

Support Our Health Care (SOHC)

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

Newsletter

May, 2015

Health Care Steering Committee Updates

Information from the monthly meetings of the PHCSC, working to improve Princeton's model of health care.

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Music and Memory

Ridgewood Lodge becomes one of five long term care facilities in BC to offer the Music and Memory program. Barb Gagnon, recreation director at the Lodge, will be implementing the program over the next several months.

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Update on Brian Day Case

The day in court for Canada's public health care system has been postponed for a second time. Read excerpts from a report by Colleen Fuller of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

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Rally for Public Health Care - March 31

Hospital Employees Union and SOHC rally in support of Medicare. Held on March 31 at Veteran's Square, the date marks the first anniversary of the demise of the Canada Health Accord.

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Our Volunteers

As our name implies, support is critical to the success of our organization. Without the support from community volunteers SOHC would be powerless to accomplish its goals.

Since we first organized back in April 2012, we have received support from a variety of sources. Our membership has been consistently strong and provides a base for the volunteer work that is so important to our organization.

In addition, support has come from our elected officials at the local, provincial, and federal level. Area H (RDOS), the Town of Princeton, our provincial MLA, and our federal MP have all made valuable contributions in support of our goals.

It's also important to acknowledge the support of the health care community over the past three years. Interior Health, initially seen as our adversary, has become a cooperative partner in our

efforts. And at the local level, we must thank our doctors, nursing staff, paramedics, health care staff, and community service workers for their willingness to work collaboratively with SOHC.

But perhaps the greatest support we have is from the active volunteers who are dedicated to the improvement of health care for the people of Princeton and Area. In particular, we owe a huge debt of thanks to all the volunteers who make up our Board of Directors, serving our community on the "front lines" of positive change.

Brad and June Hope are well known in the health care community. They have provided support for health care in a variety of ways over the past several years. June's contributions include serving as Chair of the Princeton & District Hospice and Palliative Care Society, Treasurer of SOHC, and participation in several committees involved with health care research and improvement. She also operates *Touch of Hope*, a hands on healing clinic that has

provided many community residents with much needed relief.

Brad's main contribution to our community was in his capacity as Area H Regional Director, a position he held for six years. Brad provided invaluable support both as a member of SOHC and through his work with the Princeton Health Care Steering Committee.

Sadly, after 26 years on the Hope Ranch, June and Brad have decided to move on. On behalf of SOHC, I'd like thank them for their outstanding contribution to our community and wish them well in all their future endeavours.

All the best,

Ed Staples, SOHC President





Princeton Health Care Steering Committee Updates

A report from the Shared Care Committee provides the latest figures on the Princeton Access to Specialists program. Since January 2014, there have been approximately 60 specialist outreach clinics and over 450 patient appointments in association with the project. Specialty areas presently being covered include Cardiology, General Internal Medicine, General Surgery, GP Mental Health and Substance Use, Orthopaedics, Psychiatry, Paediatrics, Nephrology, Respiriology, Rheumatology, and Urology, with more specialty areas being explored. On February 19, Dr. Ella Monro joined Dr. Brian Forzley and Lisa Needoba to give a presentation on the Access to Specialists program at the 2015 Quality Forum in Vancouver. Organized by the BC Patient Safety and Quality Council, the forum is attended by health care practitioners and administrators from across the province.

The Art for Health group is working on a plan to improve the aesthetic appeal of our health care facilities. The group, consisting of Susan Delatour, Merrilyn Huycke, Nienke Klaver and Ed Staples, have made several recommendations to the Steering Committee and have begun work on projects designed to make our hospital and clinic more welcoming and appealing.

Marilyn Harkness gave a report on recent developments involving the Okanagan Similkameen Healthy Living Coalition. The Coalition is working with the Town Council in their efforts to pass a Smoke Free Outdoor Places bylaw for Princeton. Harkness provided information on the healthy eating initiative and local plans to raise community awareness of the health dangers of over consumption of sugar.

Ed Staples and Dr. Ella Monro reported on the newly formed Healthcare Sustainability Society that is raising funds to support the recruitment and retention of doctors for our community.

