

Dear Community

The board members of Cortes Community Health Association had a meeting with Island Health, the Campbell River Primary Care Network, the Campbell River Division of Family Practice, and members of the Quadra Health Society Board on January 22. We are pleased to announce that a temporary plan has been put into place to maintain primary care services on Cortes Island at a high level. Here is a summary of the plan.

Dr. McIntyre will retain her position as the Medical Director and "host physician" at the clinic until July 31, 2024. However, all other physician services will be provided by visiting or locum physicians. Dr. McIntyre will work remotely and supervise the visiting physicians. As the Medical Director, Dr. McIntyre will review laboratory work and diagnostics, ensure follow-up, and provide support to the Registered Nurse at the clinic.

Currently, the clinic has three locum physicians - Dr. Bauer, Dr. McKeown, and Dr. Foggin - who have agreed to cover several weeks of clinic services. The clinic is actively recruiting for more locum physicians and a permanent Medical Director.

Furthermore, the Campbell River Primary Care Network has received funding to establish a Community Health Centre model for primary care service delivery in the Discovery Islands region. While we do not have any details about this at present, it will hopefully result in a more efficient, stable, and sustainable health service on our island, using a more regional approach and relieving physicians of the administrative burden of operating a practice in a remote location. We will keep you informed as we learn more about the implications, feasibility, and suitability of this.

In summary, we have a plan in place to ensure that our clinic will continue to have physicians available to provide patient care in the foreseeable future. While we will have different physicians staffing our clinic, we hope that many will return frequently. However, there may be occasional weeks where there is no physician available at the clinic. In such cases, we have a plan to provide remote coverage and support to patients during those weeks. We are aware of the shortage of physicians in General Practice, particularly in rural areas of British Columbia, and our community is not the only one facing this challenge. We anticipate that there may be some changes, but we will keep you informed of any developments as they arise.

Additional resources:

We do realize that uncertainty and concern for continuity in your health care is very difficult and it is for us as well. If you would feel better seeking a physician in another community like Campbell River or Courtenay, use this link or call 811 to be placed on a waiting list for a primary care provider.

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

<https://bcachc.org/about-chcs/>

World Health Organization definition of Primary Care:

Primary care is a model of care that supports first-contact, accessible, continuous, comprehensive and coordinated person-focused care. It aims to optimize population health and reduce disparities across the

population by ensuring that subgroups have equal access to services. There are five core functions of primary care:

1. First contact accessibility creates a strategic entry point for and improves access to health services.
2. Continuity promotes the development of long-term personal relationships between a person and a health professional or a team of providers.
3. Comprehensiveness ensures that a diverse range of promotive, protective, preventive, curative, rehabilitative, and palliative services are provided.
4. Coordination organizes services and care across levels of the health system and over time.
5. People-centred care ensures that people have the education and support needed to make decisions and participate in their own care.