



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

BC HEALTH COALITION



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About the BC Health Coalition

The BC Health Coalition champions a strong public health care system that is there for all of us when we need it.

We are a democratic, inclusive and consensus-based community of individuals and organizations that span the province of British Columbia. Together we advocate for evidence-based improvements to our public health care system, stimulate public education on health care issues, and drive positive change to our health care system through campaigns across the province.

Become a Member

Membership in the BC Health Coalition is open to all organizations and individuals who support the principles of the Canada Health Act, oppose privatization of health care, and support the principles of the Canadian Health Coalition's [Call to Care Statement](#).

To learn more about annual membership visit: www.bchealthcoalition.ca.



A Message from our Co-Chairs

Disparities in health are amplified during pandemics.

We're now in the midst of a major pandemic that has exposed the consequence of years of underfunding, cuts and privatization of BC's public health care system. The need for a just recovery, that considers the needs of all, is vital.

The BC Health Coalition stands with you as we fight together for a better public healthcare system that includes universal pharmacare and that's there for all of us when we need it.

We have reasons to be hopeful; tactical use of intervening in court action, community-engaged and worksite-engaged activism and connecting networks of patients, healthcare workers, students and working families are the strengths of our coalition. BC also elected a government that campaigned on a promise to strengthen public healthcare and we're poised to hold them accountable.

We also know we have a tremendous and unprecedented fight ahead of us, and it will have a deep political legacy. Corporate lobbyists, the private insurance industry, healthcare profiteers and politicians that want to dismantle public healthcare are doubling their efforts. They are well-resourced and poised to use a global health pandemic to normalize profiteering and privatization. It's our collective action that

stands in their way.

As the saying goes; They have the money. But we have the many.

You are part of a network of 800,000 people in this province who are determined to build a public funded and public delivered healthcare system that will be there for us when we need it. Let's keep fighting alongside each other to chart a path forward.

In Solidarity,



Edith Machattie
Labour Co-Chair



Kathleen Jamieson
Community Co-Chair



Steering Committee Members 2019-2020

We thank the following Steering Committee members for their hard work and commitment to guiding the Coalition this year.

Sheila Moir, BC Federation of Labour

Scott De Long, BCGEU

Nathan Allen, CUPE BC

Sara Rozell, Hospital Employees Union

Jaime Matten, Health Sciences Association

Christy Slusarenko, MoveUP

Erica Jones / Patrick Johnson, UFCW 1518

Marcy Cohen, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives BC

Janani Ravikularam, Check Your Head

AJ Klein / Teresa Murphy, Council of Canadians

Ihsan Malik, Metro Vancouver Cross-Cultural Seniors Network

Zarghoona Wakil, MOSAIC

Ed Staples, BC Rural Health Network

Kathleen Jamieson, Community Co-Chair, COSCO

Edith MacHattie, Labour Co-Chair, Health Sciences Association

Introduction to Staff

Usman Mushtaq



Coordinator, he/him/his

Strategic Priorities & Planning,
Organizational Health, Financial Strategy

Usman has been an organizer in the area of migrant justice for the past decade in Toronto, Ottawa, and now unceded Coast Salish territories. Some of the projects he has coordinated have pushed municipalities and school boards to

ensure their policies and services are accessible to all migrants regardless of status.

His more recent work has involved collaborating with youth in the City of Richmond to plan, develop, and implement youth-led campaigns. One of these campaigns was to work with Van-couver Coastal Health and TransCare BC to bring trans youth created education resources that highlighted the experiences of trans youth outside of urban areas to schools, libraries, and clinics in the lower mainland.

Usman is excited to bring his organizing and coordinating experience to the BC Health Coalition. He's also the sleep deprived parent of a 15 month old

toddler! Before baby, he frequently DJed dance parties in Vancouver.

Ishani Weera



Campaigner, she/her/hers

Campaigns Strategy, Policy Analysis & Advocacy, Media & Communications Strategy

Ishani is a lobbyist, labour educator and campaign organizer.

She is the former Director of Organizing and Outreach at the Alberta Federation of Labour and most recently served as Manager of Communications and Education at the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees.

Ishani is passionate about high participation community organizing, popular education and using labour organizing principles in engagement and communications strategies.

She is a member of the United Association of Labour Educators and writes about solidarity and hashtags in her spare time. Ishani has an academic background in Political Science (University of Alberta, York University) and remains perpetually interested in how we talk about public policy and who gets excluded from public policy conversations.

Born in Colombo, Ishani has also lived in Manitoba, Ontario and Alberta.

