

March 2022

Message From Leadership

From Dr. Dean Chittock & Dr. Chad Kim-Sing



Dr. Dean Chittock
Vice President, Medicine, Quality & Safety



Dr. Chad Kim Sing
Associate Vice President, Medicine, Quality & Safety

As medical staff, we make decisions every day that affect the health of those we care for. And those choices affect not only the people around us, but the world we live in.

In this Spring 2022 Medical Staff Newsletter we celebrate and recognize Vancouver Coastal Health's commitment to planetary health. As an organization, individuals, and health care providers, we have an opportunity and obligation to be accountable and responsible for building not only healthy persons, but healthy environments.

This goes far beyond 'reduce, reuse, recycle' to a commitment around questioning and changing our approaches to delivering health care. VCH has made planetary health a strategic priority, not because it's a popular movement but because it's the right and ethical choice for our organization and those in our communities.

Our work as medical professionals is constantly informed by learning and questioning. Our approach to planetary health should be no different. We encourage you to embed the question of 'how can we do the best we can?' to reduce the environmental impacts of our work and carbon footprint. Ask ourselves, 'are there better ways of doing business?' 'Can we do things in a different way?'

These are questions we should be asking before each act of consumption, purchase and action as we provide service. Many of our colleagues are already asking these questions, and we've featured a number of their initiatives in this edition of the newsletter.

[Read the full Message from Leadership](#)

In the Spotlight

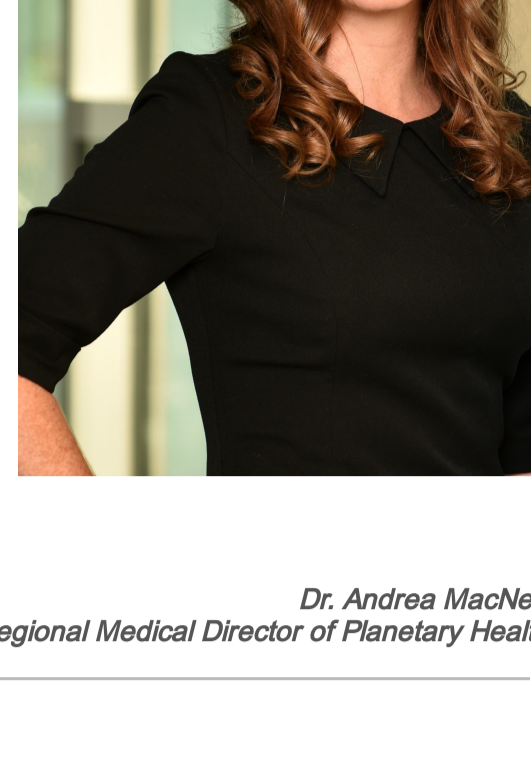
Creating a Planetary Health 'anchor institution' at VCH

It was an awareness of the ecological impact of surgery, combined with a lifelong passion for the environment, that spurred surgical oncologist Dr. Andrea MacNeill's championship of meaningful change in the health care industry.

"I was struck by the visible waste in the operating room as a resident and felt there had to be a better way," she explains. "I learned that only a decade prior, hospital incinerators were a leading source of dioxins – a carcinogen – and was distressed by the paradox that in the process of taking out someone's cancer, we were creating more cancers."

A surgical oncologist at Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), she also holds the inaugural role of VCH Regional Medical Director of Planetary Health and is a clinical associate professor at UBC. Andrea's goal is to introduce and encourage personal, institutional and regulatory responsibility and actions across VCH that will create a culture of real, positive difference in sustainability. To her knowledge, VCH is the first health authority in Canada to make such a substantial commitment to embedding it across the organization.

