
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health
BC Medical Association

New care clinic supports expectant Cowichan Valley moms

DUNCAN – A new full-service, family-friendly maternity clinic for pregnant women living in the Cowichan region is now open and accepting patients.

Located at Cowichan District Hospital, the Cowichan Maternity Clinic was developed by the Cowichan Division of Family Practice with support from the Vancouver Island Health Authority and the Cowichan District Hospital Foundation, which provided a one-time grant of \$75,000 for renovations and equipment.

The clinic provides complete maternity care for expectant moms and post-natal care for up to six weeks postpartum. Patients include those who do not have a family physician as well as women whose regular family physician does not provide obstetric care. With a location that provides access to other hospital services like labs and ultrasounds, the clinic offers flexible appointment scheduling, including same-day and walk-in appointments and serves patients living in communities from Ladysmith to the Malahat, and Lake Cowichan to Penelakut Island.

Patients receive comprehensive maternity care that includes referrals to support services such as public health and breastfeeding support. The clinic also provides an opportunity for patients to meet and connect with other expectant parents and to engage in parenting-related discussions and education.

Recognizing the high percentage of Aboriginal families living in the region, the new clinic offers an opportunity to improve access to pregnancy and birth health services for Aboriginal women, and Aboriginal health providers were consulted about the design and operation of the clinic.

Quotes:

Mike de Jong, Minister of Health:

“We are committed to ensuring that women have the best possible health throughout their pregnancies and to giving B.C. children a great start in life. This new clinic addresses a significant need in the community by ensuring that expectant moms have access to stable obstetric services close to home and is a great example of how Divisions of Family Practice are working at the community level to determine and meet the specific health care needs of B.C. patients.” [draft]

“Dr. Bill Cavers, co-chair General Practice Services Committee:

“We are very pleased to support the Cowichan Division in the opening of this clinic. Increasing access to maternity care is an important part of our local family physicians’ efforts to enhance full-service primary care in their region.”

Dr. Maggie Watt, Duncan family physician and physician lead, Cowichan Maternity Clinic:

“The Clinic will support local doctors as well as patients, by offering a team environment that helps them better manage the workload and unpredictable schedules of maternity care. Already this is bringing some family physicians back to obstetrics and helping us build sustainable capacity to better serve local women.”

Amy Brophy, executive director of the Cowichan District Hospital Foundation:

“Cowichan District Hospital Foundation is so pleased to partner with the Cowichan Valley Family Practice Division and Vancouver Island Health Authority by furnishing and equipping a new Maternity Clinic on the 2nd Floor at Cowichan District Hospital. By simplifying access to maternity services with a “one-stop” clinic at the hospital, the doctors can provide better care to our expecting mums in the Cowichan Valley, and we can look forward to healthier babies and later healthier children and adults.”

XXX, Vancouver Island Health Authority:

“Cowichan’s new clinic will benefit many patients and families including those who do not have a family physician. We are very happy to be able to play a part in this multi-partner project by providing space for the clinic at Cowichan District Hospital at reduced cost, as well as in-kind services such as laundry services.”

Quick Facts on the Cowichan Valley Maternity Clinic:

- The clinic team includes nine local family doctors experienced in obstetric care, as well as a registered nurse and a medical office assistant.
- The new clinic has the capacity to see X patients per year.
- Aboriginal patients account for approximately 30 per cent of the deliveries in the Cowichan Valley.
- Last year 508 babies were born at Cowichan District Hospital.

Quick Facts on Divisions of Family Practice:

- Established in October 2009, the Cowichan Valley Division is one of 23 Divisions of Family Practice, which cover 89 communities across B.C.
- Divisions of Family Practice are groups of physicians organized at the local or regional level who work to address common health care goals.
- Divisions are an initiative of the General Practice Services Committee, a joint committee of the Province and the BC Medical Association that works to improve community-level patient care in communities around the province.
- Local Divisions, working collaboratively with the regional health authority and community members, are responsible for identifying the gaps that exist in patient care within their community and work to develop solutions.
- Each community or region of the province where physicians wish to establish a division will have one by 2012.
- Divisions of Family Practice are now working at the community level to ensure that British Columbians who want a regular family physician will have one by 2015.

Learn More:

For more information on the Cowichan Maternity Clinic, visit: www.cowichanmaternityclinic.ca

For more information on Divisions of Family Practice, visit: www.divisionsbc.ca

Contact:

Ryan Jabs

Media Relations Manager

Ministry of Health

250 952-1887 (media line)

Sharon Shore

Senior Manager of Communications and Media Relations

BC Medical Association

604-638-2832 or 604-306-1866