



Pender Islands
Health Care Society



Annual Report for 2022-2023

Presented at the Annual General Meeting
September 25, 2023



Pender Islands
Health Care Society

Territorial Acknowledgment

We acknowledge with respect and gratitude that S,DÁYES—known in English as the Pender Islands, where we live, work, and play—is part of the unceded, traditional territory of the WSÁNEĆ First Nations.

Our Vision

We strive for quality, accessible health care, and wellness support for the Pender Islands community.

Our Mission

To facilitate access to primary health care and complementary services to support the health and wellbeing of the Pender Islands community.

Our Core Values

Reliable and quality services

Fostering a space where services are reliable and meet the needs of the community.

Respect and inclusion

Providing a safe and accessible place for community members, especially those who need it most.

Grounded and pragmatic

The PIHCS operates using a pragmatic approach to ensure the sustainability of the organization.

Community-centred

The ultimate goal of the Society is to serve the community. It was founded on community needs and it will continue to do so.

2021-2022 Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Bruce Waygood, President
Catherine Dawson, Vice President
Rick Mudie, Treasurer
Urs Boxler, Secretary

Board of Directors

Karen Bell
Vicki Dutton
George Fowlie
Gail Jamieson
Maggie Macdonald
Simone Marler
Peter Paré
Allan Shapiro

Committee Members at Large

Art Curtis
David Harrison

Program Partners

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the following program partners:

- BC Ministry of Child and Family Services: part-time counselling position
- Island Health: Lab Services, part-time counselling, volunteer coordination, and food support programs
- Healthy Aging, United Way of BC: Better at Home Program, Pender, and Saturna Islands (in partnership with Saturna Community Club)
- CRD - Pender Island Parks and Recreation Commission: recreation programs
- BC Association of Community Health Centres: Nurse Practitioner locum housing, one-time deficit operational funding grant
- Government of Canada Community Services Recovery Fund: IT infrastructure
- Province of BC: Ministry's Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program: heat pumps and generator
- Southern Gulf Islands Neighbourhood House: food security programs
- Government of Canada New Horizons for Seniors Program: food program funding
- BC Farm Market Nutrition Coupon Program

Note to readers: This Annual Report covers the fiscal year from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023.

President's Report

During 2022-23, I was privileged to lead a working board. Our job was (and is) to focus on keeping our Health Centre in good shape physically and financially, and well-staffed. Doing so is crucial to our mandate to “facilitate access to primary health care and complementary services to support the health and wellbeing of the Pender Islands community”.

A tough time for primary health care

The delivery of primary health care was not easy during the year. Dr. Moore retired in December 2022 after years of dedicated service. Even with a long lead time, Island Health’s recruiting efforts to find a replacement coincided with a critical, country-wide shortage of family physicians. The situation was compounded by the province’s new payment model for family doctors in urban settings in BC, with no equivalent program for rural physicians in places like Pender. As of September 2023, details are still being worked out on a new master agreement for rural and remote physicians. Until this occurs, finding another doctor is likely to be difficult.

Further, locum support rates in urban settings were enhanced, but not for rural clinics, which made getting locums for the vacant physician positions on Pender an ongoing challenge. Additionally, locum support for nurse practitioners (NP) was essentially non-existent, thus leaving the patients of NP Tracey Adams without back-up when she took long-overdue vacation time.

In the background was a record 20% increase in the full-time population of the island between 2016-2021 and increasing numbers of summer tourists. These factors put significant strain on delivering primary health services for registered patients as well as emergency care for part-timers and visitors.

Executive Director Marion Alksne and Assistant Executive Director Jane Harrison did yeoman’s service in dealing with challenging locum support programs for the physicians and nurse practitioner. We especially acknowledge Dr. Knight for taking on additional duties to help address the lack of physician and locum services. As we moved into 2023-24, the board submitted proposals to Island Health to ameliorate these problems.

