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B.C.'S MINISTRY OF HEALTH



UPCCs – What's new and why?

When urgent primary care centres (UPCCs) were first announced in June 2018, they were a solution to close some of gaps being experienced by patients needing treatment for urgent, non-emergency issues, like minor cuts or sprains. When patients either don't have a family doctor, can't get into see their own family doctor or need to be seen evenings, weekends or holidays, UPCCs provide an alternative to lining up at a walk-in clinic or ending up in the emergency department by getting patients the care they need faster with the support of a full primary care team. UPCCs have proven to be a highly valuable resource – collectively, the first five centres that have been open since the fall 2018 have received over 82,000 patient visits.

Thanks to the hard work and collaboration of our partners, 14 UPCCs have been announced, with the most recent in [Victoria](#). As more and more UPCCs have become operational, a new opportunity emerged: UPCCs presented a unique opportunity to add value to our health care system in a few ways.

While continuing to meet the urgent care needs, they could also be a vehicle to connect physicians or nurse practitioners with patients who don't have their own. They could also serve as a flexible resource to their communities, by acting as “hubs” of care for clinics and patients within a primary care network. They can house team-based care resources for the entire network, as well as host additional services, like social work and mental health services – also accessible to providers and patients throughout the community.

These subtle but significant shifts mean UPCCs play an integral role in making health care more accessible for patients under B.C.'s [Primary and Community Care Strategy](#).

Going forward, to reflect this change, all new UPCC's will be called urgent *and* primary care centres, with the emphasis on providing a full suite of primary care services.

Now, when a patient who does not have an existing primary care provider presents themselves at a UPCC, the centre itself will become the patient's temporary medical home. It will provide non-urgent care for the patient and hold the patient's medical records. Some patients will become regular patients of the UPCC, while others will eventually transition to new practices or providers within the PCN as it becomes operational, allowing the UPCC to continuously attach patients moving forward. Patients who are



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attached to a provider elsewhere in the community can continue to use the UPCC for urgent and after-hours primary care services.

UPCCs will continue to give communities better access to same-day, urgent, non-emergency health care while providing more access to primary health care evenings and weekends. Patients who require medical attention within 12-24 hours for urgent but non-emergency conditions (sprains, minor cuts and burns, e.g.) can go to the UPCC for treatment.

For a full list of UPCC locations, visit [HealthLinkBC](https://www.healthlinkbc.ca).



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