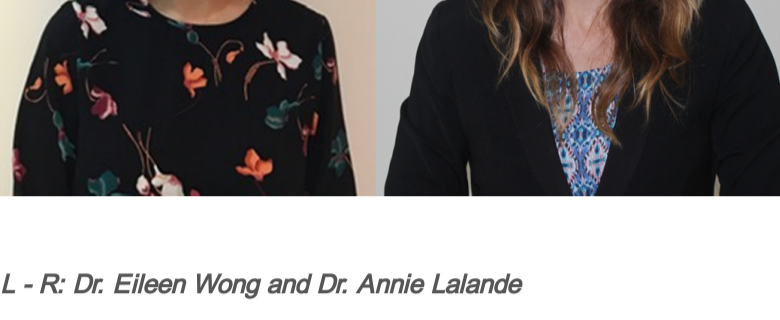
In 2018, Andrea led a study of the levels of greenhouse gas and other pollutant emissions in the Canadian health care system, making Canada only the third country to do so. The methodology from this study is now a cornerstone of the Lancet Countdown's annual reporting on national health system emissions for over 40 countries.



Dr. Andrea MacNeill
Regional Medical Director of Planetary Health

[Read More](#)

Taking a bite out of food waste in health care



L - R: Dr. Eileen Wong and Dr. Annie Lalonde

As inflation rises and supply chains grow taut, British Columbians are more thoughtful than ever about food security and waste. Food waste is an issue that's not new for institutions, says Dr. Eileen Wong, and one that she's sought to address in long term care at Holy Family Hospital (Providence Health), by looking at it from the perspective of resident quality of life and enjoyment.

Recognizing how often enjoyment of food – or lack thereof – came up in family meetings with staff at Holy Family Hospital's long term care, in early 2018, she started a quality improvement project measuring the amount of food that LTC residents weren't finishing and to understand why, as it was a consistent cause of concern for families.

[Read More](#)

Did You Know?

West Coast Doctors for Planetary Health

Dr. Rashmi Chadha, an addiction and pain management specialist at Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), is passionate about creating a community movement to address the climate emergency.

In her work, Rashmi has seen firsthand the human impact of the climate crisis.

"Many of my patients are people that are homeless," says Rashmi. "Which makes them particularly vulnerable to climate change. This was especially evident last summer when BC experienced extreme heat during the heat dome."



Dr. Rashmi Chadha

[Read More](#)

Reduction in routine 'group and screens' = greener system

Sometimes, the smallest changes can lead to significant outcomes.

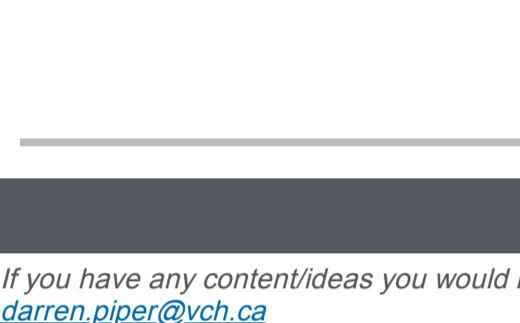
When Drs. Jacqueline Trudeau and Andrew Shih decided to investigate the impact of reducing preoperative group and individual (GRS) for their **Physician Led Quality Improvement (PLQI)** project, they wanted to help ease the burden placed on patients, but also on the healthcare system as a whole.

Andrew, Medical Director and Regional Medical Leader of Transfusion Medicine at Vancouver Coastal Health, explains that their **GRS reduction project**, to some extent, was born out of the pandemic.

"Most preoperative consultations have been happening virtually due to COVID-19," says Andrew. "However, since the preoperative GRS still needs to be done at the site where the surgery happens, many patients were having to travel long distances, just to get their bloodwork done."

[Read More](#)

The triple-bottom line: unnecessary lab testing and the environment



Have you ever stopped to wonder whether all lab tests ordered for patients are absolutely necessary?

For Dr. Janet Simons, Co-Medical Director, Clinical Informatics, and Internal Medicine Physician at Providence Health Care (PHC), this question has been the focus of much of her work at St. Paul's Hospital (SPH).

