



Making better  
decisions together  
with patients  
and families



## North Shore Primary Care Network

### Community Engagement Summary Report

May 13, 2019

Prepared by: VCH Community Engagement  
[ce@vch.ca](mailto:ce@vch.ca) 604-714-3779



## Background

---






Under the direction of the Ministry of the Health, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Division of Family Practice are developing Primary Care Networks (PCN's) that will change the way people access health services where they live, and better connect family doctors and nurse practitioners with other health care professionals in the community.

The benefit for family doctors and nurse practitioners will be convenient access to a supportive network of people and services for expanded patient care. For patients and clients, it will be timely, coordinated and comprehensive, primary care when its needed so individual health care needs are met more effectively. Overall, PCNs would strengthen teamwork, communication and centre services around patients and their families.

In order to understand the primary care needs of the North Shore communities staff led an engagement process to hear from residents, patients, their families and their caregivers to understand their experiences with our current health care services and programs and understand how it can be improved to support their health and wellbeing without having to leave the North Shore.

## How we engaged

---

-  In April and early May 2019, residents,
-  community organizations and health practitioners were invited to attend a series
-  of forums in North Vancouver and West Vancouver to learn more about the benefits
-  of a Primary Care Networks and to ask questions and share their experiences.
- 

VCH Community Engagement



The forums were promoted through social media, Eventbrite and through community partners to encourage participation in the forums.

## What we asked

---

Staff posed three overarching questions to participants:

1. Is it important to have access to a family doctor when you need it? Why?
  - Do you have challenges finding a family doctor or nurse practitioner?
  - Do you have any challenges getting in to see your doctor or nurse practitioners?
2. What other services, besides your family doctor, would you like to be able to access or feel are needed to help you take care of your health?
  - What are the connections to other services that you need?
3. Are there any community programs or services that you have experienced or can think of that could help people take care of their health?
  - What are some existing services that could be enhanced or what new services should be added?

### KEY POINTS:

- **It is important to have a GP or NP who knows me. Relationship is important.**
- **A GP or NP for the family unit is a benefit.**
- **The same person to provide primary care over a period of time creates stability in health care management.**
- **Flexibility for access is needed; when and where and how often.**
- **Virtual care options should be available** 2
- **Options for accessing primary care once in place need to be promoted.**
- **Availability of community based resources.**

## What we heard

---

### Is it important to have access to a family doctor when you need it? Why?

- Everyone agreed that having a family doctor or nurse practitioner is very important for a variety of reasons. Some of these include, for continuity and health history. A family doctor understands your health history which is important for diagnosis, referrals, prescriptions, etc. It also helps to keep people out of emergency departments.
- Those who didn't have a family doctor said they didn't have one because they don't know how to find one. They may use walk-in clinics or have moved around too much to retain a family doctor. There are also many family doctors retiring and they have no one to pass their practice on to or hand over patients. Some people have found that doctors wouldn't take them on because they were older or had complex health issues.
- Some of the issues that prevented participants from accessing their family doctor included limited office hours due to business hour days or their doctor working part-time. Some could not get appointments in a timely manner and could not wait or they had to travel a long way to see their doctors.

### What other services, besides your family doctor, would you like to be able to access or feel are needed to help you take care of your health?

- Better coordination and more holistic health care on the North Shore that includes doctors, mental health services, timely referrals and better navigation of the system.
- Better access to 24 hour care that isn't the emergency department, where you are able to get x-rays and other diagnostics done.
- More transparent information about how much health services cost.
- Other ways to see a doctor or health practitioner like home visits or virtual health.
- Better peer support networks and systems to alleviate some of the stress on our health care system.
- Specialty clinics for chronic diseases that patients can access before they are in a crisis.

### Are there any community programs or services that you have experienced or can think of that could help people take care of their health?

- Better and more accessible information about what services are available in your community and how to access them. This information should be available virtually and within the community at locations people frequent.

- 411, 211 and 811 phone lines.
- North Shore Keep Well and Seniors One Stop, North Shore Community Resources, Circle of Support Program, PainBC, Cancer Thrive, Family Services on the North shore, HollyBurn, Kelty Mental Health.
- More community based education, like education sessions on specific topics and to support health management. Information available in different languages.
- More mental health services (preventative and treatment) for all demographics and populations.

## Summary and Recommendations

---

- Create capacity for GP’s and NP’s to take on patients for the long term.
- Provide, through the PCN, a network of health care professionals that can broaden and improve access to primary care.
- Ensure primary care providers are aware of community based resources that they can refer or direct their patients to.

*“It is very important to have a family GP who sees all of me, who gets to know me and understands my health history and issues.”*

### Who we heard from

---

The communities across the North Shore were invited to participate in this dialogue. We promoted the session through community partners, at our facilities on the North Shore, on Facebook, Twitter and Eventbrite. Residents and community partners from the communities of North Vancouver and West Vancouver Overall 45 participants attended the 3 sessions.

*“Due to difficulty of access people are muddling by; not getting the health care they need to stay well or improve as it is too difficult”*