



HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGENDA

DATE: 2024.01.15

LOCATION: Council Chambers – City Hall

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

413 Fourth Street, Kaslo

1. Election of Chair

- 1.1 Call for Nominations (3 times)
- 1.2 Vote by secret ballot
- 1.3 Confirmation of Chair
- 1.4 Destruction of ballots

2. Call to Order

3. Adoption of the Agenda

- 3.1 Adoption of the Agenda for the 2024.01.15 Health Advisory Committee Meeting.

4. Adoption of the Minutes

- 4.1 Adoption of the Minutes of the 2023.11.27 Health Advisory Committee Meeting.

5. Delegations

- 5.1 Phoebe Lazier – BC Rural Health Network and Outreach Initiative

6. Information Items

- 6.1 Member Reports
 - 6.1.1 Kaslo Community Service - Brandrick
- 6.2 Correspondence
 - 6.2.1 BCRHN Edition 2023.12.01
 - 6.2.2 BCRHN – President Skelton 2023.12.08

7. Question Period

8. Business

9. Late Items

Consideration of any late items added to the agenda.

10. Next Meeting

March 11th, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in City Hall.

11. Adjournment

DATE: 2023.11.27

LOCATION: Council Chambers – City Hall

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

413 Fourth Street, Kaslo

PRESENT:	Chair	Mayor Hewat
	Members	Councillor Bird, Deb Borsos, Elizabeth Brandrick, Liz Ross
	Absent	Victoria McAllister, Leni Neumeier
	Staff	CO Allaway
	Public	Shelina Musaji (dep. 6:23), Leanne Blancher (dep. 6:42)

1. Call to Order

We respect and recognize the First Nations within whose unceded lands the Village of Kaslo is situated, including the Ktunaxa, Sinixt, and Sylix People, and the Indigenous and Metis Residents of our community.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 Adoption of the Agenda for the 2023.11.27 Health Advisory Committee Meeting.
Moved, seconded and CARRIED
THAT the agenda for the 2023.11.27 Health Advisory Committee Meeting be adopted as amended.

3. Adoption of the Minutes

- 3.1 Adoption of the Minutes of the 2023.09.25 Health Advisory Committee Meeting.
Moved, seconded and CARRIED
THAT the minutes for the 2023.09.25 Health Advisory Committee Meeting be adopted as presented.

4. Delegations

- 4.1 Dr. Shelina Musaji – Victorian Community Health Centre
Dr. Musaji provided an update on staffing at the Victorian Community Health Centre.
- 4.2 Leanne Blancher – BC Emergency Health Services
Ms. Blancher provided an update on BC Ambulance staffing in Kaslo.

5. Information Items

- 5.1 Member Reports
- 5.1.1 Kaslo Acupuncture Society Report
 - 5.1.2 Kaslo Community Services – Senior Co-ordinator’s Report
 - 5.1.3 Dialysis Service in Nelson – Bird 2023.11.20
 - 5.1.4 Staff Report – Radon Testing 2023.11.23

5.2 Correspondence

- 5.2.1 British Columbia Rural Health Matters – 2023.10.16
- 5.2.2 British Columbia Rural Health Matters – 2023.10.18
- 5.2.3 British Columbia Rural Health Matters – October Edition
- 5.2.4 BC Lung Foundation – Radon 2023.10.26
- 5.2.5 British Columbia Rural Health Matters – 2023.11.01
- 5.2.6 British Columbia Rural Health Matters – 2023.11.07
- 5.2.7 British Columbia Rural Health Matters – 2023.11.15
- 5.2.8 BCRHN Frailty Strategy Survey – 2023.11.21
- 5.2.9 2024 West Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital District Board Meeting Schedule
- 5.2.10 Interior Health & Regional Hospital Districts Partnership Agreement

6. Question Period – Nil

7. Business

7.1 Interior Health – Victorian Community Health Centre 2023.10.26

The information regarding Victorian Community Health Centre operating hours was received for information.

7.2 2024 Health Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule

Moved, seconded and CARRIED

THAT the 2024 Health Advisory Committee meeting schedule be adopted as presented.

8. Next Meeting

The next Health Advisory Committee meeting will be held on January 15, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at City Hall.

9. Adjournment

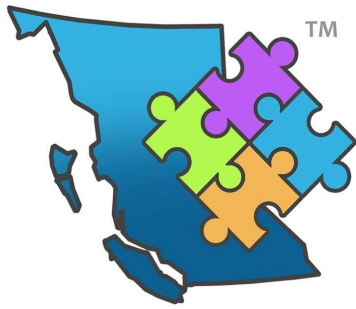
The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Corporate Officer

Chair Hewat





BCRHN

British Columbia Rural Health Network

What is the BC Rural Health Network?

The BC Rural Health Network (BCRHN) is a not-for-profit society that leads initiatives to improve healthcare in rural and remote communities across British Columbia by employing community-driven solutions and advocacy rooted in solid science. Confronting challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and a growing disconnect between rural residents and their healthcare systems, the BCRHN champions communication and solution-sharing among rural communities, recognizing that although communities are unique, there is pan-provincial applicability of local, successful health strategies.