"As a medical biochemist, lab medicine is an integral aspect of my work," says Janet. "So I'm constantly questioning, with both hospitalized patients and outpatients, 'do we always need all of the lab tests that are ordered on our patients?'"

L - R: Dr. Karina Spoyko and Dr. Janet Simons

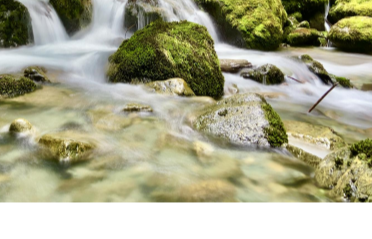
[Read More](#)

Get Involved

If you have any content/ideas you would like to share for future Medical Staff Newsletters, please contact Darren Piper at darren.piper@vch.ca

Medical Staff Website Redesign

The VCH medical staff website is being redesigned in order to provide medical staff with the information they require to feel supported and informed as critical partners in care delivery. Engaging with medical staff on the design of the new website is accurate, in ensuring an effective user experience, and providing information that is timely, useful, accurate, and relevant.



Planetary Health in pictures



Photo credit: Brian Lane

What does planetary health look like to you? We invite you to share a photo that represents how you see planetary health in your everyday lives. Although we won't be able to include all your photos in future newsletters, we can certainly feature a few (with the appropriate photo credits).

These are two photos that remind us how impactful it can be to have access to clean water and outdoor spaces.

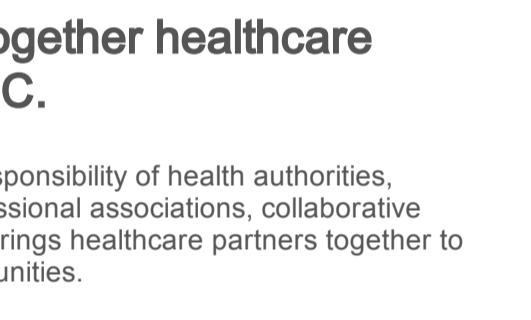


Photo credit: Brian Lane

Please email darren.piper@vch.ca with your planetary health photo submissions, with applicable photo credits.

The BC Medical Quality Initiative (BC MQI) brings together healthcare partners to improve the quality of medical care in B.C.



BC Medical Quality Initiative

Medical quality in B.C. is the shared responsibility of health authorities, government, regulatory colleges, professional associations, collaborative committees, and others. The **BC MQI** brings healthcare partners together to improve care for individuals and communities.

Green transportation options for VCH staff

There are a number of active and clean transportation options to commute to/from work, in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and enhance air quality.

Whether you're in Vancouver, Richmond, or one of the Coastal areas, there are different choices available for [sustainable commuting](#). By choosing a cleaner and more active alternative to a single occupant vehicle (SOV), you're in one day a week, you can help reduce GHG emissions by 20 percent! Check out some of these great resources and incentives to help make your commute a little greener.

[Read More](#)

Events & Education Opportunities

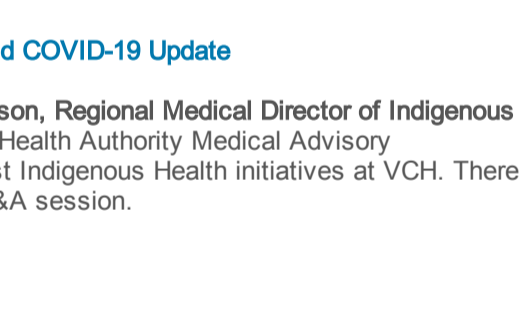
Upcoming Medical Staff Forums

April 20: Planetary Health and COVID-19 Update

Join us for a presentation from Dr. Andrea MacNeill, Regional Medical Director for Planetary Health. Vancouver Coastal Health, on the environmental effects of the health-care industry and how medical staff can help make a positive impact. There will also be a COVID-19 update and live Q&A session.