A very busy year for Society staff

In early 2022, Drs Rebner and Weins let the Society know they would be taking a 7.5-month extended leave starting in late November, with most of that time covered by locums Dr. Amyree and Dr. Knight. Dr. Moore then finalized his retirement date to take effect in mid-December.

The situation focussed ongoing discussions about the management of the Medical Clinic. The Society took on the administration of the clinic and became the employer of the medical office assistants on October 1, 2022, in an arrangement paid for by Island Health and the physicians. We are grateful to Jane and Marion who were both heavily involved in this transition, and to Tania Honan for taking on bookkeeping services to the clinic.

Strategic actions to sustain the Health Centre

The board held a retreat at the end of May 2022 to assess progress on its 5 Year Strategic Plan, first developed in 2020 when the Society faced growing operational deficits and a capital expenditure forecast to be at least a million dollars. As we came into fiscal year 2022-23, we reported that for the first time in 41 years, stable tax roll funding—approved by an overwhelming majority of island taxpayers in a November 2021 referendum—meant Health Centre operating costs would not create a deficit. This freed up major funding from rental income, grants, and donations for much-needed upgrades and repairs. (*See Treasurer’s Report*)

Under the tireless coordination of the building committee, work on major capital projects made significant progress. (*See Executive Director’s Report.*) Ensuring that our premises are in good shape and meet new building code requirements continue to rely on rental income, successful grant applications, and the generosity of Pender residents.

The search for a new executive director

A major task for the Board began in late 2022 when Executive Director Marion Alksne signalled her intent to retire at the end of 2023. After a thorough search process, the board appointed Annette Garm as incoming executive director on August 28, 2023. Following a three month overlap with Marion this fall, Annette will take on full responsibility as of December 4, 2023. Annette brings a wealth of experience with various aspects of the BC Health system and has the background to both lead and advise on a primary health care delivery model for Pender and the Outer Gulf Islands.

A working board

The Society is fortunate in having board members who bring a great deal of expertise to the table. They never faltered in their willingness to do the work necessary to keep the Health Centre facility viable and to retain and improve services.

Simone Marler will be stepping down from the board as of September 2023. During the very early stages of the referendum, she was asked to help the Communications Committee because of her professional background. She quickly joined the board to learn issues firsthand while supporting the referendum campaign, and the updating of the Society's branding, website, and social media presence.

Farewell to Marion

Although Marion's retirement will be well into the 2023-24 reporting year, it would be remiss not to recognize her exemplary time as executive director. As she says, it's been an "interesting" five years.

Marion has served during a difficult time affected by three years of pandemic conditions. Nevertheless, her leadership saw the development of a strategic plan, a new awareness of the need for major capital repairs, a referendum on taxation to support Health Centre operations, taking on the administration of the Medical Clinic, and even a flood in the crawl space. As her term draws to a close, Marion has been working closely with Outer Gulf Islands (OGI) health centres to find a common voice on how best to deliver primary care for our island communities.

On behalf of the board, thank you for your professionalism, dedication, patience, knowledge, and caring ways.

Respectfully submitted: *Bruce Waygood, President, Pender Islands Health Care Society*

Executive Director's Report

Under the heading of “Our Core Values”, it states that the Society will be “grounded and pragmatic” to ensure the sustainability of the organization. I checked the dictionary meaning of “pragmatic” to make sure it matched my own definition and found this: “pragmatic: dealing with things sensibly and realistically, based on practical rather than theoretical considerations”. Throughout 2022-23, we exercised this value non-stop.

From a building perspective

The septic field was upgraded, the perimeter drainage system scoped, repaired, and updated, a new generator installed, and interior waterlines replaced.

We relied on the generosity of donors and grant funding organizations, plus the hard work of local contractors to get the jobs done. Most of these recent upgrades were funded by major donors and successful grant applications, with plans coordinated by tireless volunteer board members and staff.

