

## Division maternity care projects: Closing gaps in care through networks and innovation

**M**aternity patients who do not have a family doctor (or whose family doctor does not provide obstetrical care) can experience significant barriers in accessing consistent care during their pregnancy. Closing gaps in care and breaking down silos between maternity care providers is a significant focus in the work of the Joint Collaborative Committees (General Practice Services Committee, Specialist Services Committee, Shared Care Committee, and the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues).

The Shared Care column in the September 2018 issue of the *BCMJ* (“Building interprofessional maternity care in BC”)<sup>1</sup> describes how the Shared Care Maternity Network, now involving 21 divisions of family practice, supports maternity providers in BC communities to improve inter-professional collaboration and create more patient-centred care. Breaking down silos in perinatal care—which is often split between family doctors, registered midwives, and obstetricians—can increase access to care, improve quality, and enhance care provider satisfaction and retention.<sup>2-4</sup>

But how does funding and support from the Joint Collaborative Committees (JCC) translate into patient resources and supports at the community level? JCC support has enabled many divisions of family practice to create innovative solutions—including clinics, websites, resources, and referral systems—to ensure that maternity patients have access to clear, barrier-free, culturally safe care

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and support throughout all stages of pregnancy.

### Maternity clinics and care networks

A number of divisions have created maternity clinics and care networks through which patients can access the care they need and benefit from seamless referrals. While some of this work is focused on coordinating and improving care at the division level, many clinics and care networks feature websites to help patients navigate their care.

**Burnaby Division of Family Practice.** Burnaby Maternity Clinic ([www.burnabymaternityclinic.com](http://www.burnabymaternityclinic.com)). A GP-to-GP network through which family doctors provide 24-hour care for maternity patients through the clinic throughout pregnancy, labor, and delivery, and up to 6 weeks postpartum.

**Campbell River and District Division of Family Practice.** Campbell River Maternity Clinic ([www.crmaternityclinic.com](http://www.crmaternityclinic.com)). Culturally safe care is a priority. Clinic physicians have participated in cultural safety training, and health coaches from the Kwakwaka’wakw Maternal Child Health Project are available to assist patients with travel and access to appointments and services.

**Cowichan Valley Division of Family Practice.** Cowichan Maternity Clinic ([cowichanmaternityclinic.ca](http://cowichanmaternityclinic.ca)). Nine family doctors and an RN provide care throughout pregnancies, births, and up to 6 weeks postpartum.

**Mission Division of Family Practice.** Mission Maternity Clinic ([www.divisionsbc.ca/mission/initiatives/mission-maternity-clinic](http://www.divisionsbc.ca/mission/initiatives/mission-maternity-clinic)). In addition to maternity and postnatal care provided through this clinic, the di-

vision arranges care for new mothers and babies in their attachment clinic until they can be attached to a family physician in the community.

**Nanaimo Division of Family Practice.** Nanaimo Maternity Docs ([www.maternitydocs.com](http://www.maternitydocs.com)). A network of maternity care physicians who provide seamless pregnancy, birth, postpartum, and newborn care to local patients. The group’s website provides women with resources, supports, and information about their care options.

**South Okanagan Similkameen Division of Family Practice** ([www.pentictonmaternity.com](http://www.pentictonmaternity.com)). The South Okanagan Maternity Centre provides Penticton maternity patients with collaborative care from physicians and midwives. The division also created an informative website for all patients and care providers in the South Okanagan, featuring all local options for maternity care and a comprehensive list of resources and supports.

**Vancouver Division of Family Practice.** The Patient Attachment Initiative referral program prioritizes maternity patients and has successfully matched more than 3461 mothers and babies to family doctors to provide ongoing long-term care.

### Maternity care websites and other resources

Some divisions support GPs and patients by creating informative websites and providing lists of resources and supports.

**Thompson Region Division of Family Practice** ([www.divisionsbc.ca/thompson-region/our-impact/maternity-care](http://www.divisionsbc.ca/thompson-region/our-impact/maternity-care)). The division’s website provides patient resources and maternity care options, including clinic information and care provider biographies.

**Vancouver Division of Family Practice.** Pregnancy Vancouver ([www.pregnancyvancouver.ca](http://www.pregnancyvancouver.ca)) features “Find a Doctor” functionality for patients to connect to a primary maternity care physician, and shares knowledge and resources about pre-natal and postnatal care.

**Connecting patient medical homes and primary care networks**

Physician networks are a key element of patient medical homes,<sup>5</sup> enabling doctors to rely on each other for practice coverage and to provide continuous care for patients. Maternity care networks provide a clear example of how physicians can support one another in this way, closing gaps in care for patients through seamless connections between providers—an attribute which will also place them at the foundation of primary care networks as they are built.

Many other maternity networks

and projects are currently underway around the province. As these projects develop, information and stories will be shared on the Divisions of Family Practice website. To learn more, visit [www.divisionsbc.ca/provincial/what-we-do/patient-support/maternity-care](http://www.divisionsbc.ca/provincial/what-we-do/patient-support/maternity-care).

— **Afsaneh Moradi**  
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**References**

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**Provincial maternity care program**

The GPSC Maternity Care for BC program supports, reconnects, and trains family doctors in a clinical learning environment. It helps physicians through mentorship, hands-on experience, and financial support. The program is tailored and flexible to each individual’s learning needs. Learn more at [www.gpsc.bc.ca](http://www.gpsc.bc.ca).

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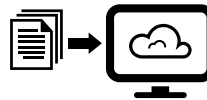
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