The Network consists of over 100 healthcare advocacy organizations, municipalities, regional districts and individuals working in cooperation with healthcare policymakers. The purpose of the Network is to promote and support a health services system that improves and sustains the health and well-being of residents of rural communities across British Columbia. The BC Rural Health Network is apolitical, nonpartisan and solutions-based.

To learn more about the BC Rural Health Network, please visit our website:

<https://bcruralhealth.org/>

As an organization, we strive to:

1. Offer easy access to resources on rural well-being.
2. Offer easy access to reliable rural health news and information.
3. Record and share community experiences.
4. Present research-backed positions and solutions that are driven by rural

communities.

5. Support system changes that help create equity in access to care and better health for all rural BC residents.
6. Share successful strategies in an effort to address rural healthcare concerns.
7. Advocate for policy changes that provide all rural residents with attachment to a health care practitioner
8. Identify areas of research aimed at improving access to healthcare in rural communities and to provide fertile ground for research to take place.
9. Inform the BC Ministry of Health of rural healthcare concerns
10. Recommend solutions for the improvement of services to rural BC residents
11. Work in partnership with other provincial organizations to influence policy changes that improve access to healthcare services
12. Recognize the healthcare concerns of indigenous communities and include their issues and concerns as part of our work
13. Improve access to mental health services
14. Promote patient-centred, community-based primary healthcare reform

[Please consider joining the BC Rural Health Network, where every voice matters.](#)





December 2023 – January 2024 - Senior Co-ordinator's Report

1. Simple meals for 'The Healthy Aging' *Therapeutic Activation Program* (TAPS) are prepared at our Food Hub. The 50 meals are distributed between Meadow Creek and Fletcher Falls. The delivery process provides an excellent opportunity to share information with Seniors, and creates a time of social interaction and check-ins.
2. Free activities for the TAPS group of clients continues:
 - a) A 'Rain or Shine Walking Group' begins at 10:00 am. Tuesdays at the Front Door of Abbey Manor. These walks include a simple shared lunch.
 - b) A Life Writers six-week workshop will begin in February. Participants can register with Kathy at Kaslo Community Services ph. # 250-353-7691.
3. Angela at the Kaslo Public Library is available for Digital Support by appointment. Phone the Library to book an appointment.
4. Lynda Beddow continues as a volunteer assisting people with the filing of their income tax returns. Lynda prepares returns for low-income clients of all ages. Resuming after April 2, 2024
5. Medical and Non-Medical Rides for Seniors can be arranged through 'The Kootenay Seniors Volunteer Drivers Program', phone #778-463-5247. Volunteers can contact the K.S.V.D.P.
6. 'West Kootenay Nav-Care' - a new friendly visitor's program has begun in Kaslo. Volunteers visit a senior once or twice a week for a time of social interaction. Contact Audrey Salazar Calvo if you would like to be a volunteer or know someone who would like to be a client paired with a friendly visitor. Contact Audrey at: ph.#778-689-6832 or <kaslo@westkootenaynavcare.org>
7. A 'Seniors Exercise Program' is held at the Heritage Hall on Fridays beginning at 9:30 am. Contact Liz Ross @250-353-2465, or Elizabeth Scarlett at 250-353-2563. Cost is \$60.00 from Nov. 3rd to Apr. 26th or \$5.00 each time.
8. Carpet Bowling takes place at the Legion on Wednesday mornings.
9. Friday am. 'Sr. Coffee Drop-In' from 9:30-11:30 at the Seniors Hall. Donations are \$3.00.
10. The West Kootenay Low Income Dental Assistance Program (TEETH), is accepting new clients again beginning again in March of 2024. To qualify for the program individuals or families need to have an income of \$42,000 or less annually. Family members can be enrolled in the program if they are eligible. To register contact the Senior Coordinator.
11. The Seniors Monthly 'in-person' meetings are held at the Kaslo Seniors' Hall at 11:00 am. on the 1st Tuesday of each month from Sept. until June. Meetings are followed by lunch at a cost of \$15.00 for members and \$20.00 for visitors. (The Annual Memberships cost is \$15.00).
12. The Seniors' Annual Christmas luncheon was held on-Tuesday, December 5th at the Kaslo Legion Hall, and the Community Christmas Dinner was held on December the 20th. Over 300 people were served at the Legion, had their meals delivered, or picked them up at the door.
13. The Seniors' Coordinator can be contacted at < elizabethbrandrick@kaslo.services >.

From: Paul <newsletter@bcruralhealth.org>
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 8:09 AM
To: Karissa Stroshein <admin@kaslo.ca>
Subject: Rural Health Matters December Edition



BCRHN
British Columbia
Rural Health Network

December 2023
Edition

[A Letter from our President](#)

Hello readers,

As I do every month when I sit down to write my report, I am reminded about what a difference a month can make. Or as 2023 comes to a close, the difference a year can make!

