



Helping those with chronic pain, disease, and mental health or substance use challenges in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows

Submitted by Jackie Amsden, communications manager, Ridge Meadows Primary Care Network

Residents in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows are taking their first steps towards fuller,

healthier lives thanks to the newly hired health-care professionals at the Ridge Meadows Wellness & Urgent and Primary Care Centre.

The positions include health-care services for seniors, children and youth, adults living with chronic pain, chronic disease, and mental health and substance use challenges. They are funded through the Ridge Meadows Primary Care Network.

“Persistent pain is physical and emotional,” says Paulina Undurraga, the centre’s new physiotherapist for chronic pain. “It’s a complex issue that I can’t successfully support entirely on my own. My intervention is most effective when it includes supporting clinicians from other disciplines, like mental health.”

Chronic pain can impact many aspects of a person’s life. Take Sukhi, for instance.

Sukhi, one of Undurraga’s patients, suffers from ongoing hip pain and migraines, caused by a motor vehicle accident several years ago, which left her unable to maintain full-time employment. She was referred to Undurraga and the primary care network’s social worker Stella McKay by a family doctor.

“I was feeling unhappy and miserable with having to be so constrained by my pain in terms of what I could do...even just being able to be present with my children,” Sukhi says. “I would see others doing so much more and compare myself to them—which would push me further into this state of depression and anxiety.”



Paulina Undurraga,
Ridge Meadows Wellness and Urgent and Primary Care Centre’s new physiotherapist for chronic pain

Greater access to care services is improving lives of British Columbians

For Sukhi, connecting with a team of various care providers has made all the difference. She credits Undurraga and McKay for showing her there is no shame in getting help; whether that meant taking medication or just setting personal boundaries. She credits them for helping her escape the downward spiral and develop the skills and knowledge that will help her control her pain in the long term.

“I would never have been able to access both a counselor and physiotherapist if I had to do this privately, I just wouldn’t have been able to afford it,” Sukhi adds. “I’ve had this injury for eight years now and have tried other services, but it was having the support of them together that has me finally feeling hopeful about my quality of life.”

Primary care networks are part of a new model of health care being launched in partnership throughout B.C. by the Ministry of Health, Divisions of Family Practice and health authorities. In Ridge Meadows, Fraser Health, the Ridge Meadows Division of Family Practice and Katzie First Nation are collaborating to create a seamless primary health-care journey for patients.

