



# Virtual Support for Hospitals Model of Care Project

Quality Forum: March 12, 2025

*We acknowledge with gratitude that we are gathered on traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the First Peoples of British Columbia, who have cared for and nurtured the lands and waters around us for all time.*

*We give thanks, as Occupiers, for the opportunity to live, work and support care here.*

# Agenda

<b><i>Topic</i></b>	<b><i>Speaker</i></b>
Introductions	All
Problem Summary	Karen Cooper
Overview of Virtual Support for Hospitals Models of Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Virtual Support Models of Care in Canada</li></ul>	Robyn Emde
Overview of Cariboo Memorial Hospital <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Three Month Summary: Key Metrics</li></ul>	Karen Cooper
Building a Provincial Virtual Support for Hospitals Model of Care	Robyn Emde



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# Problem Summary

# 5 emergency rooms close in B.C. Interior over long weekend

All but 1 have since reopened, with Nicola Valley Hospital set to resume services Monday morning

CBC News · Posted: Sep 01, 2024 8:15 PM PDT | Last Updated: September 1, 2024



The Nicola Valley Hospital, the only hospital in Merritt, B.C., was closed on Sunday. Four other hospitals in B.C.'s interior paused emergency services over the long weekend. (Interior Health)

# Service Interruption Provider/Patient Impacts



Interior Health



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- ❖ Ensure transportation resources & coordination of transfer
- ❖ Support family travel

3 hours each way

- ❖ Identify sites with capacity to receive next admitted patient
- ❖ Exhaust all staffing opportunities to remain open



1 hour each way

3.5 hours each way



- ❖ Repatriation efforts in reverse to return



- ❖ Activate extensive communication of service interruption
- ❖ Lock doors

1 hour each way



# Mitigation Strategies



# Vision

*Enabling equitable local access to quality health-care for all citizens of BC through virtual care.*

## Virtual Support for Hospitals Principles



Virtual care  
complements  
in-person care



Strengthen &  
support  
quality  
patient care



Equity &  
access to care



Culturally safe



High-quality  
patient-  
centered care



Complementary  
to existing  
virtual care  
services



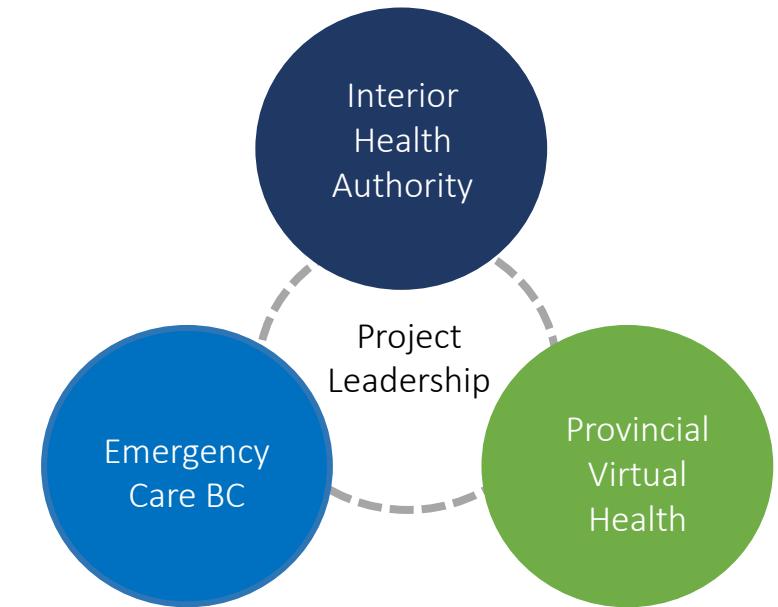
Improve  
provider  
experience

# Project Collaboration Model

The regional Virtual Support for Hospitals Model of Care projects are co-led by:

- Interior Health Authority: Digital Health and Clinical Ops
- PHSA Emergency Care BC (ECBC)
- PHSA Provincial Virtual Health (PVH)

The project is supported by MOH Hospital Services Branch and Rural Coordination Centre of BC, with representatives from each organization part of the project.