In preparation for our meetings this month, I took a look at our membership list on the website and at the map of where our members are located and reflected on how much we've grown over the last year. It really is amazing! We are now over 100 members and growing!

Many thanks to those who have made, and are constantly improving our website. It's truly worth your time to take a look at our website and the interesting and useful information it provides including daily blog posts and our member section.

On November, 10th I attended a meeting of the Virtual Health & Wellness Collaborative for Rural and First Nations BC Advisory Group. There have been so many wonderful achievements in Virtual Health to aid in rural and remote health care. Real-time Virtual Access to physicians for support, and second opinions, has been well received and continues to grow. This not only aids in patient treatment but also aids in the recruitment and retention of physicians and other healthcare professionals by minimizing doctor burnout.

As I have mentioned here before, I am a co-lead of the Rural Citizen Perspective Group with Tammy Hofer of the BC Health Quality Council, sponsored by the Rural Coordination Centre of BC. We had the pleasure of hosting both Paul and Phoebe. Paul discussed our work with the UBC Centre of Rural Health Research on the Gap Analysis Survey and Phoebe discussed the community engagement initiative she is involved with. I have to thank them both for their excellent presentations! There was lots of good discussion and opportunities for collaboration.

As previously mentioned, your board had a special meeting on October 30th with the Minister of Health, Adrian Dix. Great discussions were had on what we as the BCRHN represent and our accomplishments as an organization. He then invited Paul and me to meet with him regarding core funding for the Network.

On November 21st, we met with Minister Dix and the Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health, Jennifer Rice, where we presented a proposed budget for BCRHN operations. I am very thankful for this opportunity to spend an hour with these very busy people who were welcoming and engaging as we spoke again of our Network and presented our budget request. I feel the meeting went very well and we look forward to hearing the decision regarding our proposed budget.



We also were pleased to be invited to meet with the NDP Rural Caucus, following our meeting with Minister Dix and Parliamentary Secretary Jennifer Rice. As we are a non-political Network, it was important to us to be transparent about our budget request and to meet with the other political parties. We are pleased and thankful that Shirley Bond and her colleagues from the BC United Party met with us, as well as Sonia Furstenau from the BC Green Party. I found their questions and our discussions very thoughtful and supportive. We were very honoured to be announced in the legislature by both Parliamentary Secretary Jennifer Rice and Shirley Bond from the BC United Party.

I must admit, this was my first time in the Parliament Building itself, not to mention the BC legislature! I am in awe of not only the beautiful building, and the traditions such as

the presentation of the sceptre at the opening of the session, but also of the people of all parties who are dedicated to the people of BC.



As this year closes, I feel so much pride in our Network. I am constantly reminded of how lucky I am to belong to an organization like the BC Rural Health Network. Many thanks are due to the people who make this Network work...

So...

To Paul, who brings his expertise to his position, and who volunteers so much of his own time because of his commitment and dedication to our organization's goals,

To Phoebe, who has been such a wonderful addition to our Network, and her ability to engage with our communities and provide such useful information to our partners,

To our Board of Directors and liaisons, you are so dedicated and bring meaningful and insightful discussion to our meetings making sure we are always committed to our mission,

To the Executive, always there to discuss, problem solve and perhaps just have a good laugh as we go forward in our mission,

To our partners including Hope Air, BCACHC, United Way, and the Centre for Rural Health Research,

And finally, to our members and volunteers,

Please allow me to extend my sincere thanks. Without you, none of the work we do would be possible!

It is the season for celebrating! For me, that is Christmas so Merry Christmas! But in whichever way you celebrate, please enjoy a safe and happy holiday season. I wish you nothing but peace and prosperity in the year to come...

Only the best,

Peggy

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Dear Readers and Supporters,

November marked two years of my work with you in improving rural health and wellness in BC. Over that time we have grown the Network to over 100 members encompassing organizations, municipalities, regional districts and individuals. We have transformed our committees and our structure to be effective and responsive to the needs of the members and the communities whose interests we champion. We have become a truly pan-provincial network and we have made significant gains in community engagement and sharing resources. We have created a growing and live repository of resources on our website. We have entered engagements with the [BC Association of Community Health Centres](#), [United Way BC](#) and [Hope Air](#). We have attracted talent in staff and volunteers that are truly exceptional. We have united the voices of many rural residents on solutions-based approaches to community-driven healthcare. We have worked on joint research with the [UBC Centre for Rural Health Research](#). We have begun the process of decolonizing our group, transforming our structure and making ourselves a truly inclusive and welcoming organization. WE have done a lot and WE have much more to do!

These are some of the questions that have been posed this month in the meetings we have engaged in with the leaders of BC and here are some of my responses.....

What is it that makes us unique as an organization in the rural health community?

The BC Rural Health Network is community-driven, our Board of Directors are community champions who are directly engaged in rural community outreach, and community volunteerism and bring true rural lived and living experience into the health conversation. We are focused on solutions and bring evidence forward to support the solutions we present. We work with everyone who would like to collaborate in non-partisan and science-based approaches. We have come to exist due to community need and we are growing.

