

Support Our Health Care (SOHC)

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

Newsletter

November, 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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Our New Federal Minister of Health

Dr. Jane Philpott assumes the Health portfolio in the new Trudeau cabinet. She brings a wealth of experience, including that of family physician.

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Politics and Health

For the 42nd time in the history of this great country, Canadians went to the polls on October 19th to elect a new federal government. Over the 78 day campaign, political parties identified the issues that they considered the most important to Canadians, including the economy, national security, the environment, and many others. It was a long list and a long campaign.

Surprisingly, the one issue that Canadians care deeply about was largely missing from Election 42. In an October 15, 2015 poll conducted by EKOS Research just prior to the election, Canadians showed that public health care remains one of our most valued systems, that the public is looking for significantly more resources and innovation in our National Health Care, and voters would reward those parties that

provide compelling solutions to the challenges facing our cherished public health care system. (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/284184189/EKOS-Poll-Canadians-Worried-Sick-About-Health-Care>)

Canadians have good reason to be concerned about the state of their public health care system. A move toward a two-tier privatized system, legal challenges by profit seeking doctors, an aging population, inability to pay for prescribed medicine by 1 in 4 Canadians, and reduced access to services in rural remote communities are among the many challenges that face our new federal government.

The Liberals have made many promises, including the negotiation of a new Health Accord, investment in a national seniors strategy, and implementation of universal pharmacare. Those of us who value our public health care system will be eagerly watching as our new

government works to fulfill these promises.

Dan Albas is our new Member of Parliament in the Central Okanagan-Similkameen-Nicola riding. In a recent article in The Tyee, Albas stated that MPs "were elected to be the voices of our ridings" and "that all members of the House of Commons, no matter what they do, are all part of Canada." SOHC congratulates Mr. Albas on his re-election and looks forward to working with him to improve public health care for all Canadians.

To your health,

Edward Staples, President





Princeton Health Care Steering Committee Updates

At their July 16 meeting, the Princeton Health Care Steering Committee (PHCSC) completed their second year of operation and agreed to begin their third mandate in September with the aim of developing and sustaining an effective health care model for people living in and around Princeton.

The PHCSC consists of representatives from the Cascade Medical Group (practitioners), Princeton General Hospital administration and staff, the Town of Princeton, Area H (RDOS), Interior Health, BC Ambulance Services, and SOHC.

With the objective of consistently assessing progress, the Steering Committee completed a review of its Action Plan at its October 20 meeting. The Committee looked at action items from the previous year, identifying them as completed, active and ongoing, or shelved for future consideration.

Completed items included the development and implementation of a plan for the reduction of narcotic prescribing, completion of a new clinic room at Cascade Medical Centre as part of the ongoing goal to provide adequate space for the practitioners, and implementation of a "Rapid Access" clinic for attached patients.

Several action items remain "active and ongoing" for the next year. Recruitment and retention of health care practitioners and staff continues to be a priority item for the PHCSC. The addition of Dr. Tim Van Der Heide to the Cascade Medical Team brings

our community closer to the goal of five full time General Practitioners and one full time Nurse Practitioner. The Committee will continue to work with health care professionals to fill present vacancies.

The PHCSC recognizes that access to both local and regional health care services remains an issue for many Princeton and Area residents. Through the Access to Specialists Project, many patients requiring specialist care have experienced improved service over the past year. This very successful project, sponsored by the BC Shared Care Committee, will continue, with a focus on long term sustainability and the addition of improved access through telehealth and home monitoring programs. In addition, the Committee will continue to work towards improved public transportation options for access to regional health care facilities in the Okanagan valley. There will also be a focus on informing local residents of the present options available for patient transport.

Improvement in clinical support remains an important action item and will focus on improved pre-natal care to meet the needs of women in Princeton and the development and implementation of a chronic disease management plan.

A new focus for the PHCSC over the next year will be the development of a Community Outreach program designed to form relationships with local individuals and organizations that are part of our community's larger health and health care service team. In addition, the Committee is planning a second Health Care Community Consultation to be held early in the new year.

Other action items include the development of a public education program focusing on health promotion and the use of available health care resources, promotion of the public use of the comments and suggestions email address (info@princetonhealth.ca), and maintenance of the Steering Committee webpage (www.princetonhealth.ca).

Improvements to the hospital, clinic, and long term care facilities will remain a priority for the Committee. Recently, the hospital purchased a new portable ultrasound unit which will be used primarily for assessment and diagnostic work in the emergency room. The new unit provides easy maneuverability around exam tables for point-of-care imaging. There has also been an upgrading of technology with the addition of a wireless electrocardiogram (ECG) device providing easier access to cardiac information in the ward and in the emergency ward.

After two years of outstanding service to our community, Marilyn Harkness and Walter Hogg have stepped down from the PHCSC. Marilyn Harkness represented the Town of Princeton until her retirement in 2014 and then served as the Health and Wellness representative for the past year. Also stepping down is Walter Hogg who served as the Seniors representative on the Committee. The PHCSC recognizes the important contribution that was made by these two community leaders and wishes them well in all their future endeavors.



Our New Minister of Health

Dr. Jane Philpott, Member of Parliament from the Greater Toronto Area, adds Minister of Health to her long list of accomplishments. SOHC congratulates her on her appointment and wishes her well as she works to maintain and improve our public health care system. The following excerpts are from an article by Laura Fraser, posted by CBC News on November 4, 2105.

Canada's new Minister of Health, Dr. Jane Philpott, may be a relative newcomer to the political sphere, but her career in health care spans three decades and two continents. Philpott's experience as a health-care manager includes six years as Chief of the Department of Family Medicine at Markham Stouffville Hospital, a position she left in 2014 after she began to campaign for the Liberals.

Federal health accord

[W]hile Canada's provinces have jurisdiction when it comes to the services they deliver, there are some major issues looming on the national health-care front.

Negotiating a new federal Health Accord — introduced by Paul Martin's Liberals in 2004 — could be [the first major issue looming on the national health-care front]. The Liberals campaigned on a promise to negotiate a new accord with long-term funding after the Conservatives announced they would not renew the plan when it expired in 2014.

The 2004 accord promised that Ottawa would increase its annual health transfer to the provinces by six per cent a year over the ensuing decade. But the Harper government told the provinces it would phase out those increases after 2016-2017 and that any future boosts to the provincial health transfers would match the growth in gross domestic product. The decision set off protests at the time, although numerous economists called it good fiscal management. But health-care professionals, patient advocates and unions say the decision didn't reflect the cost of caring for a population that's living longer and is therefore often more sickly in old age.

Pharmacare

There's also been an increasing push for Ottawa to develop a national pharmacare program, with more than 115 physicians endorsing the Pharmacare 2020 report, which calls for certain medications to be publicly funded.

It's unclear exactly where Philpott stands on these issues as she could not be reached by CBC Toronto on Wednesday. In launching her campaign, she said she wanted to go into politics to make "society healthier."

You can read the full CBC article at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/health-minister-jane-philpott-portfolio-1.3304345>



SOHC Partners in Mental Health Initiative

Dr. Nelly D. Oelke, Assistant Professor at the UBCO School of Nursing, has invited SOHC to provide assistance in the expansion of a mental health research project that will include the community of Princeton and Area.

The initiative will build on current research being conducted in Osoyoos, Oliver, and Okanagan Falls. SOHC will be assisting Dr. Oelke in initiating conversations with individuals and organizations in our community who are currently involved in providing support and services to older adults with mental health concerns.

The project will utilize a participatory research approach, working directly with older adults to identify presently available resources with the goal of developing a set of innovative tools that will meet their needs more effectively.

Dr. Oelke is working towards an application for a grant through the Vancouver Foundation. This grant requires community support which has been provided through letters of support and in-kind contributions from the Town of Princeton, the Princeton Rotary Club, the Village of Keremeos, and SOHC.



