Provincial Health Services Authority

Provincial Virtual Health and Provincial Language Services

Fiscal 2024/25 Year in Review

Introduction

Provincial Virtual Health (PVH) is a clinically focused team that owns the delivery and management of virtual health, and provides strategic direction on virtual health initiatives at PHSA and across the province. To transform how patients access services and information, we are enabling remote connections between patients and providers – anytime, anywhere.

In late 2024, Provincial Language Services (PLS) and PVH joined to become one portfolio. PLS supports organizations providing services to their linguistically and culturally diverse clients, including immigrants, refugees, official minority language speakers and members of the Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing community through addressing language and communication access issues and barriers.

This change presented a prime opportunity to support equitable language access to health care across the B.C. system.

As valued members of the PDHIS portfolio, PVH and PLS work to ensure patients receive culturally safe and accessible health care at the right time and in the right place. A key priority in our work is addressing the complex challenges faced by rural and remote Indigenous Peoples in accessing timely and appropriate care. We embed Indigenous cultural safety and humility in all our projects, with a focus on improving health outcomes for Indigenous Peoples across B.C.

Governance

Digital Health Leadership Committee

- Provincial scope, takes a system-wide view and provides cross-sector strategic advice, ensuring alignment of initiatives

Provincial Virtual Health Collaborative

- Comprised of senior leaders from health authorities and health entities across the province

Featured initiatives

Indigenous language Action Plan: Launched restructured plan

- Provide guidance, support and coaching for decolonizing practice across PDHIS to ensure Indigenous Specific Anti-Racism practices are embedded in PDHIS projects, systems, educational materials, evaluation and patient engagement.
- Eradicate Indigenous-specific racism, create a decolonized approach to practice and education across all PDHIS.

Indigenous language services pilot project

- Provide language services to better support Indigenous patients in accessing care.
- The framework serves as a resource PHSA staff can use to support respectful collaborations with Indigenous partners, and offers valuable insights for those seeking to deepen their understanding of reconciliation.

BC Cancer Provincial Nurse Line

- Replaced telephone nurse lines at five BC Cancer regional centres that only operated during business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday) with a provincially centralized program that provides 24/7 support for BC Cancer patients and caregivers with symptoms related to their cancer treatment.
- Since go-live in January 2025:

4,000+ Calls per month   **1.5 hours** Average wait time, down from 3 hours

22% Proportion of calls answered live (versus patient's receiving a call-back) up from 7%

Episodic Virtual Primary Care

- Oversee the development, implementation, and ongoing monitoring of a coordinated provincial program that enhances capacity to episodic primary care services for unattached patients and more timely access to primary care for attached patients.
- Since November 2024:

380,000 Number of people registered on the Health Connect Registry to be attached to a primary care provider

40,000 Number of unique patients who have had virtual care appointments through this service. Roughly half of the patients are unattached.

Hybrid Model of Care

- Planned and supported go-live of three sites across two regional health authorities (Island Health and Northern Health). Hybrid model of care connects hospital patients with health care providers working remotely via secure video or phone calls, ensuring hospital Emergency Departments can remain open during physician shortages and patients receive the care they need in their community.
- Since launch in late fall 2024:

No Service interruptions at pilot sites

For a complete list of initiatives, access the detailed 2024-25 Year in Review report.