Is the BC Rural Health Network an advocacy group?

Yes, we advocate for solutions that our members can all agree upon. However, advocacy is not our primary function and represents a very small percentage of the work that we do daily (~5% of my time is spent on advocacy.) Collecting the lived experiences of community members, understanding unique community dynamics, sharing successful strategies, sharing resources and sharing information that can assist in rural wellbeing is the mainstay of our daily work.

Why should governments invest in the BC Rural Health Network?

Through meaningful engagement with grassroots community groups, community champions, volunteer groups, local governments and concerned residents, begins the process of rebuilding trust and inclusion of those who are feeling disenfranchised and marginalized in rural areas. This requires investment and a structure that can deliver information effectively to the community and disseminate that information through the community from the ground up. We have demonstrated our impact and ability with very few resources and intend to demonstrate our impact as we are funded to do this important work.

As we collectively grapple with current healthcare challenges, it is paramount to recognize the urgency of including authentic rural community perspectives. The cost of inaction is not just monetary; it is measured in lost lives, untreated illnesses, low vaccination rates, failure to follow emergency directives and communities' growing disillusionment with the very systems meant to safeguard them. Addressing this need isn't just a matter of policy; it's a commitment to equity, justice, and the very ethos of care. The question isn't whether we can afford to bridge these gaps, but rather, can we afford not to?

How has the BC Rural Health Network made a difference?

We are learning daily about new resources (many just new to us) that most rural communities don't know exist and don't have a known point of access to connect with. We identify gaps in information, gaps in service, and gaps in communication and we work diligently to start the process of filling those gaps. We inform, we educate and most importantly we listen.

Are others doing the same type of work?

Yes, many wonderful organizations are working to improve health and healthcare in rural and remote communities, and we commend many of their efforts. None of these groups duplicate our work and we try to avoid the duplication of existing groups that are doing some amazing work in rural communities. We are not aware of any group that is interacting with communities with our approach nor reaching the people we reach in the way we reach them.

We have no predetermined list of community contacts but seek new points of contact and use our existing network to expand our connections with community champions who have not been heard or reached by others. We grow these relationships into a bi-directional engagement that remains open and active. We are not simply extracting data and mapping community assets, we are working to build relationships and

communication with the heroes who exist throughout our province and who volunteer their time to give back to their communities. We seek their wisdom!

Concerns have been raised by other groups regarding outreach fatigue yet we don't encounter this problem. The problem we face is not having enough outreach personnel to engage more effectively. We are fortunate and appreciate that outreach is now often coming from community champions to us and not vice versa. We see rural health and wellness improvement as a collaborative effort that requires the involvement of many. We learn daily about more programs, initiatives and organizations that have gathered valuable information on rural communities, rural health programming and rural life. Unfortunately, we also see a lack of information exchange, a lack of public-facing data, a lack of effective community communication and a serious problem in engagement with the people who live, work and play in rural BC. We recognize that one group cannot do it all, we recognize that we need to become more inclusive and not less if we are to find solutions that work and start the long process of rural health renewal in BC.

Working with all

Peggy has given an overview of our work in Victoria and our meeting with Minister Dix and PSRH Rice. That meeting was a great success for the BCRHN and the Minister has indicated that funding will be made available to assist our outreach and communication work. A formal budget request was presented. This marks a major advancement and 2024 will see the beginning of a new chapter for your Network and rural community inclusion.

We also recognize that the Government is not the only voice in the BC Legislature and working with all political parties is critical to being transparent and responsive to the diverse community that is rural BC. Prior to arriving for our meeting in Victoria we reached out to all 3 opposition parties and received meeting invites from both the BC United official opposition and the BC Green party leader.



Not only were these engagements important in ensuring that our approach is non-partisan and in gaining the support/interest of all key players but also a great reminder that people care and people serving as MLAs care deeply about BC and the people they represent in their constituencies and provincially. Being introduced in the

Legislature is always an honor and having the BC United Party and the Government introduce us helps solidify that our group is able to work with everyone (of note the BC Green party also intended to introduce us but other business delayed Ms. Furstenau arriving in the session.) You can view the afternoon in the legislature in its entirety by [clicking here](#) and PSRH Rice's introduction by [clicking here](#).

The fall sitting of the Legislature ended today, November 30th, 2023 and we hope all BC MLAs and public sector workers get a well-deserved break over the holiday period! Having worked with many in our capital I know how hard many work and the sacrifice of time away from home and family. I thank you all!

As Peggy has outlined we have much to be grateful for and many to thank! I will end this month's update by thanking our President Peggy Skelton, I have come to know Peggy as a friend and as a truly wonderful person who has served the community her entire life. The role of President in our group is an important function and the time spent in volunteering by Peggy is remarkable, she works tirelessly for the communities on the East Shore and then extends herself to represent your interests on the provincial stage. Travelling to Victoria was not only a major ordeal and an expensive engagement but involved many unexpected hurdles that Peggy cleared with grace and represented us all very well, thank you, Peggy!

