

# Community Health Services Working Together



## Welcome to Community Health Services

This handbook is your guide to receiving care from Island Health Community Health Services. It explains your rights and responsibilities when working with us and provides important information to support your care.

Our services can help you live safely and independently in your home for as long as possible. We will work with you to create a care plan that meets your needs, whether you need our help on a short or long-term basis.

You are welcome to have a family member or friend present at any of our meetings.

## Your Rights and Responsibilities

As a client of Community Health Services, you have certain rights and responsibilities. These also apply to other people who make health decisions on your behalf.

### Your Rights

As a person receiving care, you can expect to:

#### Be kept up to date

- Be involved in all aspects of planning your care.
- Be told what services are available, what these services provide, and if there are costs attached.
- Receive information to make decisions about your care, including how to access, change, or decline services.
- Be involved in any changes to your care plan.

### Be treated with courtesy and respect

- Receive care that is respectful of culture, values, beliefs, and lifestyle and free from physical/mental abuse or neglect.
- Be cared for by trained and competent Community Health Services staff.
- Have your personal and medical information protected as private and confidential (as required by law).
- Have a representative of your choice support you and speak on your behalf.
- Understand how you can express concerns about your care, voice a complaint, or appeal a decision.

## Your Responsibilities

As a person receiving care, we ask that you:

### Are respectful to our staff

- Violence, foul language, and verbal threats will not be accepted.

### Communicate with us

- Provide information about your health history and personal care needs.
- Release health records from your healthcare providers to Community Health Services staff.
- Consent to communication between Community Health Services and your other healthcare providers.
- Let us know if your care needs change, or if there are any changes (either temporary or permanent) in your condition(s).
- Let us know if you are not available for services as planned.

Ask  
questions!  
We are here  
to help.

## Be actively involved in your care

- Take part in health assessments to help decide your care needs and follow the care plan you develop with us.
- Follow the advice and instructions given to you by Community Health Services staff and your other healthcare providers.
- Let us know if you have a Health Representation Agreement or Power of Attorney.
- Create a backup plan for unexpected changes in service (see page 6).

## Make sure your home is a safe place for our staff to work

- Under the Workers' Compensation Act, all workers are entitled to a safe workplace.
- Community Health Services staff will check your home environment to make sure it's safe for providing care.
- WorkSafeBC requires our staff to wear their shoes at all times

## To receive services, you, any visitors, and household members must:

- Disclose any known household infectious diseases (e.g., tuberculosis, influenza, Noro-like illness, chicken pox/shingles, or COVID-19).
- Make sure the property is clear of hazards that might cause slips, trips, or falls.
- Store firearms as per the Firearms Act; if necessary, remove all firearms or restricted weapons from the property.
- Keep pets in a separate room or location, or controlled on a short leash while staff are in your home.
- Make sure everyone in the home does not smoke one hour before (and during) visits.
- Disclose the potential for staff exposure to an environment containing harmful drugs (e.g., fentanyl and/or unregulated substances) and work with care staff to create a safety plan.

## Manage surveillance devices appropriately

- Our staff have the right to know about any recording or home surveillance device, as per Island Health's Recordings by Clients and Visitors policy.
- Do not distribute or use home surveillance footage without the explicit written consent of Island Health and any other representatives captured in the video.

## Be aware of your responsibilities

- Talk to us right away if you have any questions or concerns.
- Tell us if you feel unable to meet your responsibilities:
  - Services may stop if you don't share concerns, or don't meet your responsibilities.
  - We will always talk to you about stopping services and will inform your healthcare providers.
  - You can contact your health unit to request an appeal if you don't agree with our decision to stop services.

## The Client Service Agreement

All clients of Community Health Services need to review, agree, and sign a Client Service Agreement.


### The Client Service Agreement:

- Provides information about your rights about consent to services and treatments.
- Documents that your identification has been confirmed.
- Describes our commitment to keep your personal information confidential.
- Allows us to apply for benefits on your behalf.
- Provides information regarding the appeal process, including how to contact the Patient Care Quality Office to express any care concerns.

Before you sign the Client Service Agreement, make sure you understand what it says and what Community Health Services can and can't do for you. Ask as many questions as you need.

By signing the agreement, you agree to let Community Health Services staff share your information with other healthcare providers when needed.

If English is not your first language, interpreting and translation services may be available to you.



Keep your  
Client Services  
Agreement in a  
safe place.

## Your Care Plan

Your care plan acts as a guide for your care team and is based on your healthcare goals. It is regularly reviewed and updated. Every time your care plan is updated, we give you a new copy.

If you receive home support services, your care plan will also include the tasks that Community Health Workers help you with. All this information will be put in your Community Health Services binder which must be kept safely in your home. Please return your binder when you no longer need our services.

## Care Assessment

Our team will assess you and your home environment to decide the best services for you.

We may talk about:

- Your health history and current health issues and how you cope.

- Permission to contact your family, healthcare providers, and others involved in your care.
- What medicine(s) you take.
- How you manage daily activities such as eating and dressing.
- What family and social supports you have.
- Your income.

