

NEWS RELEASE

June 12, 2015

A GP for Me physician recruitment strategy aims to fill primary care gaps in local communities

Chilliwack, BC — The Chilliwack Division of Family Practice is seeing early successes after it introduced a physician recruitment and retention strategy that aims to ensure there are enough family doctors available to meet current and future primary care needs in the region.

The Division has received funding for this work from [A GP for Me](#), 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 primary care provider to find one. A GP for Me is being implemented across the province by Divisions of Family Practice, non-profit community-based groups of family doctors committed to improving primary care in their communities. In the communities of Chilliwack, Agassiz-Harrison, Seabird Island and Hope, A GP for Me is being led by the Chilliwack Division of Family Practice.

The recruitment of new doctors into the community and retention of existing ones are key priorities for the Chilliwack Division, in order to manage the community's health care needs as the population grows and as family doctors retire or move away from the community.

The Division's Recruitment and Retention Committee, comprised of Division leadership and staff, local family doctors, representation from Fraser Health, and external community partners, such as the Chilliwack Economic Partners Corporation, is reaching out to potential recruits who may be interested in coming to any of the communities. Initial efforts to proactively seek replacements for colleagues who are retiring or leaving the community are already showing results.

- Patients of three doctors who either moved away or retired in the past few months are either attached to or meeting with new doctors who are coming to the community.
- Two international Medical Graduates have been recruited to Hope.

Dr. Jessica Kennedy, Physician Lead for Recruitment and Retention, highlights the committee's diversity to support these efforts. "These are fabulous communities to be working in and we are keen to demonstrate this to incoming doctors. We are working hard as a medical community to ensure that new doctors are well-supported when they arrive here," she says.

The committee is also scheduling guided tours for potential and confirmed recruits to acquaint them with the community. Elly Meyerink, Operations Lead for the Chilliwack Division, organizes these tours. "The tours are important in the recruitment of new doctors," she notes. "When they are able to see where they could be practicing, and observe the collegiality of the physician community and the support they offer each other, potential recruits are often influenced to join the diversified medical community that exists here."

Physician recruitment and retention is one of six **A GP for Me** strategies the Division is advancing to improve the capacity and delivery of local primary care services, including:

- **PAM (Patient Attachment Mechanism):** Connects individuals who do not have a primary care provider with a primary care clinic, a family doctor or a nurse practitioner in the community: **604-795-0034** or toll free: **1-844-795-0034**.
- **Increased support for the Chilliwack Primary Care Clinic:** More patients who do not have a primary care provider can access services until they can be attached to a regular provider.
- **Expanded rural services and outreach programs:** The Hope and the Fraser Canyon communities are improving access to primary care for new mothers, Aboriginal and seniors' populations.
- **Practice support and coaching for doctors and medical staff:** A partnership with Fraser Health provides customized support for busy medical practices, to help them find office efficiencies to create capacity and enhance the delivery of patient care.
- **Enhanced community education and awareness:** Information and weekly blogs on the Division website, and education sessions sponsored by the Division and community partners, help people learn about when, how and where they should access primary care.

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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.

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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