# Virtual Support for Hospitals Models of Care in Canada



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Emergency Care BC  
Provincial Health Services Authority



Interior Health

# Informant Interviews Across Canada



**“Virtual care is safe care” –**  
*Dr. Puneet Kapur, Saskatchewan*



**“Design the service based on the problem you are trying to solve” –**  
*Dr. Jan Sommers, Nova Scotia*



**(On the patient experience) Ensure patient culture is considered in decision making –**  
*Dr. Todd Young, Newfoundland*



**(On the provider experience) Focus on relationship building and making them feel like a team -**  
*Dr. John Pawlovich, British Columbia*

# Jurisdictional Scan Summary

	Virtual Provider Staffing				Technology Complexity			Technology Implementation & Support		Virtual Provider Coverage Arrangement		
	Internal		External		Low-Tech	Medium-tech	High-Tech	Internal	With Third-party Company	On-Site Hybrid	On-Call Hybrid	Fully Virtual
	Local	Health Authority	Provincial	Third-party								
British Columbia: RCCBC VERRA			X		X			X			X	
British Columbia: <i>Eagle Ridge Hospital Virtual Evening Hospitalist</i>	X				X			X		X		
Newfoundland & Labrador: <i>Virtual Emergency Room Services</i>		X					X	X				X
Newfoundland & Labrador: <i>Virtual ED Physician Coverage, supported by Teladoc Health</i>				X			X		X			X
Nova Scotia: <i>VirtualEmergencyNS, supported by Maple</i>		X				X			X	X		
Central Saskatchewan: <i>Virtual Physician in Emergency Room</i>		X			X			X				X
Northern Saskatchewan: <i>Virtual Care and Remote Presence Robotics Program (University)</i>			X				X		X			X



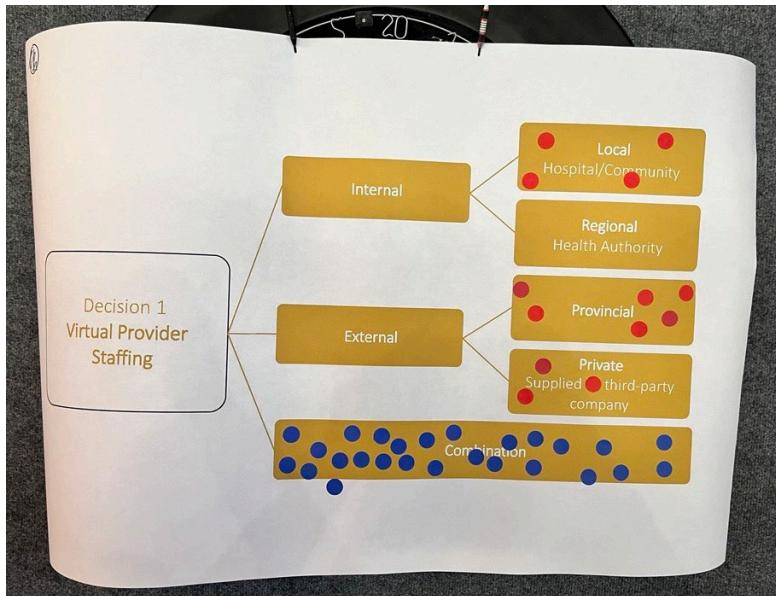
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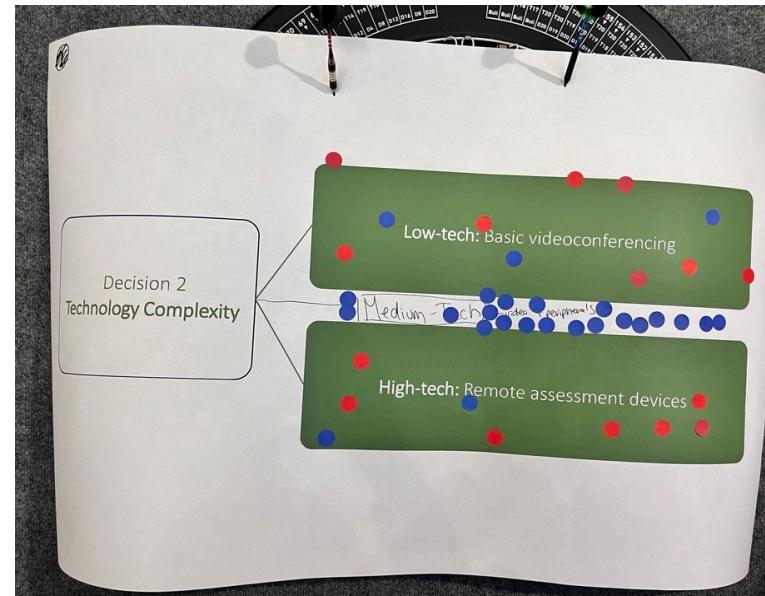
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# Regional Virtual Support for Hospitals Model of Care: Cariboo Memorial Hospital

