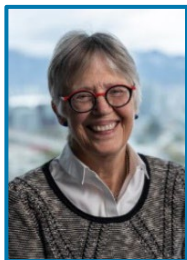


Indigenous cultural safety corner

[Urban and Away From Home \(UAH\)](#) is a term that represents Indigenous people living outside of their traditional territories. Within the VCH catchment, this includes [Métis](#) and [Inuit](#) communities, as well as First Nations people from other territories that choose to live within the VCH region. Access to culturally safe care has been identified by Indigenous people who are away from their home communities as key to feeling connected to traditional health and healing practices. It's important to recognize the implications of seeking health care in an unfamiliar place with unfamiliar practices. The [Indigenous Patient Experience Team](#) is available to support patients who self-identify as Indigenous to ensure their health care experiences are culturally appropriate and to assist providers in their continued Indigenous cultural safety learning journey.



Update from the VCH Board Chair

Dr. Penny Ballem attended HAMAC and reiterated the importance of the relationship between HAMAC and the Board, as HAMAC serves as a trusted

advisor to the VCH Board of Directors. As we enter a new year, we are reminded to continue focusing on the population we serve to provide effective, high-quality care for patients and clients within VCH.

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)

[Medical Assistance in Dying](#) occurs when an authorized nurse practitioner or physician provides or administers medication that intentionally brings about a person's death, at that person's request and is available in all regions of BC. Those currently eligible for MAiD are people suffering from a grievous and irremediable medical condition. On March 17, 2024, proposed changes to MAiD legislation could come into effect that will expand MAiD access to those suffering from a mental disorder as their sole underlying medical condition. The MAiD team attended HAMAC and provided an overview of the potential changes to legislation regarding MAiD eligibility. The HAMAC discussed the provincial safeguards being put in place. Prior to any legislative changes, the MAiD team will return to HAMAC for a supplementary update to share any new information relevant to medical staff.

[MAiD education resources](#) are available online on the intranet. For more information about the proposed changes to legislation or for general information, the [MAiD team](#) is available to answer questions and offer education about this service for patients.

Regional pool of Active Emergency physicians

In response to the ongoing shortage of rural physicians in some VCH emergency departments (EDs), work is being done to create infrastructure around a regional pool of Active (medical staff category) Emergency physicians. The structure would involve having Active Emergency physicians form a Temporary pool across all VCH ED sites to allow physicians to fill shifts during temporary, time-bound staffing shortages and gaps in service at specific locations as determined by local medical leadership. This pilot project is designed to mitigate administrative burdens associated with time-sensitive privileging to act on HHR needs expeditiously. More work is needed prior to rolling out the structure and will return to the HAMAC HHR subcommittee and the HAMAC committee of the whole for further feedback and advice.

Public Health update: Homelessness

Homelessness continues to increase in the greater Vancouver area. Every three years, BC Housing performs a 24-hour point-in-time [count of homeless people](#) in the area. The last count was in March 2023 and was up 32% from the previous 2020 count, the largest increase between counts ever recorded. Of the homeless counted, 33% identified as Indigenous, while only 2% of the Census population identified as Indigenous.



Respiratory virus season

The BC Centre for Disease Control put out a notice regarding an [increase in invasive group A streptococcal infections](#), particularly among children. Staff and medical staff are encouraged to get their flu vaccine at a local clinic or pharmacy. To self-report your flu vaccine, visit the [BC health care portal](#).