Audrey Guay



Organizer, she/her/hers

Member Engagement & Outreach,
Education & Capacity-Building,
Mobilization Strategy

Audrey Guay believes in the power of organized, active citizenship. She finds great joy and energy in developing new skills, working with teams, and engaging big ideas. She is trained in the broad-based relational organizing tradition of the Industrial Areas Foundation and has been involved in the Metro Vancouver Alliance organizing effort for over three years. She most recently organized a HousingPro-ject that engaged labour unions, faith congregations, community organizations, decision makers, and housing professionals in public education events

on land trusts and church property redevelopment. Audrey recently completed her Masters in Urban Studies at Simon Fraser University, where she was awarded the 2019 Alumni Award for Community Engagement. Her undergraduate degree from Queen's University was in Health Studies, and she is excited to dive back into the world of public health with the BC Health Coalition.

Born in Montreal to a French-speaking family, Audrey spent most of her childhood in Bamako, Mali, and has traveled extensively across five continents. She is deeply grateful to have been learning attachment to place these past five years on the unceded, ancestral Coast Salish territories.



Join a Working Group

The BCHC currently has three active working groups. Groups meet monthly to identify priority issues in their area. Working with staff, they identify campaign goals and offer recommendations to the Steering Committee.

They serve as a hub for our coalition’s expertise and help connect our members with directly impacted communities and partner organizations working on similar issues. Membership to Working Groups are open to coalition member representatives, and other individuals may be invited to join as decided upon by the group members.

In addition to our three working groups, the BCHC also supports the independent work of the Community Alliance of Racialized Ethnocultural Services for Equitable Health.

WORKING GROUP	2020 PRIORITY AREAS	CO-CHAIRS
Seniors Care	Strengthening the full continuum of seniors care, including Home Support, Assisted Living, and Long-Term Care Removing the profit motive from Long-Term Care Recognizing and addressing social inequities in seniors care Advocating for Universal Pharmacare	Kathleen Jamieson (COSCO) Lou Black (HEU)

<p>Primary Health Care Reform</p>	<p>Advocating for funding and expansion of the Community Health Centre(CHC)Model in BC</p> <p>Ensuring funding for CHCs is flexible enough to respond to community needs and address the social determinants of health</p> <p>Organizing alongside communities who currently face multiple barriers to accessing services in ways that support them to grow their power</p> <p>Working with the provincial government on a CHC implementation strategy through a provincial Partnership Table</p>	<p>Marcy Cohen (CCPA)</p> <p>Edward Staples (BC Rural Health Network)</p>
<p>Anti-Privatization</p>	<p>Protecting public health care in courts and leading the work on the Cambie Trial</p> <p>Advocating for public solutions to surgical wait times</p> <p>Preventing the delisting and privatization of primary care services, including corporate for-profit virtual health and telehealth</p>	<p>Stephen Elliott-Buckley (HEU/CUPE)</p> <p>Colleen Fuller (REACH Community Health Centre)</p>
<p>Community Alliance of Racialized Ethnocultural Services for Equitable Health (CARES)</p>	<p>Representing organizations and individuals who work with ethnocultural communities and are interested in connecting more closely with the health system</p> <p>Supporting the government to reform primary care and to shift to a team-based model of care delivery</p> <p>Advocating for programs that will improve culturally appropriate care, including funding cultural brokers to work within care teams</p>	<p>Ingrid Mendez (Watari)</p> <p>Esther Hsieh (Umbrella Multicultural Coop)</p> <p>Zarghoona Wakil (MOSAIC)</p>



Campaign Highlights

Public Solution to Surgical Backlogs

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, elective surgeries were put on hold earlier in the year leaving many people waiting longer to get the help they needed. In May, the government released a plan to address this surgical backlog as elective surgeries resumed. Unfortunately, the government's plan included use of private surgical clinics when already proven public solutions that build the public capacity of our health care system already existed. The BCHC asked our members to call on the government to scale up these public system improvements instead of relying on private clinics through an email campaign to Minister Adrian Dix and the Health Ministry.

Over 1,400 emails were sent to Adrian Dix with the support of our members calling on the government to streamline waitlists and optimize hospital/OR capacity among other improvements.

Assisted Living

The BCHC released a collaborative report with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Hospital Employees Union looking at issues in assisted living in BC from the perspectives of front-line workers and families. The first of its kind report proved that problems in seniors' care are not present in just long-term care but also home and community-based health care. In looking at assisted living in BC, the report

examined the state of services for seniors, the conditions in which care was provided, and the regulatory/legislative gaps that have led to the issues in assisted living.

The report collaborators were able to identify many issues with assisted living including affordability challenges, particularly in private-pay units (where the senior or their family pay the full cost and are charged for each additional service beyond the basic minimum required). Through the report, a spotlight was placed on the gaps in our full seniors care system.

CHC Partnership Table

In partnership with the BC Association of Community Health Centres (BCACHC), we pushed the government to make a commitment to support CHC adoption as part of the provincial primary care strategy.

