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Western Institute of Living, one of the first multidisciplinary psychiatric clinics in BC. Dr Johnston went on to have a long and fulfilling career practising adult psychiatry in Vancouver.

He and Tess were married in 1963 and four children arrived soon after. The purchase of a farm on Salt Spring Island was the start of many joyous family occasions. In retirement, Alan continued to pursue his interest in horticulture in the BC Fruit Testers Association, with his espalier work and his gardens. He and Tess traveled extensively, enjoying time together.

This devoted family man, husband, father, and friend was loved for many things, but especially because he was a wonderfully patient listener. His ability to help others arrive at new perspectives meant he was often relied upon in times of trouble or momentous decisions. Dr Johnston will be loved, always, and greatly missed by his family. He is survived by his wife, Tessa, four children, and ten grandchildren.

—Dean Johnston, MD  
Vancouver

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### Recently deceased physicians

If a BC physician you knew well is recently deceased, consider submitting a piece for our “In Memoriam” section in the *BCMJ*. Include the deceased’s dates of birth and death, full name and the name that the deceased was best known by, key hospital and professional affiliations, relevant biographical data, and a high-resolution photo. Please limit your submission to a maximum of 500 words. Send the content and photo by e-mail to [journal@doctorsofbc.ca](mailto:journal@doctorsofbc.ca).

# council on health promotion

## We’ve done a lot of good things this year

Illness prevention and health care promotion are the driving forces behind the work that Doctors of BC’s Council on Health Promotion (COHP) and its five subcommittees (Athletics and Recreation, Emergency Medical Services, Environmental Health, Geriatrics and Palliative Care, and Nutrition) undertake every year.

developed a policy paper titled *Reaching Out: Supporting Youth Mental Health in BC* ([doctorsofbc.ca/reaching-out](http://doctorsofbc.ca/reaching-out)) that encourages youth to seek out their family doctor to discuss mental health concerns, among other options. The paper also calls on health authorities to ensure GPs are informed of existing local mental health resources, calls

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COHP is the longest-running and largest standing committee of Doctors of BC. As the primary advocacy body of Doctors of BC, COHP’s goal is to make a meaningful difference in the lives of British Columbians through its public campaigns, policy initiatives, media interviews, and joint work with government.

Each year COHP zeros in on an issue that it feels needs greater attention. Many youth transitioning from adolescence to adulthood experience challenges, but this path can be particularly difficult for the estimated 12% to 20% of young British Columbians who suffer from mental illness. It is during this time that many mental health conditions first appear but, sadly, many of these youth do not seek help, which can lead to a lifetime of unnecessary anguish. To address this issue COHP

on government to increase system capacity, and commits to promoting educational materials for physicians.

A particularly exciting aspect to this project was the creation of a dedicated website ([OpenMindBC.ca](http://OpenMindBC.ca)), an information hub for youth and their families, doctors, other health care providers, teachers, and counselors. An abundance of excellent tools and resources developed by a range of community mental health organizations can be found here.

This year marked the fifth annual Walk With Your Doc event. Conceived by the Athletics and Recreation Committee to promote the health benefits of daily physical activity, this event grows each year. In May, 58 walks with 2700 patients walking side by side with nearly 300 doctors took place across the province. As well, now in its third year, Be Active Every Day challenges students to get moving for 60 minutes every day. In November, 4600 students took part in 38 schools encouraged by 40 doctors in 22 communi-

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*This article is the opinion of the Council on Health Promotion and has not been peer reviewed by the BCMJ Editorial Board.*

ties around the province. My heartfelt thanks go out to every doctor who volunteered his or her time for both of these worthy endeavors.

In addition to its continued work promoting road safety, the Emergency Medical Services Committee has a focus on harm reduction strategies. The committee developed a number of resolutions that are now both Doctors of BC and CMA policy: supporting community-based programs that offer naloxone and other opioid overdose prevention services, improving screening tools to detect drug-impaired drivers, and calling for a review of national and provincial/territorial legislation to address drug-impaired driving.

A number of environmental projects are in various stages of development across the province—mining, fracking, dam construction—that call into question the health of the surrounding population. To mitigate health issues, the Environmental Health Committee has engaged with the provincial government to offer physician input on health impact assessments of major environmental projects. The committee has also brought national attention to the health hazards of wood smoke and

the protection of arable land from non-arable development.

Improving quality of care for seniors and those near end of life is the key focus of the Geriatrics and Palliative Care Committee. A number of successful resolutions were moved


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forward this year, including considering the time-to-benefit of prescribed interventions and medications for seniors and supporting education for appropriate evaluation and management of the behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia before the use of antipsychotic therapy. A policy paper is in early development on enhancing physicians' ability to provide support to informal caregivers.

Healthy eating can be a challenge for many of our patients, and it's the Nutrition Committee's mandate to help doctors keep abreast of current nutritional hot topics. Committee members have played a key role in shaping the provincial Healthy Eating Strategy and the CMA now supports targeted population health programs aimed at improving food security for all Canadians.

From making a public splash to working behind the scenes, COHP is bringing awareness of BC doctors' activities to help improve the health of British Columbians and is actively building relationships with stakeholders. From partnering with the Canadian Women's National Soccer Team to encourage kids to be active every day, to working with pediatricians and dietitians in support of the World Health Organization Growth Charts, to collaborating with the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles to ensure our roads are safe for all—COHP members are making sure that Doctors of BC represents a profession of influence. We expect next year to be just as eventful.

—Lloyd Oppel, MD  
Chair, Council on Health Promotion



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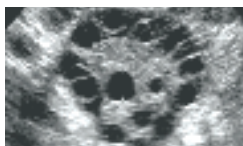
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**Dr. Anthony Cheung**  
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MEDICAL DIRECTOR



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