



Strategic Initiative Evaluation Project (SIEP) Oceanside Health Centre

Introduction

In August 2011, Island Health contracted an external evaluation team to evaluate, in collaboration with Island Health, strategic initiatives being implemented by the organization. The evaluation included a prospective evaluation that focused on Island Health's model of integrated, community-based service delivery at the Oceanside Health Centre (OHC) that opened in 2013 in Parksville, BC.

Island Health would like to acknowledge and thank Oceanside residents, staff and leaders at the Oceanside Health Centre, the Oceanside Division of Family Practice and all other stakeholders who participated in the prospective evaluation project of the OHC.

The OHC is unique, and for this reason, it was important for us to collect data and assess the OHC model soon after all services were available to clients in fall 2013. This evaluation was the starting point for our continued assessment, improvement and evolution of the OHC model now and into the future.

A brief summary of the report, as well as a listing of actions taken since the evaluation was completed, follows below. To view the full report visit,

www.viha.ca/about_viha/news/reports/oceanside_health_centre_evaluation_project.htm.

(Note that edits were made to this report to remove names of individuals – the authors reviewed and approved all edits).

Evaluation method

All aspects of the evaluation were implemented in collaboration with a working group made up of an external team and Island Health personnel. The prospective evaluation used a mixed-methods before-and-after study design, involving measurement of key outcome indicators before OHC opened in 2013, followed by a repeated measurement in 2014, through surveys and the use of similar questions in client/stakeholder interviews and focus groups to gauge change related to the introduction of the OHC.

Improvements at the Oceanside Health Centre:

The evaluation report and its findings are valuable assets as we continue to evolve and improve the OHC to ensure that it is providing patients/clients with the care and services that they need and deserve. The report identifies a number of challenges facing the OHC. Island Health has, and will continue to work on improvements. Among improvements to date:

Services:

- Island Health has now anchored Oceanside to a larger centre (Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (NRGH)). For instance, we have streamlined the process to transfer patients from urgent care to the NRGH emergency room, and patients from the Oceanside area previously receiving IV medications at NRGH are now routinely able to complete their IV therapy at Oceanside.

- During the first year of operations there were a number of early closures of Urgent Care due to temporary gaps in physician and nursing coverage. The Centre now has a full complement of Urgent Care physicians and nurses, and has not experienced an early closure since early 2015.
- Following the opening of the OHC, patient volumes in Urgent Care were higher than first anticipated. Wait times continue to be a challenge in Urgent Care, due to high daily patient volumes, averaging about 66 per day. To address higher patient volumes in Urgent Care, physician hours in Urgent Care have increased from 16 hours to 28 hours daily.
- The Oceanside Health Centre has also adjusted the hours of operations for Urgent Care. The change in hours has helped to improve check-in to discharge targets by shifting resources so that more nurses and doctors are available during the peak hours.
- The adjustment in hours of operation has helped to ensure sustainability of physician coverage in urgent care during the evening hours, and improved consistency in hours of service. This change also allows for scheduling more nursing staff during peak volumes at the busiest times of the day.
- The number of Nurse Practitioner (NP) hours in Primary Care has increased by 15 hours per week. NPs are taking new patients.
- The OHC leadership team is working with the Oceanside Division of Family Practice to look at ways to increase access to primary care in the community.
- There have been a number of service enhancements at the OHC since it opened in 2013:
 - A Mental Health walk-in service has been added to improve access to services for people with Mental Health and Substance Use challenges;
 - Medical Imaging hours have been expanded;
 - Telehealth Services have been increased to include Tele-MS and Tele-Geriatrics;
 - A new and distinct Medical Daycare Service;
 - A new Geri-Psychiatrist with availability working five days per week at the OHC; and
 - A weekly clinic with a Geriatrician who has a special interest in neurology.
- Clients coming to the OHC for booked appointments now have the ability to check-in for their appointments using a self-check-in kiosk.
- OHC was the first Island Health community site to use an Electronic Health Record, the Unit Dose Medication System and Physician Order Entry. This has resulted in substantial learnings about these technologies, and we are now ready to implement these technologies at other Island Health sites.