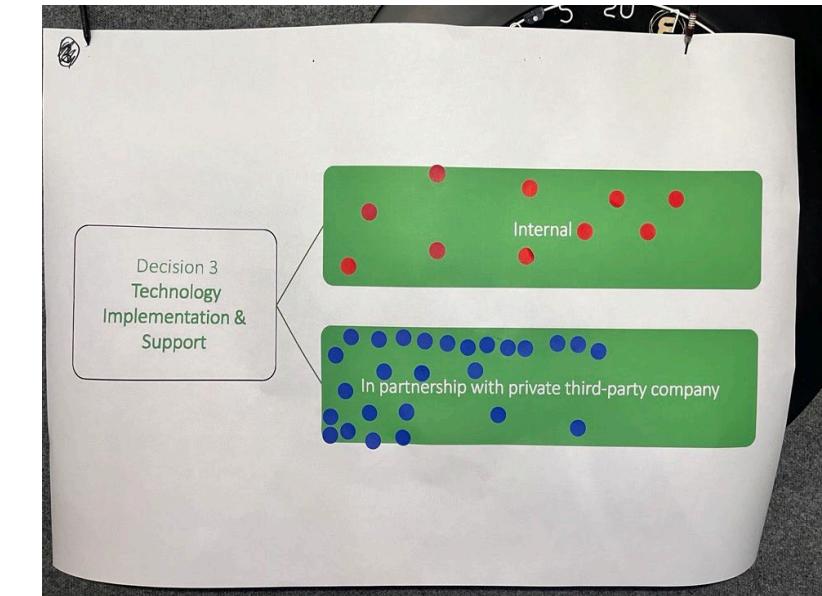
# CMH Virtual Support Model Development



**Key Decision 1:**  
Combination of Internal and  
External Virtual Provider Staffing



**Key Decision 2:**  
Medium Technology Complexity



**Key Decision 3:**  
Technology Implementation and  
Support in Partnership with  
Third-Party Company





# Cariboo Memorial Hospital Pilot

## Summary of Key Metrics (3 Month)

Higher admissions but occupancy trending downwards	No differences observed in key safety metrics	No difference in length of stay, readmission rates, or transfers back to the emergency department	Patient satisfaction is high	Provider satisfaction is high
<b>Analysis:</b> If the virtual model was not present, the hospital would be struggling to support patients	<b>Analysis:</b> Virtual care is safe care, with appropriate escalation pathways	<b>Analysis:</b> Virtual care maintains status quo for access and flow indicators	<b>Analysis:</b> Patients are pleased with service vs. transfer <b>Recommendation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Consistent provider over multiple shifts</li><li>•Ensure 1:1 time with virtual physician and patient</li><li>•Adequate training for virtual providers</li></ul>	<b>Analysis:</b> Better solution vs. service interruptions <b>Recommendation:</b> Continue to improve workflow efficiencies to decrease extra workload on staff



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# Building a Provincial Virtual Support for Hospitals Model of Care

# Virtual Support for Hospitals Model of Care

## Regional Pilots, Supported by Vendor

### Short Term

Address immediate needs in mid-sized hospitals

- External vendor contracted as short-term solution
- Vendor contracts with Health Authorities up to 2 years for virtual physician services
- Pilots launched or planned in Interior Health, Northern Health and Island Health