I have many more updates to provide but I will pause for now and give a mid-month update before the holiday season kicks into full swing.

Yours in health and wellness,

Paul.

Join us for our AGM on December 13th!

Our annual AGM will be held on December 13th at 4 pm. In addition to updates from the BCRHN team, we will be joined by Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health Jennifer Rice as our keynote speaker.

PS Rice is a resident and MLA of Prince Rupert and has represented the constituency of the North Coast since 2013. Premier David Eby assigned Jennifer with the role of Parliamentary Secretary of Rural Health in January of 2023. PS Rice will speak to her role and her responsibilities in this new position and will take questions from those joining our call.



Our AGM is for members only and we encourage you to join us as a member and to participate in our organization. Every voice counts at the BCRHN.

[Click here to become a member](#)

[Click here to become a member](#)

Community Connect: An Update on Our Outreach Initiatives

Hello and Happy December!

For those I haven't had the pleasure of connecting with yet, please allow me to extend a warm introduction. I'm thrilled to share a bit about the ongoing community engagement work I am doing and I enthusiastically await on opportunity for us to connect in the future!

As many of you may be familiar with me, I will keep my introduction short and sweet. I'm Phoebe, a recent psychology grad from the University of British Columbia Okanagan. I have spent the majority of my life in rural BC, growing up in Nelson and relocating to the Nicola Valley after completing my degree. I love the outdoors, cooking and reading. I am particularly interested in identifying and addressing the social determinants of health.



In my role with the BCRHN as the community outreach coordinator, I am engaged in a Community Outreach Initiative in collaboration with the BC Association of Community

Health Centres (BCACHC) and the Innovations Solutions Unit (ISU) at UBC, Hope Air and United Way BC (UWBC).

This initiative focuses on meaningful engagement and connection with rural BC communities to gain insight into the current healthcare resources that are available in the communities, the gaps in care, the challenges and barriers in accessing care, successes and innovations related to healthcare access, mental health care, Indigenous-centred care, maternity care, how the community safeguards vulnerable populations during emergencies and more. The information we collect contributes to the creation of comprehensive community profiles that authentically represent the voice of each community. These profiles will be used to inform the CHC model of care, our advocacy work and Hope Air's service provision in rural BC.

Additionally, I'm actively fostering connections and facilitating the sharing of solutions and resources within and between rural BC communities. This includes highlighting the extensive network of senior resources provided by United Way BC and sharing information about the valuable travel assistance programs offered by Hope Air.

Establishing these meaningful connections within communities has not only allowed me to gather valuable information and share solutions and resources but has also facilitated connections between groups or individuals with similar goals. The abundance of volunteer work in rural communities across BC continues to amaze me. Whether it's local seniors' groups, Better at Home programs, community services societies, Hospice, or healthcare auxiliaries, the immeasurable positive impact these volunteers have on their communities is truly commendable. Thank you for your dedicated efforts!

So far, I've had the pleasure of connecting with over 120 community members in more than 50 rural BC communities. My sincere thanks go out to every individual who has taken the time to meet with me, sharing insights into your communities and the remarkable work you do as healthcare professionals, community champions, local leaders, and volunteers. I eagerly anticipate furthering this outreach work and connecting with even more of you in the future. This work truly does fill my cup!

If you would like to connect with me, please feel free to send me an email at phoebe.lazier@bcruralhealth.org. I look forward to hearing from you!

Warm wishes,

Phoebe.



Aging in Uncertainty: The Growing Housing Crisis for BC Seniors





United Way
British Columbia

Working with communities in
BC's North, Interior, Lower Mainland,
Central & Northern Vancouver Island

Imagine a life spent working hard, only to find yourself retiring in your 60s or 70s, facing the prospect of homelessness. This harsh reality is increasingly common among seniors in British Columbia, as revealed in a comprehensive 66-page report titled 'Aging in Uncertainty: The Growing Housing Crisis for BC Seniors.'

This report, jointly released on National Housing Day by United Way British Columbia and a coalition of BC Non-Profit community-based seniors' organizations, spotlights the critical issue of seniors struggling to secure affordable housing in the face of soaring living costs, stagnant government retirement incomes, and a shortage of affordable housing.

 Dive into the full report: [Healthy Aging Programs for Seniors | United Way BC \(uwbc.ca\)](#)  Spread the word, share with your networks, and let's collaborate with government to find solutions to the urgent housing crisis.

Together we can build a future where our seniors can age with dignity and security!

[Read the Full Report Here!](#)

[Read the Full Report Here!](#)



United Way
British Columbia

Working with communities in
BC's North, Interior, Lower Mainland,
Central & Northern Vancouver Island



A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY...