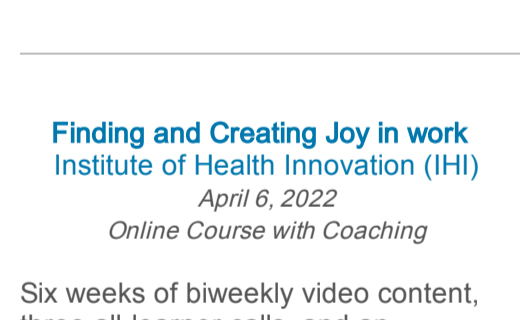
Panelists: Dr. Chad Kim Sing (host), Dr. Ross Brown, Dr. Patricia Daly, Vivian Eliopoulos, Dr. Andrea MacNeill and Dr. Titus Wong

Date and time: Apr. 20, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.



[Register](#)

May 18 – Save the date! Topic to be determined



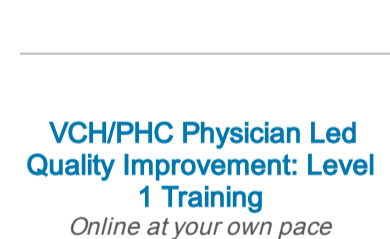
June 15: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and COVID-19 Update

Join us for a presentation from Dr. Don Wilson, Regional Medical Director of Indigenous Health and first Indigenous member of the Health Authority Medical Advisory Committee, on cultural safety and the latest Indigenous Health initiatives at VCH. There will also be a COVID-19 update and live Q&A session.

Date and time: June 15, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

[Register](#)

Upcoming Courses & Conferences



Financial support for courses and conferences

Physicians may be eligible for coverage of the tuition or registration fees for the courses and conferences listed here from your [SSC Physician Leadership Training Scholarship](#). Before starting the course, complete the application form found [here](#).

Finding and Creating Joy in work
Institute of Health Innovation (IHI)
April 6, 2022
1 Training
Online Course with Coaching

Six weeks of biweekly video content, three all-learner calls, and an opportunity for added coaching.

[Register](#)

Understanding and Identifying Unconscious Bias
April 19, 2022, 1 - 3 pm
Online, facilitated/No cost

This course is intended to increase our awareness of inclusion literacy, understanding unconscious bias and cross-cultural competency

[Register](#)

2022 Canadian Conference on Physician Leadership
May 6 & 7, 2022 / In person (Toronto)

Are you concerned about your wellbeing, your patients, your planet? COVID-19 has challenged us to improve our approach, to become more adaptive and more inclusive.

[Register](#)

More information about Courses and Conferences

Wellness

Supports for medical staff and their families

Physician Health Program

The Physician Health Program is a valuable resource for B.C. medical staff, medical students, and residents as well as their partners and children.

The program provides 24-hour access to a confidential helpline – anytime you need it – to receive support, referrals and counselling for challenges such as mental health, relationship stress, and career and life transitions. To learn more, visit the [website](#).



LifeWorks Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

VCH staff, medical staff and their families can access counselling and individual wellness services by calling 1-833-533-1577 for all of their health and wellness needs. For more information, visit [oneVCH](#).

Free Calm app premium subscription for VCH staff

TELUUS Health has partnered with VCH to offer one-year, free Calm premium subscriptions to VCH staff and medical staff. For more info and for how to redeem, visit [oneVCH](#).

Thank You

We would like to express a sincere thank you to each of the members of our Editorial Board, as well as to VCH Communications, Vivian Chan, Laurie Kilburn, Darren Piper, Allison Chau and Brian Lane (Medical Quality Leadership & Practice). These individuals have taken the time to help ensure the sharing of timely updates that are relevant to our VCH medical staff within our diverse groups and Communities of Care.

Meet the VCH Editorial Board

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VCH is strongly committed to diversity within its community and especially welcomes input from racialized persons / persons of colour, women, indigenous / Aboriginal People of North America, persons with disabilities, LGBTQIA2S+, and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas.