

RURAL HEALTH MATTERS

British Columbia Rural Health Network

April 2020

Dedicated to the development of a health services system that improves and sustains the health and well-being of residents of rural communities across British Columbia as a model of excellence and innovation in rural health care.



Letter from the President

Dear BCRHN Members and Supporters,

The global crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic has been expressed as challenging, unprecedented, difficult, crazy, and terrifying; and depending on your personal situation, these are all appropriate descriptions. Who would have thought, even a month ago, that we would be self isolating and adjusting to circumstances that have become the “new normal”.

As each of us in our own way make these adjustments, it’s heartening to know that there are positive things to report as our communities rally in support of each other.

In my home community of Princeton, the Mayor has called on local organizations to assist him in the implementation of a plan to support those who are most vulnerable and incapable of helping themselves. The Support Our Health Care Society of Princeton has responded to the call by asking our members and supporters to assist in this initiative by identifying people in need and volunteering to help in any way they can. The response has been very positive.

I expect that this scenario is being repeated in a variety of ways throughout the province. It underscores the value and importance of the many organizations and individuals that make up the volunteer support systems

responding to the particular needs of our communities.

The BC Rural Health Network was formed as a way to identify our common concerns and share our successful strategies and initiatives. There is perhaps no better time than during this crisis to connect with each other and share our stories.

To this end, we are partnering with the Centre for Rural Health Research (CRHR) on a survey to capture rural communities response to Covid-19.

We are interested in highlighting stories of resilience and innovation. We will gather stories from across rural BC and send them out to our membership. In addition, the Centre for Rural Health Research will be highlighting some of the responses through a podcast series that will also be available to our members and open to the public through the CRHR website. Further information that will include a link to the survey will be sent to our membership shortly.

As President of the BCRHN and on behalf of the Board of Directors, I’d like to wish all of our members and supporters the very best as we work together in these challenging times.

Edward Staples, BCRHN President
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Member of the Month

Society for Protection and Care of Seniors - Trail

The Society for Protection and Care of Seniors (SPCS) is a non-profit, volunteer based Seniors' health care advocacy group located in Greater Trail. We advocate and pursue options for adequate, accessible and the safe continuing care of seniors' resources within our communities. We communicate, disseminate information and educate to accomplish these goals.

In 2004, many seniors had difficulty accessing appropriate health care. There was a need for an advocacy group to bring awareness to IHA. The Trail Health Watch was formed to speak out for seniors with health issues.

In February 2006, a tragedy now known as “The Albo case” occurred. The Albo family's parents were both Trail hospital patients, when suddenly, contrary to the family's wishes, the parents were separated. Their mother was transferred to a long-term care facility in Grand Forks where two days later, she passed away. Their father passed away just 10 days later.

SPCS changed its name to The Society for the Protection and Care of Seniors. As a result of all the work SPCS has done over the past years, there has been considerable impact on how and what decisions are made by IHA. In 2010, a ten year span 'Lost Services Report' was created to identify detrimental changes to services – many are still concerns 15 years later! This Report can be viewed on our website: www.spcstrail.weebly.com. SPCS continues to advocate for improvements to service and to express concern regarding cuts to health care. An important role is to help citizens give voice to their valid concerns.

We are proud to be a part of Connected Communities - a West Kootenay group that meets regularly to discuss shared issues and advocate for change. Twice a year Connected Communities representatives meet with Kootenay Boundary IH Administration to discuss concerns and offer recommendations for dealing with identified concerns. This provides an avenue of transparency with IH. As a member of BCHC and COSCO, we also have a voice in provincial issues.

Members of SPCS find it rewarding to be actively involved in improving and enhancing positive changes to our health care system. SPCS advocates for the implementation of both the Ombudsperson's and BC Senior's Advocate's recommendations. We continue to be a force for change locally, regionally and provincially.

We are driven by the mandate first voiced by Jim Albo: to keep meeting, attend vigils and give time, energy and expertise to SPCS “until there are changes for the better”.



From the Desk of the Administrator

“There is a fine line between rural research and quality improvement, with the desired end goal for better health outcomes, better engagement of rural population and better health service delivery.”

The first speaker in our series of quarterly presentations was Jason Curran. Jason is with Interior Health as well as the Research & Knowledge Translation Lead for the Rural Coordination Centre's newly minted (May 2019) Regional Operations Centre in Penticton - Interior Node (IN).