Jennifer Clement was welcomed as the new staff representative on the Steering Committee. Clement is the new social worker at Princeton General Hospital.

Music and Memory Program at Ridgewood

Music as therapy for Alzheimer's patients has received a great deal of attention over the past several years. In 2006, Dan Cohen founded an organization called Music & Memory based on the idea that if he ended up in a nursing home, he wanted to be able to listen to his favorite '60's music. After discovering that none of the 16,000 long-term care facilities in the United States used iPods for their residents, he volunteered to create personalized playlists on iPods for residents at a local nursing

home in New York City. Music & Memory has never looked back. Since its inception, the organization has implemented iPod personalized music programs in hundreds of care facilities throughout the U.S. and Canada. By providing access and education, and by creating a network of certified eldercare facilities, Music & Memory aims to make this form of personalized therapeutic music a standard of care throughout the health care industry.

Diane Sterne is an active community member and SOHC supporter. When she learned of Music & Memory she shared information with Nienke Klaver, SOHC Secretary, who worked with Barb Gagnon, Ridgewood Lodge Recreation Director, to set up the program in Princeton.

Through a generous donation by Doug Rebagliati, SOHC was able to cover the cost of the accreditation course and certification, which Barb completed in February. Ridgewood Lodge is now one of five long term care facilities in BC offering this program. Barb is now working on the implementation of the program which includes the development of a facility-ready iTunes library, managing resident playlists, handling equipment and security concerns, integrating personalized digital music into daily care plans, and evaluating the program's effectiveness.



Update on Dr. Brian Day Case

The following is from a report entitled **Cambie Corp. Goes to Court: The Legal Assault on Universal Health Care** written by Colleen Fuller of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. The full report is available free of charge at www.policyalternatives.ca.

As early as November 2015, the British Columbia Supreme Court is scheduled to hear an unprecedented constitutional challenge to Canada's public health care system. This is not the first or only Charter challenge to provincial and federal medicare laws. However, it poses the most serious threat to the principles of equality and universality that Canada's public health care system is built upon.

[This report from the CCPA] takes a brief look at recent attempts by private sector advocates to challenge the right to universal public health care in the courts, with a focus on the current Charter challenge before the B.C. Supreme Court. It reviews the national and international evidence on the role of for-profit providers and payers in efforts to reduce wait times. And it looks at the potential impact a successful bid could have on Canada's most valued and cherished public program: health care.

The B.C. case is being advanced by a group of plaintiffs led by Brian Day, whose clinics are known for billing patients above the fees established by the province and the medical association. In May 2007, the Medical Services

Commission (MSC) notified Day that his clinics, Cambie Surgery Centre and the Specialist Referral Clinic, would be audited. This was prompted by dozens of complaints to the MSC from patients who reported the clinics had billed them above allowable amounts.

Canada's public health care system reflects a fundamental value shared by a majority of Canadians: medically necessary health care services should be accessible to everyone regardless of income, home province or health status. The public system should be expanded, not contracted, so that services currently outside of the "medicare basket" are accessible to those who need them.

Canadians reject privatization based on their own experience, which is backed-up by the peer-reviewed evidence. That does not mean they are happy with the status quo. Surveys and polls have shown over and over again that people across the country support innovation in the public health care system to enhance access and reduce wait times based on need, not ability to pay. Governments have failed to act, instead turning a blind eye to illegal and fraudulent billing activities that ultimately harm patients.

It is hard to overstate the importance of this litigation. A win for Cambie Surgeries Corporation and its co-plaintiffs would not only undermine the values upon which Canada's health care system is based. As international evidence suggests, it would also undermine our ability to effectively address one of the issues at the centre of the Charter challenge: wait times.



Rally for Public Health Care

On March 31st, over 50 Princeton and Area residents attended the Rally in Support of Public Health Care. Organized by the Princeton local of the Hospital Employees Union and SOHC, the event marked the one year anniversary of the demise of the Canada Health Accord.

Speeches were given by Ed Staples, SOHC President; Sharon Zieske, HEU representative; Kim Maynard, Princeton Town Councillor; and Lynn Wells, SOHC Executive Director. Statements were also read from our federal MP, Alex Atamanenko and our provincial MLA, Jackie Tegart. Following the scheduled speeches, the microphone was opened to the public and several people came forward to express their concerns about the dismantling of Canada's Medicare system.





