in partnership with the First Nations Health Authority.
- Since 2018, more than 675,000 people have been connected to a primary-care provider, either a family doctor or nurse practitioner.

Learn More:

To learn more about the agreement, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024PREM0075-001656>

To read the terms of reference for the primary-care assessment, visit: https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Terms_Of_Reference.pdf

To learn more about B.C.'s primary-care strategy, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/bcs-primary-care-system>

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