Jason works out of the Penticton Regional Hospital with two other staff. His focus is on facilitating and leading rural health research across the region. He is also supporting several research projects across the province, and connecting and building a network on clinicians interested and able to conduct research. The end goal is better health outcomes, better engagement of rural population, and better health service delivery.

Research is one mechanism to connect physicians with the potential to recruit and retain physicians in rural communities. It can be a drawing point for interested potential physicians coming into a smaller community. They are more likely to sign on if they know there is a strong research fabric available to them as well as the supports which are offered through the Interior Node, and have the support and perhaps the connections of a larger network.

Jason presented a few examples of ongoing rural research that show the potential impact local or regional studies can have on small communities across the province. The key to these projects however, will be how we involve community and patient partners to help guide the research, as well as the eventual implementation of results that can have a positive effect on health care service delivery and patient outcomes.

Together with an emergency physician out of Golden, Jason is working on several projects:

Transportation: As there is no CTT in Golden, residents need to travel to centres such as Cranbrook, Kelowna and sometimes Calgary.

Patient-controlled analgesia: Patients to administer themselves when they are being transported in ambulances to larger centres to reduce the pain during transport. The doctor created this new protocol that could be spread to other communities.

Another project Jason is looking at, is a **point of care ultrasound within clinics**, which would mean cutting down the time patients need to travel to hospitals.

Jason's focus is on involving and engaging patients and community members; that research is patient orientated, and conducted with patient engagement. He is looking into how to best include patients in the research process. Jason is also focusing on spreadability and scalability for the work being done. He will share interventions as well as new evidence as they come available.

Our next topics will be *‘Are you worried about the medications that older family members are taking?’* and *‘How are Distances to the Closest Health Services Measured? Are There Better Ways?’*

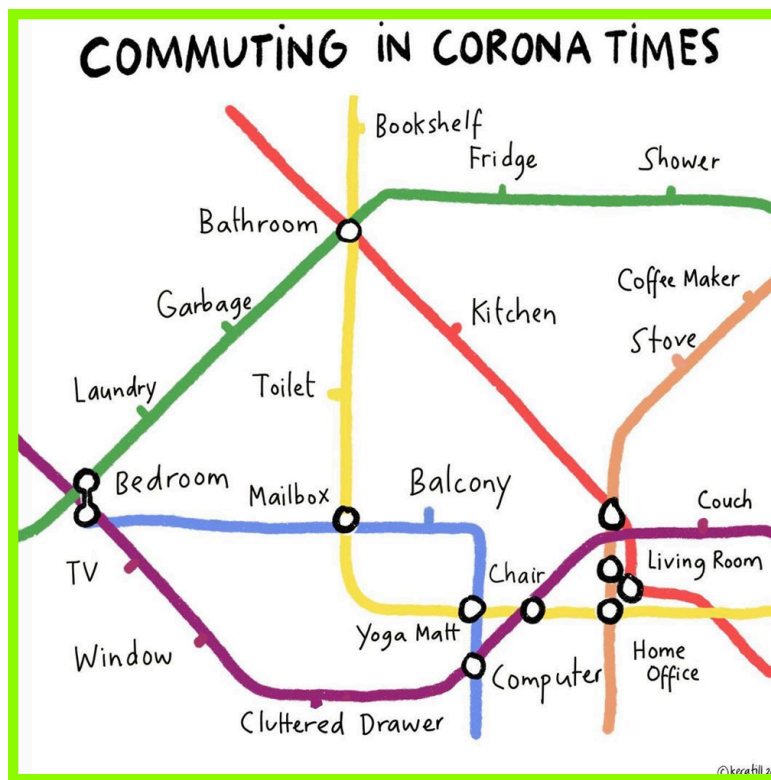
Please give us some feedback as to which topics are of interest to you or your organization.

Connie Howe

COVID-19 helpful links

- > https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/?fbclid=IwAR0gTyg_1KAonIz3K_rsfCOSr_bNQOm_z_jid3qFTpcZ92N4lZ6oPj7hX_Q
[Confirmed Cases and Deaths by Country, Territory or Conveyance]
- > <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support>
- > <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>
- > <https://www.fraserhealth.ca/news/2020/Mar/how-to-manage-anxiety-around-covid-19#.XnpAFIhKiUm>
- > <https://theconversation.com/social-distancing-can-make-you-lonely-heres-how-to-stay-connected-when-youre-in-lockdown-133693>
- > <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19> (Province of BC)
- > <https://bc.thrive.health>
[Support App and Self Assessment Tool]
- > <https://thetyee.ca/News/2020/03/24/Science-Journals-Covid/>
- > <https://elemental.medium.com/if-youre-feeling-overwhelmed-here-s-a-science-backed-way-to-take-control-a9650718365c>
- > <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-social-distancing-isnt-enough-we-need-to-ramp-up-testing-and/>
- > <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/newsletters/#coronavirus-update> [Sign up for the Coronavirus Update newsletter to read the day's essential coronavirus news, features and explainers written by Globe reporters]
- > <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>
[World Health Organization - don't forget to click on the myth busters]