Meeting with Jackie Tegart

On April 8th, members of the SOHC Executive met with our MLA, Jackie Tegart to discuss recent health care initiatives in Princeton. The discussion points focused on three areas:

- The sustainability of the *Princeton Access to Specialist Care* program
- Development of a Physician Assistant program in BC
- Convalescent care beds in hospitals in rural remote communities

The *Access to Specialist Care* program has been a huge success in our community (see PHCSC Updates on Page 2). SOHC is interested in the sustainability of this program and its potential value for other rural remote communities in BC.

Manitoba and Ontario have an accredited Physician Assistant program that provide "highly skilled health care professionals who work alongside physicians to improve access to care, reduce wait times, and enhance the

quality of care." SOHC pointed out that PAs have the potential to provide a long term solution to our doctor shortage problem and that doctors in Princeton have indicated they would be interested in using PAs if they were available.

Most local hospitals have space that might be used to provide services presently only available at the regional level. An example of such service would be convalescent care; instead of keeping surgical patients in convalescent care at regional (centralized) hospitals, they could be transferred to their "home" community to receive the care they need. In addition to reducing overcrowding at the regional hospital, it would put patients in closer contact with friends and family. SOHC informed MLA Tegart that this initiative comes as a suggestion made by IH staff and is supported by Princeton doctors.

Tegart indicated her appreciation of the positive work being done in our community and volunteered to hand-deliver a letter from SOHC outlining details of these initiatives to Health Minister Terry Lake. That letter has been sent and SOHC is awaiting a reply from the Minister.



"Vote for Public Health Care" Campaign

2015 is a federal election year in Canada. SOHC, through its membership in the BC Health Coalition is asking BC voters to make a pledge to vote for the candidate or federal party that they believe offers the best support for Public Health Care. By signing the pledge, you are adding your voice to a growing number of British Columbians who want to see innovative action on health care.

After you sign, the BCHC will report back to you - showing where candidates and their parties stand on key health care issues.

Let's make public health care a priority in the federal election. If enough of us commit to vote for public health care, we can elect a government with a strong mandate to improve and strengthen health care that is based on need rather than ability to pay.

Make your pledge today at www.votepublichealthbc.ca

Colour Me Healthy Fun Run - May 23rd

The Princeton Secondary School leadership class is holding a fund raiser on May 23rd in support of health care initiatives in our community. The title of the event is *Colour Me Healthy* and involves a five kilometre run (or walk) beginning and ending at the high school. The entry fee is \$25 per person with all proceeds going to the Princeton Healthcare Sustainability Society.

Participants can pre-register by filling out a registration form available at Princeton Secondary School. You can also register on the day of the run beginning at 9:00 am.



Health Care Links

Jaw Dropping American Health Care Costs

http://moneymorning.com/ext/articles/rickards/the-american-dream.php?iris=308673&utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=referral&from=tw

[LeadNow](http://www.leadnow.ca/defend-our-health/) online petition to defend and strengthen universal health care in Canada <http://www.leadnow.ca/defend-our-health/>

Cross Canada Bike Ride for Lyme Disease - arriving in Princeton on May 13

<http://canlyme.com/2015/04/21/press-release-cross-canada-bike-ride-for-lyme-disease/>

Henry's Story (Music and Memory video)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FWn4JB2YLU>

Seniors Fall In Love With iPods At Retirement Home

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7-owbPzKzE>

Music and Memory website

www.musicandmemory.org

BC Health Coalition

www.bchealthcoalition.ca

Canadian Doctors for Medicare

www.canadiandoctorsformedicare.ca

Canadian Health Coalition

www.healthcoalition.ca

UBC Healthcare Traveling Roadshow

www.unbc.ca/northern-medical-program/healthcare-traveling-roadshow

Support for a National Pharmacare program

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/why-canada-needs-a-national-pharmacare-program/article21086014/>

and...

<http://pharmacarenow.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/PharmacareFactsheet1.pdf>

South Okanagan Healthy Communities Coalition

www.oshlc.ca

Thanks!
for your
Support!!