## Provincial Planning

### Long Term

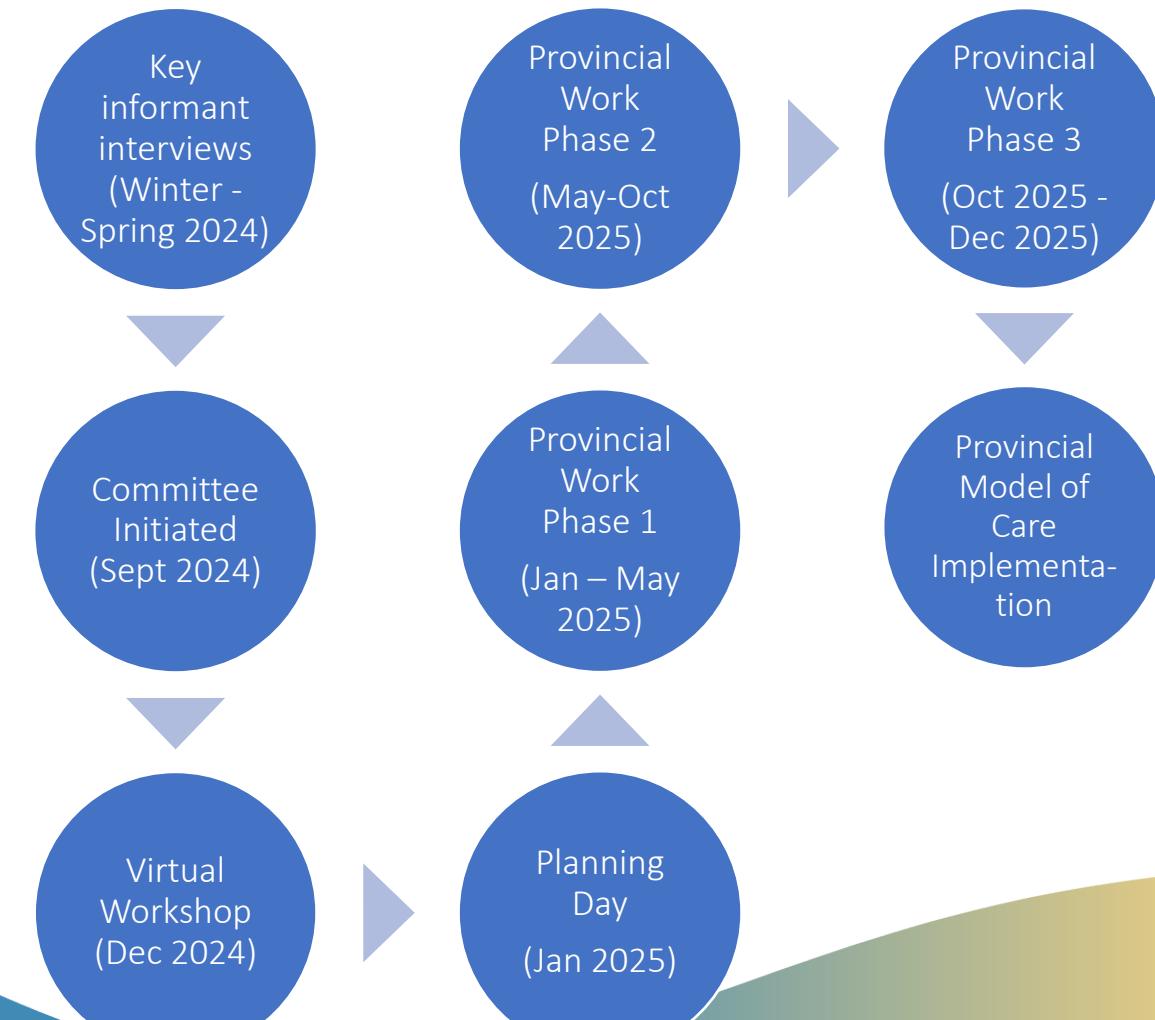
Developing a sustainable provincial solution