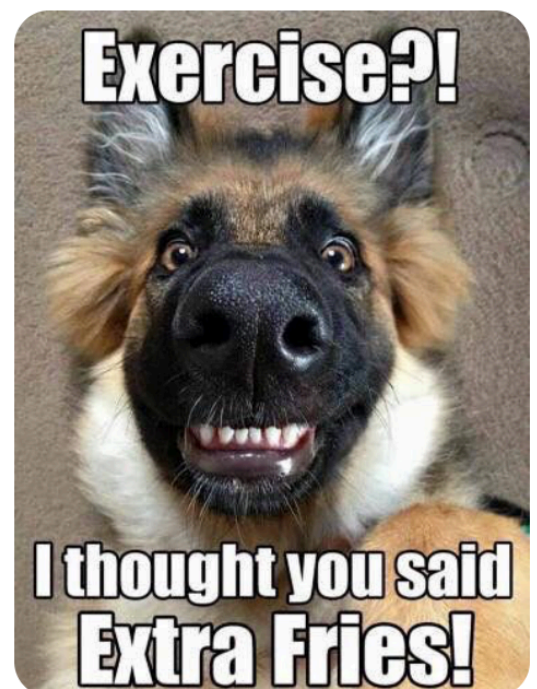
OF SPECIAL INTEREST

**Do you miss not being able to work out in your favourite exercise club?
Don't despair.**

The following was posted on our Twitter account by Pulse Cardiac Health

Screen Shot

Just wanted to let you know that in response to covid -19 .. we are opening our entire library of cardiac education & exercise video instruction to all free of charge. With the temporary closure of many of BC's cardiac rehabilitation programs, gym/Rec facilities, and many of the supports people have come to rely on, we wanted to do what we could to offer our support. Our website is pulsecardiachealth.com and the code for the Access Pass is hearthealth100. If you feel there is anyone who could benefit, we would love your support in passing this along! Thank you! Stay healthy! ❤️



Interested? Click on:
pulsecardiachealth.com



Rural Site Visit Project

Rural Coordination Centre of BC (RCCbc)

The Rural Site Visit project – funded by the [Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues \(JSC\)](#) seeks to connect with all [BSA](#) communities between 2017 and 2020.

The purpose is to hear directly from community members about their thoughts surrounding health care delivered in BC.

In communities, a team of rural physicians and RCCbc staff meet with health providers, health administrators, First Nations, and local leadership to host an open discussion about the community's innovations, and challenges with regards to local health care services.

The team meets individually with these groups to discuss health services from their perspective. Information collected from these visits is anonymized and presented to the JSC. Before any material is presented to the JSC the notes gathered are reflected back to the participants to ensure accuracy.

The intent is for the information provided to be used to better inform policy and program development, and build stronger direct relationships between the JSC and rural health providers.

Approximately 95 communities from June 2017 until December 2019 have agreed to have their responses included.

Two and a half years after its inception, the RCCbc Site Visit project has reached its half-way point with over 100 rural BC communities visited.



Click the bold text to access the latest Community Report:

https://rccbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/RCCbc-Rural-Site-Visits-Community-Feedback-Report-3_Jun-2017-Dec-2019-1.pdf

New on our website.....

There is a wide variety of useful and relevant resources available to individuals and organizations focused on healthy aging.

These include checklists, toolkits, reports, studies, videos, and other materials on the seven core program areas, as well as resources on topics such as ageism, caregiving, research, organizational and sector development, and many other subjects.

Click on <https://bcrhn.ca/healthy-aging-core-2/>



or click on: **HEALTHY AGING CORE**



A Kootenay physician, Dr. Michael Vance, has collaborated with regional engineers, Selkirk College, and the MIDAS lab in Trail to 3D print personal protective equipment (PPE), especially masks.

The team uses 3D printers and laser cutters and plastics to make the plastic shields, which cover the whole face.

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