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**GIVING
TUESDAY**

Member of the Month: The Northern Rockies Regional Municipality: A Haven of Natural Beauty and Community Spirit



The Northern Rockies Regional Municipality (NRRM), nestled deep in the northeastern region of British Columbia, is a hidden gem that boasts a unique blend of

natural beauty, cultural diversity, and a strong sense of community. This remote and relatively unexplored region is home to breathtaking landscapes and innovative thinkers, making it a special place for residents and visitors alike.

The NRRM is a vast wilderness of over 85,000 km² of land, encompassing the northern portion of the Canadian Rockies, Muskwa-Kechika Management Area, and other protected lands. Beyond its breathtaking landscapes, the NRRM is defined by its unique and resilient communities. The people who call this region home are an essential part of what makes it so special.

The NRRM is a gathering of cultural backgrounds, fostering an environment of diversity and inclusivity. Various communities, including Fort Nelson, Fort Nelson First Nation, Prophet River First Nation, Fort Liard, Toad River, and Muncho Lake welcome individuals from different walks of life, making it a vibrant and enriching place to live. Despite the distance between the communities of the NRRM, the people are closely connected creating a sense of belonging and neighbourly support. Fort Nelson, the largest community making up 2,600 of the 4,000 residents, is the main resource hub.

Fort Nelson is the regional business and service centre of the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality. It offers all the essential amenities – varied housing stock, restaurants, retail and grocery stores, services to meet your needs and a range of cultural and recreational facilities. The community's economic base is built on the small and medium-sized businesses and public sector employers who provide the products and services needed in a sustainable community, while traditional resource industries including natural gas, forestry and tourism continue to be mainstays in the region.

At the heart of healthcare in the Northern Rockies are the Fort Nelson General Hospital, Airport Way Medical Clinic, and dedicated secondary health providers and emergency services. The Fort Nelson General Hospital contains 25 acute and 8 long-term care beds, lab and diagnostics, emergency medicine, and integrated care (mental health and addictions, public health, environmental health, and home and community care). Airport Way Medical Clinic is the community's home of family practice with 5 physicians who also provide on-call services at Fort Nelson General. Fort Nelson is fortunate to have a broad range of secondary health providers including dentistry, optometry, chiropractic, virtual physiotherapy, mental health supports, and a thriving community paramedicine program delivered through BC Ambulance Service



(BCAS). Contributing to the sustainability of emergency medical services in the community, Northern Rockies Fire Rescue members are trained Emergency Medical Responders and attend all First Response calls along with RCMP and BCAS.



Given the vast distances between Fort Nelson and neighbouring urban centres (400 km to Fort St. John and 800 km to Prince George), where many have travelled for care, the local medical professionals and community must be innovative in their approach to providing healthcare. A few of the NRRM's major accomplishments include:

- The NRRM has offered complimentary housing for new physicians to the community for the past 15 years, coupled with an approach to supporting new health professionals settle into the community and maintaining relationships with locum physicians who choose to return to the community year after year to provide local doctors with some well-deserved downtime. In 2022, these programs were formalized with the [Recruitment, Retention, Education and Training Incentive Program and the Regional Health Recruitment Liaison role](#).
- The NRRM created the first Regional Health Recruitment Liaison role in Northern BC. The Liaison works closely with health employers to facilitate the development and coordination of recruitment campaigns including design and marketing approaches, on-site logistical, promotional and community-level supports such as site visits, navigating the housing market, school system and spousal/partner employment options. The position proactively markets the Northern Rockies by participating in major healthcare conferences, economic development and industry events.
- The Recruitment & Retention Education & Training Incentive (RRETI) Program provides financial assistance and incentives to attract, retain and train priority healthcare professionals to work in the Northern Rockies. The RRETI program is open to eligible healthcare professionals recruited by, and working for public, private or non-profit sector employers, in addition to secondary school students whose primary residence is in the Northern Rockies region, including the Fort Nelson First Nation and Dene Tsaa Tse K'Nai First Nation (Prophet River Band).
- The NRRM is a founding and contributing member of the Community Health Steering Committee, made up of members of NRRM staff and elected Council, Fort Nelson First Nation staff and elected Council, BCEHS, Northern Health, and Doctors of, among others. By amplifying the efforts of local physician, Dr. Marius Mostert, the committee demonstrated the need for a CT Scanner at FNGH and lobbied the health authority to begin capital planning. Through

efforts and collaboration, it has brought doctors, local government, business and service organizations together to make it happen.

