

Highlights from HAMAC

May 13, 2025 meeting summary



Indigenous cultural safety corner

On May 5th, HAMAC marked Red Dress Day, a [national day of remembrance and awareness](#) for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People. The red dress has become a powerful symbol of the lives stolen and those who continue to call for justice.

HAMAC is committed to addressing the findings of "[Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)" and the "[In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care](#)" reports. These reports highlight that, as caregivers and matriarchs, Indigenous women play a central role in community wellness and frequently interact with the health-care system, yet they face distinct challenges and have disproportionately poorer health outcomes.

This day compels us as healthcare leaders to confront the disproportionate harms Indigenous women and gender-diverse people continue to face. It challenges us to address the systemic racism and gendered violence that persists in our systems, including within health care.

Planetary Health Update

HAMAC received a presentation from Dr. Rashmi Chadha, Planetary Health Clinician Engagement Lead and Breanna Gregory, Leader, Planetary Health and Emergency Management. The presentation included an overview of the [Planetary Health portfolio](#) and highlighted some recent Planetary Health work at VCH.

The Committee looks forward to hearing further updates from the Planetary Health team on their initiatives.

Regional Department Quality/HHR Reports

Regional Department of Nurse Practitioners

Dr. Jennifer Buck, Regional Department Head of Nurse Practitioners, presented a report on the department's activities across VCH. The report included an overview of the department's governance structure, workforce composition and practice patterns. Key quality metrics were highlighted, including improvements in length of stay, readmission avoidance and continuity of care. The report also addressed current challenges and opportunities within the department.

Regional Department of Medicine

Dr. Robert Levy, Regional Department Head of Medicine, presented a report on the VCH/PHC Department of Medicine. The report focused on three ongoing quality improvement initiatives and included a detailed overview of the department's health human resources. Dr. Levy emphasized the challenges and opportunities related to workforce planning and sustainability within the department.

Membership updates

Senior Medical Director, Vancouver Community (VC)

Dr. Mike Norbury has returned to his role as SMD, VC, and Dr. Vandad Yousefi has resumed his position as Local Department Head. HAMAC acknowledged and expressed appreciation for Dr. Norbury's contributions during his interim role as Executive Medical Director, VCH Community Services, and acknowledged Dr. Yousefi for his leadership while serving as SMD, VC.

Chair, VCH Board of Directors

We extend our deep gratitude and sincere appreciation to Dr. Penny Ballem for her exceptional leadership and dedicated service as Board Chair. We are pleased to welcome Bill Duvall to the role and look forward to working with him to advance our shared commitment to quality care and system excellence.

Bill will be joining an upcoming HAMAC meeting to continue fostering strong engagement between the Board and HAMAC.

CMIO Update

HAMAC received an update from Dr. Eric Grafstein, Chief Medical Information Officer, on work in progress on patient access to their health records through the new CST Cerner Patient Portal that is planned to go live in fall 2025.

We are working towards a number of decisions on timing for delays to release of information and a process for exceptions to note distribution.

This topic will be coming to the Area Medical Advisory Committees next month for further discussion.

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May marks [Asian Heritage Month](#), a time to reflect on and recognize the many achievements and contributions that staff and medical staff of Asian descent have made and continue to make at VCH.

Asia is home to 48 countries and a vibrant tapestry of cultures, languages and histories. At [VCH](#), we celebrate the richness of Asian communities and honour the lived experiences and perspectives our colleagues bring to their work every day.

Join us on May 29 at the [Language, Culture and Community: Caring for Diverse Asian populations](#) webinar where staff and medical staff from several VCH programs and services will share how we are supporting the health and well-being of patients, clients and residents of Asian heritage.

A message of support to the Filipino Community

This year, we approach Asian Heritage Month with deep respect and care, acknowledging the recent tragedy that unfolded on April 26, following the Lapu Lapu Day celebration in Vancouver. Our hearts remain with the Filipino community and all those affected – especially our colleagues, patients and families who are grieving during this difficult time.

We are deeply grateful for the swift and dedicated response of our medical staff and frontline workers, whose exceptional skill and professionalism brought comfort and support to the community during a time of crisis. In moments like these, we are reminded of the strength, resilience and deep-rooted connections within the communities we serve.

This was a traumatic event for everyone involved and we encourage anyone who needs support to reach out for help. VCH staff and medical staff can contact the VCH Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) to access confidential counselling and wellness provided by TELUS Health.

In Memoriam

It is with profound sorrow that we share the passing of Dr. Marcel Dvorak – an internationally renowned spine surgeon, pioneering medical researcher, visionary leader and cherished educator – who died peacefully at home with his beloved family on May 9, 2025.

Dr. Dvorak's contributions have left a lasting impact on our organization and the communities we serve. His legacy will continue to inspire those who had the privilege of working alongside him. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends and all those who were touched by his leadership and compassion.



Professional Days

HAMAC acknowledged several important professional milestones that have taken place since our last meeting.

On **May 1st**, we celebrated **National Physicians' Day** — a moment to recognize the remarkable contributions physicians make each day to patient care, medical education and health system leadership. Thank you to all our physicians for your continued excellence and commitment.

May 5th was the [International Day of the Midwife](#), a time to honour the essential role midwives play in providing safe, compassionate and culturally appropriate care for families and communities.

Last week was [National Nursing Week](#), an opportunity to recognize the incredible impact nurses have across every part of our health system. Their dedication, resilience and patient advocacy continue to inspire us all.

To each of our colleagues across disciplines — including nurse practitioners, allied health professionals and administrative partners — thank you for your collaboration and ongoing commitment to high-quality care.