



**NANAIMO REGIONAL
HOSPITAL DISTRICT**

Health Forward Summit

Advancing Healthcare in Central and North Vancouver Island

On November 13, 2025, the Health Forward Summit brought together 122 leaders from First Nations, the Government of British Columbia, local governments, First Nations Health Authority, Island Health, community health organizations, and other partners to discuss the future of healthcare in Central and North Vancouver Island. This event highlighted the progress that has been made, sparked collaboration on future solutions to existing healthcare challenges, and strengthened our shared commitment to building a healthier, more resilient Vancouver Island.



Voices From Central and North Vancouver Island

- Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District
- City of Campbell River
- City of Duncan
- City of Nanaimo
- City of Parksville
- City of Port Alberni
- Comox-Strathcona Regional Hospital District
- Comox Valley Regional Hospital District
- Cowichan Valley Regional District
- Courtenay-Comox (MLA)
- District of Lantzville
- District of Port Hardy
- District of Tofino
- Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations
- Hupačasath First Nation

- Nanaimo Regional Hospital District
- Nanaimo-Gabriola (MLA)
- Nanaimo-Ladysmith (MP)
- North Island (MLA)
- North Island-Powell River (MP)
- Oceanside-Ladysmith (MLA)
- Qualicum First Nation
- Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Town of Lake Cowichan
- Town of Qualicum Beach
- Village of Alert Bay
- Village of Tahsis
- Village of Zeballos
- Yuułu?it̓ Government (Ucluelet First Nation)

Who Was At The Table

- First Nations
- Mid-Island Métis Nation
- Government of British Columbia
- Provincial and Federal Elected Officials
- Health Authorities (First Nations Health Authority and Island Health)
- Local Governments
- Regional Hospital Districts
- Divisions of Family Practice
- Medical Staff Associations
- Healthcare Advocacy Groups
- Community Partners

The Program The Summit program included a keynote, four engaging panels, and an interactive collaboration session.

Keynote – This Is Us

Andrew Ramlo, Vice President of Advisory Services at rennie, explored how population growth, aging residents, and changing migration patterns are transforming healthcare demand, workforce needs, and infrastructure pressures across the region.

Panel Discussions

- Smart Health: Exploring How AI is Transforming Healthcare Delivery on Vancouver Island
- Strong Foundations: Preventative Healthcare Through Community, Connection, and Care
- Investment in Healthcare Infrastructure and Systems Energizes Regional Economic Growth
- Shared Path to Wellness: Integrating Indigenous Healing Practices into the Healthcare System.

Reimagining Strategies for Physician and Specialist Recruitment and Retention

This interactive session brought participants together to tackle this complex challenge and consider solutions.

The Challenge

Central and North Island communities are facing persistent challenges in recruiting and retaining physicians and specialists. A coordinated regional strategy is needed to build a robust healthcare workforce that reflects the region's evolving demographic trends, including an aging population, migration, and community growth.

The Big Question

What actions can we take together to reimagine recruitment and retention of physicians and specialists?

What is Working Well

We asked participants to consider what we are doing right in response to the challenge. These themes rose to the top...



Community Engagement and Relational Recruitment

- Building deep relationships and personal touches (for example, new healthcare recruits meeting local leaders, support provided by ambassador programs).
- Leveraging community-driven recruitment through Divisions of Family Practice and Medical Staff Associations.
- Creating inclusive environments where physicians feel valued beyond financial incentives.



Educational and Training Pathways

- Delivering distributed Medical Education Programs and residency opportunities that encourage local retention.
- Offering earn-and-learn programs and loan forgiveness initiatives that support long-term commitment.
- Using nurse practitioner and pharmacist-led models that expand care options and reduce pressure on physicians.



Marketing and Lifestyle Promotion

- Running creative campaigns showcasing Vancouver Island lifestyle and amenities.
- Promoting quality of life factors such as parks, recreation, and safe communities.
- Positioning the region as a desirable place for families, not just individual practitioners.

Themes and Recommendations

Participants identified their top three recommended actions for supporting physician and specialist recruitment and retention. Their input generated nine themes and eight recommendations – ranked from most to least discussed. Recommendations four to seven ranked equally.

Theme

Recommendation

Recruitment of the Whole Family

- Support spouses in finding employment opportunities.
- Offer wrap-around services (e.g., community resources, recreational activities).
- Ensure childcare access.
- Support continuity of schooling for school age children.

1

Support the integration of physicians and their families into local communities.

Community Connection and Belonging

- Create welcoming environments for new physicians by hosting events and building a multicultural hub.
- Promote the region's lifestyle and amenities.

2

Support affordable housing solutions for healthcare professionals.

Affordable Living for Families

- Provide transitional and permanent housing solutions.
- Address cost of living challenges through subsidies or incentives.
- Explore mortgage assistance programs.

3

Invest in building and modernizing healthcare facilities and equipment, and ensure physicians have necessary staffing.

Infrastructure and Equipment

- Ensure physicians and specialists have the modern facilities, equipment, and support staff they need to deliver high-quality care and meet community needs.

4

Advocate for provincial and federal policy changes to support physicians and specialists with the licensing, credentialing, and privileges they need to practice in our region.

Removal of Barriers

- Streamline licensing and credentialing processes.
- Remove provincial and local restrictions (e.g., hospital privileges).
- Simplify administrative requirements for onboarding.

5

Advance flexible, physician-centered practice models that reduce administrative burden and enable physicians to focus on delivering care.

Innovative Practice Models

- Introduce team-based care and flexible contracts (e.g., part-time options).
- Offer concierge or wrap-around support for physicians.
- Reduce business and HR overhead so doctors can focus on care.

6

Establish inter-agency task forces to coordinate recruitment and retention strategies.

Regional Collaboration and Coordination

- Strengthen partnerships across health authorities, municipalities, and First Nations.
- Share resources across organizations.
- Adopt consistent strategies across regions.

7

Develop our healthcare talent pipeline by expanding early recruitment initiatives and distributed medical education programs.

Early Recruitment and Training

- Engage youth through high school programs and mentorship.
- Expand distributed medical education and residency programs.

8

Implement loan forgiveness and competitive compensation packages.

Financial Incentives

- Implement loan forgiveness programs tied to service commitments.
- Offer competitive salaries and relocation bonuses.



Presentation Materials and More

Summit materials are available by visiting
getinvolved.rdn.bc.ca/health-forward-summit