

Support Our Health Care (SOHC)

Dedicated to the development of Princeton as a model of excellence and innovation in rural health care.

Newsletter

Spring, 2014

Kelowna Conference

This annual research conference was held on April 10 & 11. Sponsored by the Rural Health Services Research Network of BC, this event brings together rural health care researchers and practitioners from across the country.
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Artists for Life

Inspired by the work being done at the Sherbrooke Community Centre in Saskatoon, SOHC is exploring funding sources for the establishment of an "Artists for Life" program in Princeton.
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Public Forum on Medicare - June 4

Dr. Brian Day's legal challenge to Medicare has been described as "the most significant constitutional challenge in Canadian history." The Public Forum will provide information to Princeton and Area residents.
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Ashcroft presentation

Acting on an invitation from Jackie Tegart (our MLA), Brad Hope and Ed Staples made a presentation to residents of Ashcroft, outlining recent changes to Princeton's health care model.
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CIS . . .

stands for Communities Impacting Seniors and is the focus for a research project that involves UBC Okanagan, SOHC, and the community of Princeton.
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National Day of Action

The community of Princeton participated in the Rally in Support of Public Health Care on March 31st.

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SOHC Needs Your Input



www.sohc.ca

In this, the first issue of the SOHC Newsletter, we provide our members with an overview of the activities that we are involved in. We hope you find the articles informative and thought provoking.

The Support Our Health Care (SOHC) Society of Princeton was formed over two years ago in direct response to concerns raised by the people of Princeton and

Area H. At that time, SOHC recognized the critical need to work with local leaders and Interior Health to develop an improved and sustainable health care model for our community.

Since its formation last July, the Princeton Health Care Steering Committee has successfully implemented many of its goals as set out in their Action Plan. For example, we now have a full complement of health care professionals serving our community at Cascade Medical Centre and Princeton General Hospital; ER services have been restored 24/7; we have initiated telehealth services at our hospital; increased the number of visiting specialists that provide service locally; and worked with BC Ambulance Services to improve patient transportation services.

In the initial agreement, the Steering Committee was given a one year mandate

to implement its goals. As we approach the end of that mandate, all the representatives have come to realize that the work of the Committee has just begun and at its last meeting agreed to extend the mandate for one more year.

As your representative on the Steering Committee, I want to be sure that the goals we develop for our second year reflect the wishes of the SOHC membership. To that end, the SOHC Executive will be asking for your views on what you feel are the most important health care issues and concerns that face our community. We will be preparing information and a survey that we will distribute to our membership in the near future. We welcome your input.

Ed Staples, President

Kelowna Conference

The biennial British Columbia Rural Health Research Conference was held in Kelowna, April 10 and 11, at the Manteo Conference Centre. Co-sponsored by the Rural Health Services Research Network, UBC Okanagan, and Interior Health, the conference brings together researchers, health care professionals, and community leaders from across the country. The focus of this year's conference was "Building Intersections for Vibrant Rural Communities."

Thanks to a bursary awarded by RHSRNbc, SOHC was represented by President, Ed Staples and Secretary, Nienke Klaver. They attended several presentation that covered a wide range of topics, with the majority centred on healthy living and healthy communities.

TELEHEALTH PRESENTATION

From SOHC's perspective, the most interesting and relevant presentation was entitled TeleCardiology, given by Mya Aylott from the Island Health Authority. She described how the promotion of telehealth consultations on Vancouver Island have bridged the gap between patients and providers, providing more timely and convenient care to people dealing with heart conditions.

In a follow-up conversation with Loretta Zilm, responsible for coordinating the telehealth program in Interior Health, SOHC learned that Princeton's telehealth terminal (located at our hospital) is underutilized with only one patient using the service in the past six months. Zilm informed us that there is great potential to improve health care services through more wide-spread use of telehealth in rural and remote communities. She indicated that public awareness programs and overcoming barriers on the specialist side are priorities for Interior Health. To this end the provincial Ministry of Health intends to spend close to \$1 billion on telehealth services over the next ten years.

For more information on how you can access specialist services using telehealth, it's recommended that you discuss this with your family physician or nurse practitioner.

Artists for Life

In 2006, the Sherbrooke Community Centre in Saskatoon approached local artist, Jeff Nachtigall, to become the Centre's Artist in Residence. Drawing on two decades of



experience in working with individuals to realize their potential as artists, he developed a program for the residents at Sherbrooke based on the philosophy that "creativity is at the core of the human spirit." In 2009, the National Film Board of Canada made a documentary entitled "A Year in Sherbrooke" that presents a very touching and compelling portrayal of Nachtigall's initiative in action.

