

For Immediate Release | February 18, 2022

Interior Health resuming temporarily paused services

IH WIDE – Interior Health is taking a phased approach to resume services that were temporarily paused last month due to COVID-19. The service adjustments, announced Jan. 18, were implemented to preserve safe and reliable access to patient care across the Interior region.

“The Omicron-driven COVID-19 staffing impacts on the health system are beginning to subside and Interior Health can now resume services that were temporarily paused last month,” said Interior Health president and CEO, Susan Brown. “We are working with impacted communities this week and assigning staff back to their regular roles throughout the region following a phased approach that brings services back in a safe and planned way.”

The following services will begin returning to normal as follows:

- Two new registered nurses have been recruited to Lillooet and inpatient services will reopen on Mar. 14;
- One new registered nurse has been recruited to Clearwater and inpatient services to reopen on Feb. 23;
- Nurse provided primary care services at the Barriere and District Health Centre will return to normal on Feb. 23;
- Outpatient lab services in Barriere will return to five days per week, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.;
- Scheduling non-urgent elective surgical procedures will resume on Feb. 23, and phase back to full services across Interior Health over a two week period;
- Varying by community, select outpatient services, adult day programs and non-urgent home health services will resume. Impacted clients will be contacted directly.

The following services remain temporarily reduced:

- Overnight services at the Ashcroft Community Health Centre and the Slocan Community Health Centre in New Denver remain reduced to stabilize daytime services in those communities.

“While staffing is not stable enough to safely restore all services next week, we are pleased to take initial steps and resume non-urgent elective surgeries for people throughout Interior Health. We will be rescheduling postponed procedures to catch up with the backlog as quickly as possible,” added Brown.

We recognize and acknowledge that we are collectively gathered on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the seven Interior Region First Nations. This region is also home to 15 Chartered Métis Communities. It is with humility that we continue to strengthen our relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples across the Interior.

MEDIA, FOR INFORMATION:

PHONE 1.844.469.7077 EMAIL media@interiorhealth.ca

Interior Health is reaching out to local leaders and partners to answer questions and work together as services resume. Regular communications and updates are located here: www.interiorhealth.ca/temporary-service-changes.

"We would like to thank the public for their patience and understanding as Interior Health took swift action last month to manage the COVID-19 driven staffing crisis. Safety is our highest priority and as sick calls begin to diminish and this COVID-19 wave subsides, we are pleased to lift these emergency measures throughout the region."

- 30 -

We recognize and acknowledge that we are collectively gathered on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the seven Interior Region First Nations. This region is also home to 15 Chartered Métis Communities. It is with humility that we continue to strengthen our relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples across the Interior.

MEDIA, FOR INFORMATION:

PHONE 1.844.469.7077 EMAIL media@interiorhealth.ca