We may also assess your physical health (e.g., check your blood pressure, balance, and how you move). From this assessment, we look into what services and programs you're eligible for. You have the right to request a copy of any assessment.

Depending on your situation and needs, you may receive your assessment and care in a clinic setting or in your home. Non-urgent care may be provided by phone. Interpreting and translation services are available.

Before receiving services and community supports, our staff will get your verbal or written consent.

## Working with Medications

Many clients use medications to support their health. Some medications, which are therapeutic to clients, are known or suspected to pose a health risk to healthcare workers when exposed. We call these medications hazardous.

If you require assistance with medications, our staff must look at your medications before determining how we can help. We need to make sure we can safely handle the medications and any blood or body fluids that may contain those medications.

Staff may use personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, gowns, face/eye protection, and respirators when in your home.

The type of PPE will depend on the medication or treatment and treatment length. We will determine if and when PPE is required by our staff and discuss this with you. We supply all required PPE.

A few potentially hazardous types of medications are listed below, along with a list of conditions for which hazardous drugs are more likely to be prescribed.

Classes of medications	Conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medications that replace, block, or modulate hormones</li><li>• Chemotherapy medication</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cancer</li><li>• Some viral infections</li><li>• Organ transplant</li><li>• Immunodeficiency</li><li>• Rheumatoid arthritis or other autoimmune diseases</li><li>• Seizure disorder</li></ul>

You can help keep our staff safe and healthy by sharing any changes with, or additions to, your medication.

## Help from Family and Friends

We do our best to give you the support you need, but there are some things we can't do. This is where your family, friends, and neighbours can help.

Here are some ways that family and friends can assist with your care:

- Check in on you regularly by visiting or calling.
- Take you out on social outings.
- Take you to medical appointments.
- Help with house cleaning and laundry, or arrange for someone to complete these tasks.
- Help with your grocery shopping and cooking.
- Help look after your pet(s).
- Do yard work and house maintenance or arrange for someone to do it for you.

## Backup Plan

You must have a backup plan when working with Community Health Services.

There will be times when we are unable to provide your scheduled services due to emergencies such as staffing shortages, bad weather, or natural disasters. We will give you as much notice as possible. There is no charge for these missed appointments.

Your backup plan makes sure you get the care you need even when we're unable to provide it. It should include one or more people who live locally and are able to help you at short notice.

When asking someone to be your backup plan person, make sure they know what care plan tasks they will need to do. If your backup plan changes, or if no one is available to be your backup plan person, talk to our staff.

Remember that the rights and responsibilities outlined in this handbook also apply to others who make health decisions on your behalf, such as a family member or representative.

## Understanding Adult Abuse, Neglect, and Self-Neglect

Abuse, neglect, and self-neglect can occur anywhere. When adults are abused or neglected, it can be difficult to know if or when to step in.

The starting point is understanding what these terms mean\*:

- Abuse is deliberate mistreatment causing physical, mental, or emotional harm, or damage to or loss of financial affairs.
- Neglect refers to failure to provide necessary care, assistance, guidance, or attention if that causes, or is likely to cause serious physical, mental or emotional harm, or substantial damage or loss in respect of the adult's financial affairs.
- Self-neglect refers to failure of an adult to take care of themselves causing or likely to cause serious physical or mental harm or substantial damage or loss of financial affairs.

\*These definitions are adapted from the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia (Apr 2023), [Protecting Adults from Abuse, Neglect and Self-Neglect](#), Vancouver, BC.

## Our Duty to Get Involved

Community Health Services is designated by the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia to investigate causes of suspected abuse, neglect, and self-neglect.

We have a legal responsibility to look into the situation and talk to the adult involved. We'll work with the adult to give the support that's wanted and needed, and can make referrals to other community agencies and services. We are also required by law to report any criminal offences to the police.

If you have any questions or concerns about this, contact your local Community Health Services office, or check the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia website: [www.trustee.bc.ca](http://www.trustee.bc.ca).

## Electronic Communication

The telephone is our main method of communication, but we may also contact you via email. With your consent, we can use email to send information about your scheduled visits and share resources with you.

We never use email or text to communicate clinical information, and we always ask your permission before emailing your representative, Power of Attorney, or third party vendors.

For any information that includes your personal identifiers (e.g., tax information), we use a secured file transfer service. If you agree to this, we will provide specific instructions.

## Quality of Care

Quality care is important to all of us. You have the right to give feedback about your care and know you will be treated fairly. You can pass on a complaint or concern to a Community Health Services staff member.

If your issue isn't resolved after talking about it, contact our Patient Care Quality Office.

### Patient Care Quality Office

Online form: [www.islandhealth.ca/pcqo](http://www.islandhealth.ca/pcqo)  
Phone: 1-877-977-5797

### Mailing Address:

Patient Care Quality Office  
Memorial Pavilion, Watson Wing, Rm 315  
Royal Jubilee Hospital  
1952 Bay Street, Victoria, B.C., V8R 1J8