Part of our push was to create a CHC Partnership Table to bring together stakeholders from community and government to share knowledge about the CHC model. At the Partnership Table, representatives from CHCs including providers, patients and leadership would meet with other community partners, the Ministry of Health, Health Authorities, and Ministries involved in the social determinants of health. The goal of the Table would be to share best practices and work together for the successful implementation of the CHC model in BC.

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Health agreed to work with the BC Health Coalition and BCACHC to create the Partnership Table with the first meeting of the Table scheduled near the end of 2020.

BC Elections – Ask a Candidate

With the call for a provincial election in October, the BCHC sprung into action by launching an election campaign calling on [all candidates](#) to improve the public care system we all rely on. In particular, we asked all candidates to take action on three key areas of health care - improving seniors care, increasing access to Community Health Centres, and committing to public solutions to reduce waitlist times. Through an email campaign and the launch of the votepublichealthbc.ca website, we asked our members to get candidates' stances on health care issues on the record as well as demand action in three critical areas of health care. We identified questions that members could ask candidates as well as provided key background information to support our members & campaign.

Coverage expanding to all uninsured people for COVID-19 testing and treatment

The BC Health Coalition advocated in collaboration with Sanctuary Health to expand MSP coverage to all uninsured people. The government responded by providing temporary MSP coverage to select groups and promising vital access to COVID-19 related health care all migrants in BC (including newly-landed permanent residents, temporary foreign workers, international students, those who have been rendered undocumented and those who have been stuck here since the borders closed). This was an important step towards ensuring equitable access to Universal Public Health Care while also helping to safeguard all of our health.

Unfortunately, we were disappointed that the Ministry of Health decided to clawback temporary MSP coverage in August 2020. Coverage for COVID-19-related health care remains, and given our previous work, we need to continue to fight to ensure this vital service remains.

Cambie Trial

The Cambie trial centered around Dr. Brian Day's attempt to strike down provincial health legislation that limits the for-profit delivery of medically necessary services. His claim is that these rules—designed to ensure universal access across Canada—violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

A win for the corporate plaintiffs would have been nothing less than catastrophic. Instead, the BC Supreme Court [dealt a strong blow](#) to the efforts of Dr. Brian Day and others to undermine Canada's publicly-funded health care system.

The 880 page ruling reads as a comprehensive endorsement of our universal public healthcare system. Visit www.savemedicare.ca for more information.



Coalition Member Testimonials

“West Coast LEAF believes strong collaboration and organizing is key to systemic gender justice work. This is why we are members of the BC Health Coalition, the vital and unique organizing space the coalition creates is key to future we believe in for women and all people who face gender-based discrimination.”

Sharnelle Jenkins-Thompson

(West Coast LEAF) Primary Health Care Reform Working Group Member

“The Council of Canadians liaises with the BCHC and supports its work because of our shared goal of maintaining and expanding our public health care system. Promoting and protecting public health care has been a priority in the work of the COC for many years and we greatly appreciate the amazing work of the BCHC, and all they have accomplished this year. Public health is under constant threat of privatization and great vigilance is required to identify and tackle those threats. BCHC plays a vital role in this struggle, and this year especially with their important work on the Day case.”

Penny Tilby Ron Peterson

(Council of Canadians) Anti-Privatization Working Group Member

“A strong public health care system has become increasingly important to my family, and everyone in BC, during the 15 years that I've worked with the BCHC. And during that time, the Coalition has played an increasingly important role in protecting and strengthening health care for all of us in BC.”

Carol Rivière

(Retired HSA member) Anti-Privatization Working Group Member

“My relationship with the BCHC gives me the opportunity to be better informed about the healthcare scene provincially and federally. Through its Seniors Care Working Group, I act as a liaison between the coalition and the organization that I represent at the table, BC FORUM. One purpose of this group is to provide the coalition with seniors' perspectives on how health issues should be addressed, particularly those that involve seniors care. Nothing for us, without us!”

Agnes Jackman

(BC Forum) Seniors Care Working Group Member

“Participating in the SC and PCR working group and CARES is an opportunity to learn and increase knowledge about healthcare services and policies in place, learn about other services, and bring the issues newcomers and ethnocultural communities face when accessing healthcare services. The most rewarding part is to be part of advocacy for system change to make healthcare services equitable for all.”

Zarghoona Wakil

(MOSAIC) Steering Committee Member and CARES for Equitable Health Co-Chair

“Action for Reform of Residential Care in BC is concerned about the inadequate care of residents living in long-term care facilities, exposed and magnified by COVID-19. We are making recommendations to the Minister of Health for increasing resident quality of life and working conditions for frontline staff. The work of the BC Coalition brings

together others concerned about maintaining and improving the public health system for all, facilitating and powering joint actions. Joining the BC Health Coalition Seniors Working Group has enabled us to amplify our voice/work through the support of other Coalition members.”

Penny MacCourt

(ARCC) Seniors Care Working Group Member