- Fort Nelson General Hospital acquired 'RUDi' – a virtual technology to sustain acute care services including Real-Time Virtual Support (RTVS) that runs 24/7 365 days. The collaboration sees an RTVS RUDi emergency doctor providing the Most Responsible Provider (MRP) coverage for an Emergency Room over Zoom. The in-community physician is also available but only needs to be called in for high acuity cases, allowing them to get the rest they need. This innovative collaboration between RTVS, Northern Health, and on-the-ground nurses and physicians has supported the stability of care in Fort Nelson during times of physician shortages and has allowed FNGH to avoid diversion of services. The work makes it possible for local doctors to get needed rest, resident physicians to get some hands-on training while being supported by an experienced physician and rural communities with a small number of providers to have increased healthcare stability.
- Community leaders have long pursued achieving equitable access to health care for the community, acknowledging that while the most effective solutions are home-grown, the responsibility for health care delivery rests among organizations outside the local government. To that end, the NRRM developed a Regional Health Advocacy Strategy which speaks to three main goals: health provider recruitment and retention, supporting patient transport, and enhancing virtual care.
- The NRRM has instilled a great relationship with travelling services/clinics. Understanding that specialized services are not likely available in-house, travelling clinics/physicians have enabled residents to receive these services and care without patient travel. In some cases, patients can be seen within the month based on the timing of visiting clinics (children's OT/PT) where there are months-long waiting lists for similar services in more urban locations.
- The NRRM is a family-centered community. Within the close-knit community, there is a high level of awareness about the available services. Family and child development programming offered by local organizations (NRAWS, NRCDA) is understood, valued and referred to by local physicians for both formal and informal development assessments, wellness checks and family support. These referrals can lead to engagement in community programming resulting in social connection which improves mental health - a world of preventative healthcare.

The Northern Rockies Regional Municipality is a place where slow small-town living and innovative forward-thinking intersect. The people are resilient and friendly, while nature is vast and wild. Whether you're looking for your next travel route or a place to call home, the NRRM offers an experience like no other.

[See more members of the month here.](#)

Digital Readiness in Rural Canada: Pathways Towards Digital Equity

Rural or remote-living British Columbians 19+ years are needed for a 15-minute online survey.

This study is being done by researchers from UBC. The study is called “Digital Readiness in Rural Canada: Pathways Towards Digital Equity”. Through this study, we hope to gain insight into communities and people's personal experiences with digital technology in terms of access and engagement.

Criteria:

- Are you over the age of 19 years old?
- Do you currently live in a rural B.C. community?

If you answered yes to these questions, you are eligible to participate! Survey participants will have the opportunity to enter a draw for a chance to win one of 3 \$100 CAD or one \$400 CAD gift cards!

If you have any questions or would like more information, you can contact the Research Coordinator, Cherisse Seaton. Email: cherisse.seaton@ubc.ca.

To complete the survey, please click the following link:

Digital Readiness in Rural Canada

Digital Readiness in Rural Canada



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Digital Readiness in Rural Canada

Objective

We are looking for rural living adults to tell us about their digital access and engagement experience

Eligibility

- ✔ Are you 19+ years old
- ✔ Do you currently live in a rural B.C. community

If yes, you are eligible to participate!

Participants have a chance to win a Canadian gift card!

Survey link

bit.ly/ruraldigitalreadiness

Questions? Please contact:

Cherisse.seaton@ubc.ca



[Rural and Remote Participants Needed for Online Survey: Social networks of](#)

adults 50 years and older with mental health concerns in BC

Who is in your social circle?

Researchers from UBC Okanagan are interested in learning more about the social networks of adults 50 years and older who struggle, at times, with their mental well-being. We hope to gain insight into the social connections that make up social networks to help us better understand how to improve the quality of these relationships and, hopefully, enhance people's well-being.

Participation Criteria:

- Are you 50 years of age or older?
- Do you frequently feel down or blue, unmotivated? Worried or anxious? Or do you have concerns about your use of alcohol or drugs?
- Do you live in BC? We are looking for people who live in rural/remote AND urban/semi-urban communities within BC.

If you answered yes to these questions, you are eligible to participate.

Please note: you do not need to have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder to participate.

Survey participants will have the opportunity to enter a draw for a chance to win one of five prizes!

Most people are able to complete the survey in about 1.5 hours. The exact time will depend upon how many people are in your social network.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact: Siu Lin Rodriguez (siulin2@student.ubc.ca)

Please click the following link to participate:

Social Networks Study

Social Networks Study

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR ONLINE RESEARCH STUDY

Tell us about your social circle!

Are you-

- 50 years of age or older?
- Do you have a mental health concern, such as symptoms of depression, anxiety, or problems with drug or alcohol use?
- Do you live in BC?

If you answered “yes” to the above questions, you are eligible to take part in our online study- Social networks of adults 50 years and older with mental health concerns in BC



SOCIAL NETWORKS OF ADULTS 50 YEARS AND OLDER WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Participants will have a chance to win one of five \$100 prizes!

Interested in participating? Please follow the link or scan QR code:

<https://bit.ly/SocialNetworks2023>



Have any questions? Contact Siu Lin Rodriguez at siulin2@student.ubc.ca OR Carolyn Szostak at carolyn.szostak@ubc.ca

Popular Posts and News from November 2023



[U.K. Family Doctor's Permanent Residency Application Denied Because Of English Test Mix-Up](#)



[A Day In The Life Of A B.C. Paramedic](#)



[More Ambulance Services Coming Soon To Rural And Remote Communities Across B.C.](#)



[UNBC Family Nurse Practitioner Program Doubles Available Seats](#)



[Canada Is Moving Away From Pap Tests. Here's What You Need To Know](#)



[UBCO Researchers Spread The Message That Type 2 Diabetes Remission Is Achievable](#)

We look forward to connecting with you.



