



# A Picture of Health

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B.C.'S MINISTRY OF HEALTH



## Community Health Centres

*Defining the important role of community health centres in delivering primary health care.*

February 2020



*Sonja Rietkerk, RISE's clinical lead & family nurse practitioner, at the announcement with Health Minister Adrian Dix.*

**Community members** have long advocated to bring a community health centre to the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood of Vancouver. The community has a diverse residential, working class, immigrant population and demand for both health and social services has increased put additional pressure on the existing non-profit. That's one of the reasons that earlier this year, the Province launched [RISE Community Health Centre](#) in collaboration with the Collingwood Neighbourhood House Society, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Vancouver Division of Family Practice, to provide comprehensive

primary health care services for patients, including those with mental health and addictions challenges, and other complex social needs.

RISE, which stands for **resilience, integration, social justice and equity**, will bring relief to the diverse community and connect community members who have difficulty accessing the health care system to a primary health care team and social supports.

RISE offers [team-based care](#), which means patients will be able to access different team members who support their medical and social needs. The centre also provides health promotion programs and events to the broader community which will be integrated as part of the overall services offered to the public.

Community-informed and/or governed Community Health Centres (CHCs) are being established or expanded in communities where there is a strong community engagement and readiness, or where data shows there are significant health inequities or health needs that a CHC would be best positioned to address.

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*CHCs will offer more opportunities to help reach diverse populations and expand capacity to offer care that goes beyond primary health needs alone.*

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Building on and partnering with existing not-for-profit organizations, the Province is working to provide additional resources to communities and



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integrate team-based primary care with health promotion and well-being services already being provided.

The introduction of community-based CHCs to B.C., while not yet widely available, offers tremendous opportunity to help reach marginalized populations and expand capacity to offer care that goes beyond a community's day-to-day health needs.

A CHC is typically a team-based health centre focused on both the primary health care and social needs of the population it serves.

Services at RISE will include:

- Medical exams, diagnosis, immunizations, wound care, sexual and reproductive health services.
- Addictions medicine and harm reduction for its clients as part of comprehensive primary care.
- Counseling support for those with mild-moderate mental health needs.
- Health promotion and disease prevention activities such as health screening, nutrition and food security initiatives, physical activity, group health visits and health education.
- Support navigating the health and social service systems, to support clients with social determinants of health.
- A pharmacy dispensary to support clients in accessing medication.

While it will take some time for the centre to expand and reach its full capacity, patients are now able to access initial primary health care services on-site and in community spaces through referrals from the [Collingwood Neighbourhood House](#) staff.

RISE is unique in that it is operating a clinical space at Collingwood Neighbourhood House, and will expand operations at a second site, intended to be its main location.

The main site is co-located in the same building as the Evergreen Community Health Centre, operated by Vancouver Coastal Health. This was done intentionally to better serve the community as the two centres will complement each other particularly where care is shared for the same patients.

Community-based CHCs are highly accountable to their patients and communities as not-for-profit entities – usually with an elected Board of Directors that includes a strong patient membership. In contrast the regional health authority run CHC is accountable to the health authority board.



*Health Minister Adrian Dix announces RISE Community Health Centre in the community of Renfrew-Collingwood.*

Additionally, health authority-run CHCs provide a range of services, often including primary care but not necessarily. Expansion of existing and net new CHCs will deliver primary care as a priority alongside other non clinical social services.

Evergreen will continue to provide home health services, including ambulatory care, addictions counseling, immunizations and speech language pathology.

RISE CHC will complement Evergreen's services by offering preventative and full scope primary care solutions for clients with complex social needs, including clients who are newcomers, Indigenous people, isolated seniors, youth, LGBTQ2SI+



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community, sex trade workers, the homeless and under-housed, and those with mental health and addictions challenges.

By being in the same building, it will be easier and faster for patients to access a comprehensive suite of services.

RISE is the first expanded CHC as part of the province's Primary Care Strategy. Going forward, CHCs will be developed as part of the PCN development and local resource allocations. These investments will help inform future investments in the CHC model.

RISE Community Health Centre will work with the Vancouver Division of Family Practice and Vancouver Coastal Health to support Primary Care Network (PCN) in East Vancouver, as part of the [Primary Care Strategy](#).

By participating in this process, CHCs will help inform service planning within the PCN and will be able to tailor their services to ensure they are well-coordinated and matched with the needs of the community.

To learn more, visit [RISE CHC](#).

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