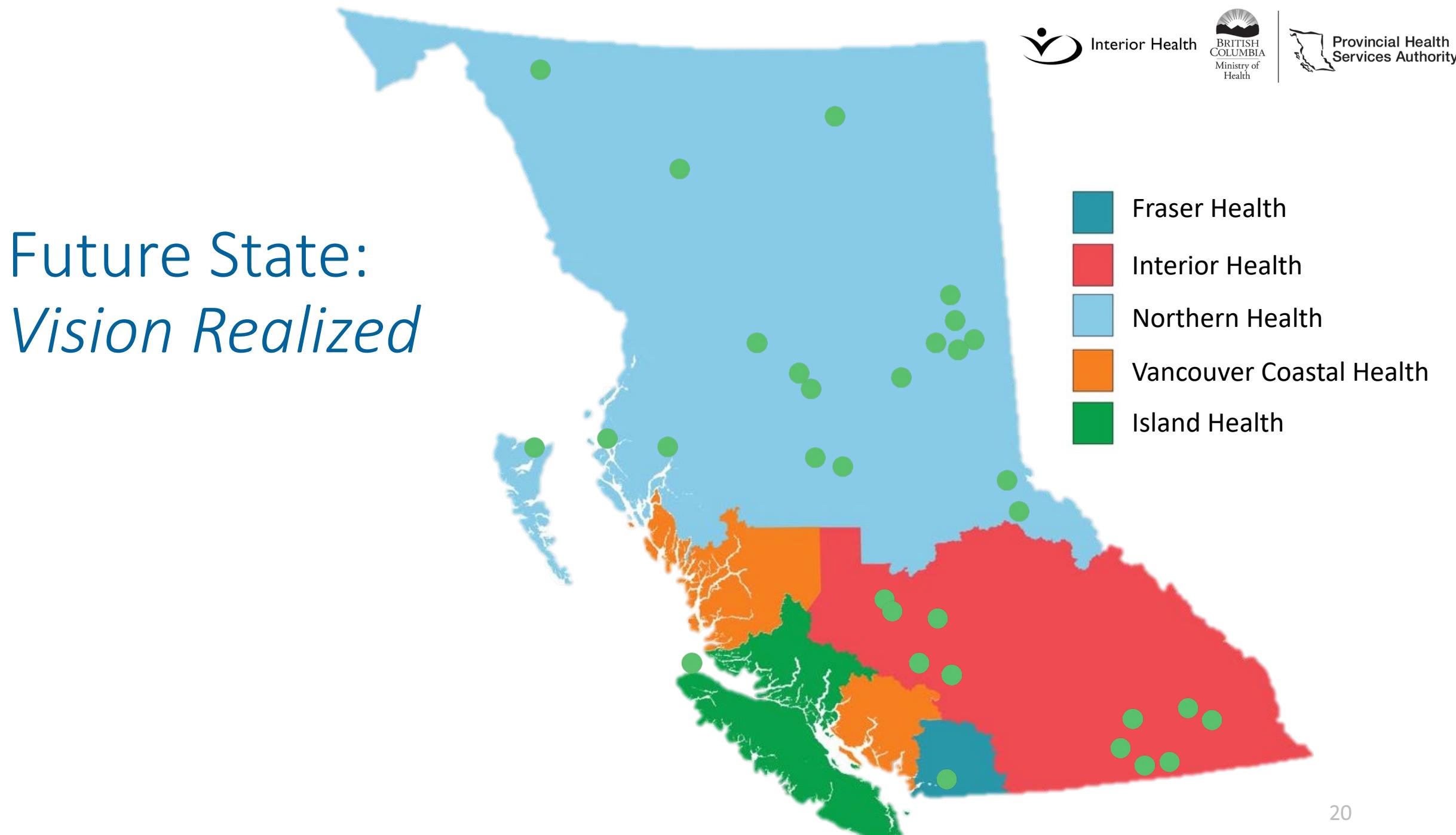
- Provincial Hospital Hybrid Model of Care Committee has been established:
  - Developing a framework that is applicable to hospitals across BC
  - Exploring a provincial virtual provider pool
  - Ensuring consistency of technology and information sharing
  - Consistent quality standards and evaluation metrics

# Provincial Virtual Support for Hospitals Model of Care Committee

## Partners:

- Ministry of Health
- Emergency Care BC
- Provincial Virtual Health
- Critical Care BC
- Rural Coordination Centre of British Columbia
- First Nations Health Authority
- Interior Health Authority
- Providence Health Care
- Fraser Health Authority
- Vancouver Coastal Health Authority
- Island Health Authority
- Northern Health Authority
- University of British Columbia





# Questions



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# Thank you

Provincial Digital Health and Information Services  
Partnering with the BC health sector, providers and citizens