
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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March 9, 2021

Ministry of Health
Interior Health Authority

Urgent and primary care centre coming soon to Penticton

PENTICTON – More people in Penticton and surrounding communities will soon have increased access to team-based everyday health care.

A new urgent and primary care centre (UPCC) will open March 31, 2021, at unit 101 – 437 Martin St.

“The new UPCC in Penticton will offer people better access to the health care they need, when they need it,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. “With the support of local health-care teams, our primary care strategy is leveraging community collaboration to strengthen primary care services throughout the province. In Penticton, this means more people, including those living in poverty, those with mental health and substance use concerns, and families and seniors with complex care needs can access same-day, everyday health care and get attached to a primary care provider if they do not have one.”

On March 31, 2021, approximately 14 full-time equivalent clinical health-care professionals will join the centre, including physicians, a nurse practitioner, nurses and allied health professionals. The team will first provide long-term primary care services for people with mental health and substance use needs. These services include complex care management, mental health and substance use health care, opioid agonist treatment and women’s health.

More health-care professionals will gradually join the centre. Once fully staffed, the UPCC will provide urgent and primary care services to people living in Penticton and surrounding communities who need health care provided within 12 to 24 hours, but do not require a trip to the emergency department, such as patients with sprains, cuts, high fevers and minor infections.

Importantly, the UPCC will also assist in connecting patients without a primary care provider to a family doctor or nurse practitioner either at the centre or in the community. Attachment will be provided in collaboration with the South Okanagan Similkameen Division of Family Practice.

Longitudinal care will be offered from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday upon opening on March 31. When the centre is fully implemented, care will be available seven days a week, 365 days a year.

The Penticton UPCC is a collaboration between Interior Health, the Ministry of Health, the South Okanagan Similkameen Division of Family Practice, the Martin Street Outreach Centre Association, OneSky Community Resources and local Indigenous partners, including the Penticton Indian Band and OoKnakane Friendship Centre. This UPCC is part of the South Okanagan Similkameen Primary Care Network.

This is the 23rd UPCC announced under the government's primary care strategy, 20 of which are open. Of those, six are in the Interior Health region, including in Kelowna, Vernon, West Kelowna, Kamloops, Castlegar and Penticton.

Quotes:

Dr. Doug Cochrane, board chair, Interior Health–

“The new urgent and primary care centre planned for Penticton will have a significant impact for patients and families living in the community and surrounding area, increasing access to local health services. The team-based approach to care by family physicians and nurse practitioners, nurses and allied health professionals means people living in the area will have added support for their immediate and long-term health needs. The UPCC will also work to help vulnerable populations, providing primary care services to people where they live.”

Chief Greg Gabriel, Penticton Indian Band –

“Historically, the Indigenous community has had a challenged relationship with the health-care system and has long advocated for adequate access to services and support. The Urgent and Primary Care Centre is a facility developed with Indigenous partner input and with the goal of providing culturally safe care. We look forward to continued support and partnership with the Interior Health.”

Matthew Baran, executive director, Ooknakane Friendship Centre –

“Ooknakane Friendship Centre is excited about the UPCC. We have been grateful to be included in many aspects of the planning and implementation of such an endeavour, knowing what it will bring for the many urban Indigenous people in our area.”

Dr. Greg Selinger, board chair, South Okanagan Similkameen Division of Family Practice –

“We welcome the Penticton UPCC as part of our primary care network. We are looking forward to patients having increased access to urgent care, especially for those patients waiting for attachment to a family doctor or nurse practitioner.”

Dr. Matthew Chow, president, Doctors of BC –

“We look forward to the integration of the Penticton UPCC in hopes it will strengthen primary care in the community. Doctors of BC has a strong interest in ensuring people have access to the health-care services they need. We also emphasize the importance of measures that strengthen the long-term relationships between patients and their family doctor. These relationships have been shown to improve health outcomes, help avoid preventable illness and reduce the cost of health care.”

Michael Sandler, executive director, Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC –

“Nurses and nurse practitioners of B.C. are pleased to see that the knowledge, skills and expertise of the entire health-care team will be utilized to improve access to health care for all British Columbians through urgent and primary care clinics. We believe that this approach will be pivotal in ensuring B.C. families can access health-care services, and we are excited to see the opening of another urgent and primary care clinic in B.C.”

Learn More:

To learn more about the Province's primary health-care strategy, visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018PREM0034-001010>

To learn more about the Province's strategy to increase the number of nurse practitioners,

visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018HLTH0034-000995>

To learn more about the Province's strategy to recruit and retain more family medicine

graduates, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018HLTH0052-001043>

Photos of the Penticton UPCC are available here: <https://flic.kr/p/2kJbX4C>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Penticton Urgent and Primary Care Centre

The Penticton Urgent and Primary Care Centre (UPCC) will be located at unit 101 – 437 Martin St., Penticton.

- It will feature improved access to care through extended weekend and evening hours.
- The centre will be open seven days a week, 365 days per year, including holidays, once fully implemented.
- People can self-refer for their urgent care needs. Patients can also be referred by community service providers, other health-care professionals and agencies. People are encouraged to visit their own family physician or nurse practitioner where possible.
- People can also schedule appointments. During busy periods, appointments will be prioritized based on urgency.
- Services being offered through the Martin Street Outreach Centre will be transitioning to the UPCC.
- Patients requiring laboratory testing beyond the simple specimen collection will be provided with requisitions for lab tests to be completed at nearby laboratories.
- Of the nearly 48,000 people in the Penticton and Summerland region, approximately 7,200, or roughly 15% of patients, are considered unattached.
- The five top identified conditions in the Penticton Local Health Area are hypertension, osteoarthritis, episodic mood and anxiety disorders, asthma and osteoporosis.
- About 43% of visits to Penticton Regional Hospital emergency department in 2019-20 were triaged as relatively low acuity. Many of these visits could be dealt with in alternative settings, such as a UPCC.
- Total capital costs for the UPCC are estimated to be \$2.5 million.
- The UPCC will be 560 square metres (6,028 square feet) and will include a reception, waiting area, exam rooms, consultation rooms, multidisciplinary assessment rooms, office spaces and a multipurpose room.
- UPCCs are part of a comprehensive provincial strategy to transform B.C.'s health system by bringing together and co-ordinating with health-care providers, services and programs to make it easier for people to access care, receive followup care and connect to other services they may need.
- The Penticton UPCC joins other local primary care clinics and walk-in clinics, which together provide primary care services to the immediate vicinity and form the South Okanagan Similkameen Primary Care Network.

South Okanagan Similkameen Primary Care Network:

- The South Okanagan Similkameen Primary Care Network is working to attach 12,000 patients by 2022-23. The network is adding capacity to the 50 physicians in the Penticton

area who provide team-based care through an interdisciplinary team of allied health professionals and increase access for people, including the frail in the community, those with low- and medium-complex conditions, and those with mild to moderate mental health and substance use challenges.

- The network will grow to eventually include all the communities in the South Okanagan Similkameen region.

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