

Division-created patient resources: Empowering patients to make healthy choices

Educating patients about their health and the health care system can help to ensure that they make healthy, informed choices and feel engaged in their own care. A growing number of divisions of family practice have developed patient education and awareness campaigns, giving GPs the opportunity to contribute their knowledge to the creation of community-specific resources that can help improve the health and experiences of their patients.

Division-organized patient education and awareness campaigns cover topics such as how to prepare for doctors' appointments, how and where to access appropriate care, and how to make healthy lifestyle choices. Many of these resources were developed through divisions' work on the A GP

for Me initiative, and in some cases the learning materials created have been repurposed by other divisions in communities around the province.

Primary care options

Ensuring patients know where to go to receive appropriate care can strengthen GP-patient attachment and reduce low-acuity visits to the ER. These were the goals of White Rock–South Surrey Division's Right Care, Right Place campaign, produced in collaboration with Fraser Health and Peace Arch Hospital. The campaign informs patients of various primary health care options available in the region that may be appropriate for their health care needs. The campaign features a rack card, video, and poster encouraging patients to “call your doctor first” and suggesting when they might call 811 (HealthLink BC), speak with a pharmacist, access a walk-in clinic, or visit the ER (or call 911).

Recognizing the value of this information to patients, the Chilliwack Division adapted these materials for use in their own Appropriate Access to Care campaign. Chilliwack's program also features a series of nine videos that define primary care for patients, advise them on preparing for a medical appointment, and provide information on how to keep track of medications. The Kootenay Boundary Division also adapted White Rock–South Surrey's materials to create their own Right Care, Right Place materials specific to their region.

The Richmond Division designed their own unique materials for their Think Where for Care campaign, which they developed in partnership with VCH, the City of Richmond, HealthLink BC, and SUCCESS. Campaign materials include pamphlets, posters, and rack cards titled “Why Have a Family Doctor?” and “A Visit to Your GP,” and a health literacy puppet show video. All materials, including the informational video, are available in four languages—English, Cantonese, Punjabi, and Mandarin—to address the needs of the community's ethnic and immigrant populations.

This article is the opinion of the GPSC and has not been peer reviewed by the BCMJ Editorial Board.

Table. Division-created patient education resources.

Division	Resource	Online access
Burnaby	Empowering Patients	www.divisionsbc.ca/burnaby/empoweringpatients
Central Okanagan	Healthy Initiatives Get Regular with Your GP	http://healthyinitiatives.ca www.divisionsbc.ca/cod/posters
Chilliwack	Appropriate Access to Care Mini Medical School Healthy Kids Initiative: Live 5-2-1-0	www.divisionsbc.ca/chilliwack/agpformevideos www.divisionsbc.ca/chilliwack/minimed www.divisionsbc.ca/chilliwack/hkilogin
Kootenay Boundary	Right Care, Right Place	www.divisionsbc.ca/kb/careoptions
Richmond	Think Where for Care	www.divisionsbc.ca/richmond/whereforcure
Sunshine Coast	Empowering Patients	www.divisionsbc.ca/sunshine-coast/empoweringpatients
Vancouver	Talk to Your GP	www.divisionsbc.ca/vancouver/talktoyourgp
White Rock–South Surrey	Right Care. Right Place	www.divisionsbc.ca/white-rock-south-surrey/rcrp

Importance of the physician-patient relationship

While some of the patient/public campaigns outlined above incorporate information that helps patients make the most of their time with their doctor, two divisions have created campaigns specifically promoting the physician-patient relationship. Central Okanagan Division's Get Regular with Your GP posters build awareness about the ways in which a good relationship with a GP can result in better health outcomes. The posters, which

remind patients to inform their doctor of all health concerns, be proactive in their health, and prepare for their appointments, can be downloaded from the division's website.

The Vancouver Division has created the Talk to Your GP campaign, a series of FAQ videos that feature division members providing a physician's perspective on topics such as why it's important to have a good relationship with a GP, how GPs can help their patients when they're admitted to hospital, what kind of information is important for patients to tell GPs, and what patients can do to enhance the care they receive from their GP.

Healthy eating, lifestyle, and general health information

Many divisions have created patient education resources that encourage healthy choices and lifestyles. Central Okanagan Division's Healthy Initiatives website serves as an

online resource for residents to find local fitness facilities and parks, fresh food choices, and doctors' offices and clinics.

Chilliwack Division's Healthy Kids Initiative provides a number of printable resources to educate kids and families about the Live 5-2-1-0 health message. Materials include a coloring sheet, rack card, support booklet, goal trackers, a poster, and a Healthy Balance for Life Medicine Wheel produced in partnership with the Stó:lō Service Agency.

The Chilliwack Division also provides local residents with a Mini Medical School information series, through which they can get information on various health topics from doctors, residents, and other health professionals. The information series, put on by medical residents through the local UBC Medical Residency program, has created a repository of presentations and resources on topics relating to mental health, end-of-life

care, healthy kids, brain injury, public health strategies, and more.

The Burnaby Division has created a public education program called Empowering Patients, comprising a wide array of presentations and information sheets for a patient audience. Topics include heart disease, blood pressure, diabetes, healthy eating, emotional wellness, healthy physical activity, and information about hospital stays. These materials are available for use by all other divisions, and the Sunshine Coast Division has repurposed them for their own local audience.

Please see the **Table** for a list of division-created patient education resources, and contact divisions@doctorsofbc.ca to learn more about adapting these materials for use in your own community.

— **Afsaneh Moradi**
Initiatives Lead, Divisions of Family Practice



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