

## NEWS RELEASE

February 27, 2015

### **A GP for Me funding helps improve access to prenatal care in Hope**

**Hope, BC** — The Chilliwack Division of Family Practice is making it easier for expecting and new mothers in the region to access primary care by supporting the expansion of the Chilliwack Obstetric Group (COG) prenatal and postpartum outreach program at the Fraser Canyon Clinic. The Division is using funding it received through the [A GP for Me](#) initiative to increase the frequency and capacity of the outreach program and to allow COG to utilize renovated facilities for their outreach.

A GP for Me is a joint initiative of the Government of BC and Doctors of BC that aims to improve access to primary care and help more British Columbians who want a family doctor to find one. The initiative is being implemented across the province by Divisions of Family Practice such as the Chilliwack Division. Divisions are non-profit community-based groups of family doctors committed to improving primary care in their communities.

“Increasing access to health care in ways that better meet the needs of patients in their home community, is a cornerstone of the A GP for Me program,” said Health Minister Terry Lake.

“Expanding the Chilliwack Obstetric Group’s prenatal and postpartum outreach program means more mothers have this prenatal care on a regular basis, which can mean better health outcomes for both mother and baby.”

A group of eight family doctors founded the Chilliwack Obstetrics Group in 2007 for expecting and new mothers because they were interested in enhancing obstetrical expertise and support in the region. Initially, the outreach program was offered once a month in Hope. Thanks to support from A GP for ME, outreach has been expanded to run biweekly. **Patients can be referred to the half-day clinic by their family doctor or can self-refer by calling 604-858-5544.**

“Prior to the outreach program that is now in place, it was very difficult for patients living further east of Chilliwack to access prenatal care,” says Dr. Alison Henry, who has been deeply involved in COG’s work. “While some were able to drive to Chilliwack, the majority of patients in Hope and area did not have access and now they do.”

Each patient is matched to one of the doctors in the group for prenatal and postpartum care. The doctors take turns on call to deliver the babies. A woman may expect that any one of the eight will be in attendance for her birth. On average, each physician attends between 50-75 births per year.

Additionally, COG integrates medical residents from the UBC Medical Residency Program to give them experience in obstetrics. All eight COG physicians are involved in the More Ob program of Continuing Medical Education. “The feedback from residents has been exceptionally positive,” says Dr. Henry. “They appreciate the half day of continuous prenatal and obstetrical care that they are exposed to, which may otherwise be hard to come by in other low-volume care settings.”

A GP for Me funding has also supported the enhancement of clinical space in Hope, allowing COG to increase the capacity of the clinic and provide more outreach. Working collaboratively with the family doctors and nurse practitioners in Hope, COG will be able to see more patients who need prenatal health services. The goal is to provide pregnant women and new mothers the full spectrum of care. Expecting mothers will only need to come to Chilliwack for the delivery.



Dr. Henry adds, “Women in their second or subsequent pregnancies, who have young kids at home to care for, are thankful at being able to avoid the long drives out for their appointments. We’ve eliminated about 160 minutes of driving a month per patient, along sometimes treacherous roads. It’s heartening to see our work making a real difference in the lives of our patients.”

The prenatal outreach program was one of the programs discussed at a community forum in Hope on Tuesday evening, February 24<sup>th</sup>. More than sixty people came out to the Partners in Health Care forum to learn more about the work of the Chilliwack Division. Attendees included Hope’s health care team, members of the municipal council, along with media representatives. For more information about upcoming events, visit [www.divisionsbc.ca/chilliwack](http://www.divisionsbc.ca/chilliwack).

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### **About the Chilliwack Division of Family Practice**

The Chilliwack Division of Family Practice is part of the Divisions of Family Practice initiative, funded by a joint committee of the BC Ministry of Health and Doctors of BC. There are 34 Divisions of Family Practice in B.C. in more than 220 communities.

The Chilliwack Division of Family Practice is not-for-profit group of family physicians and nurse practitioners from Chilliwack, Agassiz-Harrison, Seabird Island and Hope that work collaboratively with the Fraser Health Authority and other partners to develop, fund and administer community-specific programs that enhance patient care and improve professional satisfaction for physicians. [www.divisionsbc.ca/chilliwack/home](http://www.divisionsbc.ca/chilliwack/home).

### **About A GP for Me**

A GP for Me is a joint initiative of the Government of BC and Doctors of BC – formerly the BC Medical Association – aimed at strengthening the health care system by supporting the relationship between patients and family doctors. Research shows continuous doctor-patient relationships lead to the best health outcomes for patients.

### **For more information:**

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