Access and functionality:

- Work is underway to make the OHC more welcoming. In any setting, as user volumes increase, space issues will surface. The layout and design of the public space at the OHC has been reorganized to improve better flow for clients accessing the OHC and directional signage is being enhanced.
- Island Health is committed to continuing to improve the physical appearance of the OHC, particularly around making it more welcoming for Aboriginal people and adding privacy for people with mental health and substance use challenges.
- Island Health is working to improve amenities for people waiting for Urgent Care and appointments with clinicians. Vending machines have been added and Island Health is working

with a proponent following a Request for Proposals process to add a coffee shop to the main lobby area.

- OHC leadership has worked with local transit to improve transit access to the OHC. Public transit now provides pick-up and drop-off service at the front entrance of the OHC.
- Parking for patients/clients and staff continues to be a challenge at the OHC. As more services were added to the OHC, the demand for parking has increased. Island Health is working on short- and long-term strategies in an effort to improve parking. In the short-term, a loading zone area at the OHC will be converted to parking stalls. In the long-term, Island Health is working toward a separate, staff parking area at the rear of the OHC property.

Integrated care model:

- The Oceanside Health Centre model did something that had not been done in Island Health before – it asked staff to work differently. Instead of each clinician or care provider working with the client in isolation, the new model asked clinicians to come together as an integrated team and wrap all of the team’s services around the client. This was a huge change for staff and OHC leadership acknowledges that the early days of this new model definitely had challenges. Today, the staff members who make up the integrated care teams have embraced the model, and enjoy working as an integrated care team. Our clients have also told us that they like the integrated care team approach.
- Island Health strongly believes in the Ministry of Health’s priority that every patient, no matter where they live, should have access to team-based care. Island Health is now moving toward implementing this model in all communities across Vancouver Island.

Leadership and Awareness:

- Island Health has realigned its program, service and administrative structures to a more geographic, community-based model. This model includes local leadership teams, and focuses more directly on patients and clients to ensure they are a partner in their own care.
- Island Health is working to continue to improve consultation with stakeholders and to raise awareness of the OHC and the services it provides.
- Island Health is in the process of developing an Engagement to Experience Framework which will assist in developing meaningful partnerships with patients, staff and the community to realize excellent health and care and provide a consistent approach to engagement across the Island.
- Part of the Engagement to Experience Framework includes an intention to be a value-added partner contributing to the health, well-being and social development of communities and individuals. To succeed in this intention, Island Health is demonstrating our commitment to collaborative efforts by providing concrete supports; one such mechanism is through a Community Wellness Granting Program, which will allow Island Health to actively partner with communities to develop population-level interventions.

Engagement:

- The evaluation report also indicated that some community residents and stakeholders did not think that there was adequate consultation and engagement about the OHC project and the model that was selected to deliver services. We have learned from this feedback and

acknowledge that we must ensure that there is a true partnership between Island Health and all stakeholders. We are working hard to achieve this through regular meetings and community engagement with the Federation of Oceanside Residents Association (FORA), local and regional governments and the Oceanside Division of Family Practice, with whom we are forming a strong partnership. Island Health also provided seed money for the formation of the Oceanside Health and Wellness Network and the OHC leadership is an active participant in the Network.

Evaluation findings on the OHC's impact on various outcomes at the time the evaluation was completed in April 2015:

- OHC has not yet had a quantifiable impact on health at the population level, although there is a mix of qualitative reports of impacts on health at the individual level.
- OHC is now providing a large amount of health care that was previously less accessible – or not accessible at all – to area residents. More specifically, the evaluation data suggest that the OHC has contributed to a reduction in Emergency Department use by residents in its catchment area, but little change in the volumes of use of other, pre-existing Island Health services.
- There is room for improvement in integration and alignment – of both services delivered by Island Health as well as existing community health and social service partners – with patient needs, although this is improving.
- OHC has contributed to a substantial increase in the costs of providing care to the residents of the Oceanside area.