Inspired by the success of this initiative, SOHC initiated conversations with several local organizations and individuals to see if there might be interest in establishing a similar program in Princeton. Based on the enthusiastic reception to the idea, SOHC developed a proposal entitled "Artists for Life" and applied for funding from the Healthy Communities Society of BC. Although we were unsuccessful in our application, we remain committed to this initiative. SOHC has already begun exploring other funding sources and is working on developing a partnership between the Arts Health Network of BC in the development of the "Artists for Life" program. We have also initiated contact with Jeff Nachtigall and the Sherbrooke Community Centre who have indicated their ongoing support.

Public Forum for Medicare - June 4, Riverside



Dr. Brian Day, owner of Vancouver's for-profit Cambie Surgery Centre and leading proponent of privatized health care, has launched a constitutional challenge to break Medicare via the courts and establish a US-style system in Canada. Parties in this case, including the BC government, are calling this the most significant constitutional challenge in Canadian history.

If you care about Medicare, please plan to attend the Public Forum on June 4th, beginning at 7:00 pm at Riverside Community Centre. The panelists include Dr. Duncan Etches from Canadian Doctors for Medicare and Rick Turner, co-chair of the BC Health Coalition. They will present up-to-date information regarding this important court case. The public will have the opportunity to ask questions. The moderator for the evening is Brad Hope, Area H Regional Director.

Ashcroft Presentation

At the invitation of Jackie Tegart (our MLA, pictured below), on April 4th, Ed



Staples and Brad Hope made a presentation to the community of Ashcroft on the development of the Princeton Health

Care Action Plan.

About 40 Ashcroft residents attended the presentation that outlined the steps that were taken in Princeton,



Ashcroft, BC



Ashcroft (cont'd from page 2)

beginning with the Community Consultation through to the establishment of the Princeton Health Care Steering Committee and its mandate to implement the Action Plan.

Those in attendance expressed an interest to follow a similar strategy to develop an improved model of health care for Ashcroft and Area. SOHC is working closely with community leaders to provide assistance with their efforts.

Dr. Barbara Pesut, UBC Okanagan Faculty of Nursing and Canada



Research Chair, has expressed an interest in helping Ashcroft with the planning of a Community Consultation similar to the one she organized for Princeton.

SOHC has approached Interior Health to inform them of this initiative. IH has indicated their interest and will inform Ashcroft community leaders of their involvement in the near future.

Communities Impacting Seniors

In July, 2013, SOHC was awarded a Research Team Building Grant from the Rural Health Services Research Network of BC (RHSRNbc). Working in partnership with Dr. Barbara Pesut of UBC Okanagan, SOHC organized a team comprising Princeton community leaders and UBC researchers to initiate research into the impact of health care policy on the lives of seniors in our community.

After several meetings and much planning, the team has agreed on a focus for the research and applied for additional funding support. The name of the research initiative is Communities Impacting Seniors and a letter of intent has been forwarded to the Peter Wall Foundation asking for a grant to continue our work on the initiative.

Local leaders involved in the CIS project include Marilyn Harkness (Princeton Town Council), Lynn Pelly (Community Services), June Hope (Princeton Hospice), and Jamie Holloway (Princeton Social Services). SOHC representatives are Nienke Klaver and Ed Staples.

Crucial to the care of seniors in need of assistance is the work done by a small group of dedicated volunteers. It has become clear that if we are to provide the needed care, our community needs to improve the

efficiency of our volunteers and increase their numbers through effective recruitment and coordination. In that regard, the team has been working closely with Princeton Community Services and the Princeton Health Care Steering Committee to identify effective strategies to deal with our issues. In the CIS project, SOHC will be the "boots on the ground" organization involved with coordinating community involvement in the gathering of data through surveys, interviews and community consultations.

National Day of Action

March 31st marked the end of the National Health Accord, a ten year agreement between the provinces and the federal government to provide improved funding and health care services to Canadians. The termination of this agreement is the result of the refusal by the federal government to renegotiate a new Accord, instead, imposing a unilateral decision on the provinces that will result in \$36 billion in cuts to Medicare over the next ten years.

In protest, about 100 Princeton residents joined other Canadians across the country in a National Day of Action, asking the federal government to sit down with the provinces to work out a new agreement that will guarantee the rights of Canadians under the Canada Health Act.

SOHC members are encouraged to write to the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Health to voice their concerns over the lack of an agreement. For more information, please visit the following sites:

www.sohc.ca

www.medicare.ca