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BCRHN
British Columbia
Rural Health Network

Attn: BC Rural Health Network Members

Dear Members,

I am reaching out with a mix of emotions to announce the resignation of our esteemed Vice President, Colin Moss, from the BC Rural Health Network. This decision comes as Colin steps into a new chapter, pursuing a potential nomination as a candidate in the BC election for 2024.

Colin's departure is not just the loss of a colleague; it is bidding farewell to a dear friend and a relentless advocate for rural health. Our friendship will continue past any working relationships but he will be missed on the Board and within the organization. His decision, guided by his passion for public service, reflects the diverse paths life presents us with.

As a non-partisan organization dedicated to apolitical pursuits, we uphold a commitment to neutrality in political matters. Our governance structure and decision-making processes are firmly separated from any political affiliations or aspirations. In keeping with this ethos, Colin submitted his resignation promptly upon deciding to explore this new political avenue.

Throughout his tenure, Colin has significantly enhanced our organization. His dedication, vision, and tireless volunteerism have not only enriched rural health initiatives but have also left an indelible mark on our foundation and future direction. His legacy transcends his tenure, laying a solid groundwork for the years ahead.

Under Colin's leadership, particularly as the Chair of the Membership Committee, our network has flourished from a modest group of 10 members in 2018 to a robust community of over 100 members today. His contributions as Vice President and as a pivotal advisor to my role as President have been invaluable. His readiness to take on challenges and provide guidance has been a cornerstone of our success.

Colin, your journey with us has been one of immense impact and inspiration. While your path may be shifting, your influence within the Network remains steadfast. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your service and wish you the very best in your future endeavors.

We eagerly anticipate our upcoming Annual General Meeting this Wednesday December 13th at 4pm and hope to have the pleasure of Colin's company as we celebrate his contributions.

Only the best,



Peggy Skelton

President, BC Rural Health Network

From: Phoebe Lazier <phoebe.lazier@bcruralhealth.org>

Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2024 11:28 AM

To: Karissa Stroshein <admin@kaslo.ca>

Subject: Membership renewal reminder



Date: January 9th, 2024

Hello,

As we step into another promising year, I'm excited to reach out to you, our valued members, with updates and an invitation to renew your commitment to the BC Rural Health Network (BCRHN).

Reflecting on Our Journey:

This past year has been remarkable for BCRHN. Our membership surged from 83 to 107, welcoming new vital entities and our first Regional District members - a testament to our growing influence and the trust you place in us.

New Initiatives and Milestones:

- Our website has evolved into a dynamic hub of resources, reflecting our members' needs.
- The rebranding and introduction of our new logo mark a significant leap in our journey, embodying our pan-provincial and solutions-driven ethos.
- The launch of our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee, under the leadership of Jane Osborne, starts the journey to inclusivity and representation.

Influential Partnerships and Outreach:

- We've initiated valuable partnerships, notably with Hope Air and the BC Association of Community Health Centres (BCACHC), broadening our reach and impact.
- The United Way grant has empowered us to engage more deeply in Emergency Response and Preparedness, especially for rural seniors.

Research and Policy Advocacy:

- Our Implementation Committee, spearheaded by Dr. Jude Kornelsen, continues to influence policy through vital research and initiatives.
- The collaboration with UBC Centre for Rural Health Research for a gap analysis on community engagement in healthcare policy development is poised to shape future strategies.

Your Role in Our Journey:

Your involvement has been the cornerstone of our success. As we renew our commitment to improve the health and well-being of rural residents in BC, your continued membership is vital.

Renewing Your Membership:

Please renew your membership by visiting [BCRHN Membership Renewal](#). As a CRA-registered charity, we now offer tax-deductible receipts for donations. Your generosity beyond membership is invaluable in our shared mission.

Additionally, please take a moment to verify that the information we have listed on our website for you, or your organization is up-to-date and accurate. If you have any changes to be made, please contact Phoebe at phoebe.lazier@bcruralhealth.org.

As we move forward, your voice, ideas, and participation will drive our continued growth and impact. Together, let's build a healthier future for every rural resident in British Columbia.

With gratitude and best wishes for the new year,

Paul

Paul Adams || Executive Director|| **BC Rural Health Network** ||

Cell: 250-295-5436

<https://bcruralhealth.org/>|| ✉ paul.adams@bcruralhealth.org|| [LinkedIn](#)

The BCRHN is the healthcare voice of the rural residents of British Columbia and seeks better health outcomes for all people, through solutions-based approaches with governments, and information provision to residents.

The BCRHN is grateful to live, work, and be in relation with people from across many traditional and unceded territories, covering all regions of British Columbia. We are honoured to live on this land and are committed to reconciliation, decolonization, and building relationships in our communities.



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