Dr. Tim Van Der Heide

Staffing at Cascade Clinic and Princeton General Hospital

Dr. Tim Van Der Heide has joined the team of health care practitioners at Cascade Medical Centre, becoming the third full time Family Physician presently serving our community. He joins Dr. Colleen Black, Dr. Ella Monro, and our two Nurse Practitioners, Tanya ter Keurs and Viola Brown working at the Clinic.

Dr. Van Der Heide moved here from Chetwynd in July. He and his wife have purchased a 43-acre farm east of town.

In addition, there have been new hires at the hospital and our lab. James Ennis, Registered Nurse, began work at PGH in June and in September a new lab technician joined our team of three permanent and two casual lab technologists.

Our community still needs two more family physicians to complete our full compliment of doctors. SOHC continues to work actively with our local doctors and administrators to recruit and retain health care professionals to serve the people of Princeton and Area.



Okanagan Similkameen Healthy Living Coalition

On Thursday, September 10, SOHC attended the Fall Energizer workshop sponsored by the Okanagan Similkameen Healthy Living Coalition. The workshop was held at the Shatford Centre in Penticton. The OSHLC unites all regional public institutions around the goal of building new community norms for health and well-being.

The workshop brought together numerous community members and leaders who have developed and implemented Healthy Living initiatives over the past several years. Presentations focused on several themes, including Physical Activity, Active and Healthy Living, Food Security, Tobacco and Alcohol Reduction, Mental Health and Wellness, and Healthy Environment.

The Town of Princeton was represented by Counsellor Kim Maynard who gave a report on the status of the non-smoking bylaw that has received support from our Town Council.

AGM 2015

SOHC Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Support Our Health Care (SOHC) Society of Princeton will be held on Thursday, November 19 beginning at 7:00 pm at Riverside Community Centre. The agenda will include a report of the year's activities, a financial report, presentation of priorities for the coming year, and election of officers and directors.

Please plan to attend. Your support is important to the success of our society.



Love a Locum

Locums are itinerant doctors who fill vacancies in communities like ours that are experiencing a shortage in family physicians. Locums provide a valuable service when doctors are on leave, attend conferences, or take vacation time.

Locums consist of doctors who are semi-retired and looking for part-time work, younger doctors who are searching for the right community to set up practice, or doctors who prefer the locum life style.

Most rural remote communities in BC rely on locums to provide much needed service. To show our support and to encourage doctors who are looking for the right community to pick Princeton, the Love a Locum initiative was established.

The goal of the initiative is to show our appreciation by presenting welcome gifts to locums when they arrive for the first time in our community. Over the past year we have received generous donations from many individuals, businesses, and organizations.

We would like to see this valuable program continue and we need the community's help. If you are interested in supporting this worthwhile project, either by making a donation or by volunteering your time, please contact Nienke Klaver, SOHC Secretary, at tulameennienke@gmail.com or by telephone at 250-295-0822.



Health Care Links

Canadians Worried Sick About Health Care

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/284184189/EKOS-Poll-Canadians-Worried-Sick-About-Health-Care>

The National Post article on Dr. Jane Philpott

<http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/jane-philpott-first-md-to-be-named-health-minister-on-mission-to-help-poor>

Canadian Doctors for Medicare

www.canadiandoctorsformedicare.ca

Canadian Health Coalition

www.healthcoalition.ca

BC Health Coalition

<http://www.bchealthcoalition.ca>

South Okanagan Healthy Living Coalition

www.oshlc.ca

Support for a National Pharmacare program

[http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/why-canada-needs-](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/why-canada-needs-a-national-pharmacare-program/article21086014/)

[a-national-pharmacare-program/article21086014/](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>

Princeton Health Care Steering Committee

<http://princetonhealth.ca>

Support Our Health Care (SOHC) Society of Princeton

<http://sohc.ca>

Better Health Together - informative articles on digital health/telehealth

<https://www.betterhealthtogether.ca>

BC Care Providers - promoting the provision of the best possible care services for seniors

<http://www.bccare.ca/bccpa-proposes-significant-transformation-of-continuing-care-system/>

Thanks!
for your
Support!!