Advocating for our health care needs

An often-unseen role of the Society is advocacy. We appreciated the sustained willingness of Adam Olsen, MLA Saanich North and the Gulf Islands, to go to bat for our needs. Likewise, the BC Association of Community Health Centres and the BC Rural Health Network provided wisdom, practical support, and encouragement. Their perspectives on province-wide issues, trends, and resources proved to be invaluable. On a local level, meetings of executive directors and board representatives of the health centres on Mayne, Saturna, Galiano, and Pender became a creative source for ideas and joined-up advocacy on common issues.

Our Health Centre team

From a personnel perspective, the Society's staff, contractors, and tenants adapted time and again to changing realities.

We were thankful for the 30+ years of service that Dr Moore and Community Health Nurse Carolyn Cartwright Owers gave to this community, prior to their well-deserved retirements in late 2022. Our tenant group also saw the retirement of chiropractor Dr. Mark Wensley in December 2022 after 20 years of service, and the arrival of Dr. Penny Paterson who took over his practice.

When it became clear that the medical office assistants should become Society employees, they embraced the change. This enabled Drs Rebner and Wiens to take extended leave, knowing that the clinic would be well-supported. Nurse Practitioner Adams kept moving forward in her 14 years of practice on Pender, and Dr Knight increased her clinic time, as various locums provided intermittent care over the ensuing months.

Society staff Jane Harrison, Tania Honan, and Gary Immelman stretched their roles to adapt to the needs of the moment, while Andrea Mills kept community activities going with newsletters, instructors, and volunteers. Sincere appreciation goes to Bill Phillips for stepping in to cover for Jane in the Better at Home program while she was temporarily assigned to other roles. To the mental health team of Elizabeth, Ulla, and Shellyse, your steady hands made a difference during unusual times. And to Angela and Susan who came in five evenings a week to keep us tidy: no easy feat!

We were very much like the duck—unruffled on the surface but paddling like crazy underneath! As I conclude my five years as executive director, I firmly believe this is absolutely a time of opportunity and possibility, balanced with a dose of pragmatism. What an interesting pairing and prescription!

Respectfully submitted: *Marion Alksne, Executive Director, Pender Islands Health Care Society*

Treasurer's Report for Year Ended March 31, 2023

The auditor's report (*attached*) for our financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2023, was an unqualified or clean opinion, similar to last year. This means the auditors were able to rely on our internally produced financial information and endorsed our financial procedures and controls.

The audited statements disclosed a general fund operating surplus of \$180,000 compared to a surplus last year of \$108,000. These surpluses were generated by grants and large donations for capital projects that are expected to be spent by 2024.

There were two significant changes to our finances in the year.

This was the first year that the Society received the revenue generated from property taxes related to the November 2021 referendum for tax-based funding. This funding can only be used for operating expenses. The amount received was \$206,000 plus nearly \$20,000 in CRD administrative fees which included the cost of the referendum. The CRD also approved the Society's request for \$229,000 for the year that ends March 31, 2024. The second change was that the Society took on the administrative services for the Medical Clinic as of October 1, 2022. This new responsibility was underpinned by existing funding from Island Health and the medical clinic physicians.

Thanks to the Society's grant application focus, the new emergency generator and HVAC systems (replaced earlier) were paid for with a \$164,000 Canada Infrastructure Grant. The replacement of the septic field and addressing drainage problems was started and will continue in 2023-24. This work was made possible by a \$100,000 donation for the septic field and \$50,000 in combined smaller donations to address site drainage.

As we came into 2022-23, the Society recognized that a potential consequence of property tax funding was that the community might think donations would no longer be needed. Analysis made it clear that this was not the case. Budget projections showed that the Health Centre would require donations of at least \$40,000/year for capital improvements. We are pleased to report that community donations for 2022-23 continued to be strong, amounting to \$63,000.

Respectfully submitted: *Rick Mudie, Treasurer, Pender Islands Health Care Society*