

For Immediate Release | September 8, 2020

New phone numbers launched to improve access to community care

SOUTH OKANAGAN – Interior Health is making it easier for the public and clinicians in the South Okanagan to access and navigate community-based supports for mental health and substance use, home and community care, and chronic disease management services.

New phone numbers have launched that will provide a single point of access for residents to connect to health care services they need.

The South Okanagan launch is part of a phased roll-out that will be expanded to other areas of Interior Health later this year. Communities included in this first phase include: Penticton, Okanagan Falls, Summerland, Kaleden, Naramata, Oliver, Osoyoos, Princeton, Hedley, Upper Similkameen, Tulameen, Keremeos, Cawston, Olalla, and Lower Similkameen.

- **Mental Health & Substance Use (MHSU)** services can be accessed during regular business hours by calling **310-MHSU (6478)**.
 - Calls will be automatically routed to a community MHSU centre, where staff will determine where to direct the call, and connect the caller through to the appropriate service. People should call 310-MHSU if they are seeking support for:
 - ongoing difficulties with mental health concerns including anxiety, depression, paranoia, psychosis, or if they're unsure if they need support
 - ongoing difficulties with substance use
- **Home and Community Care** can be accessed during regular business hours by calling **1-800-707-8550**. There is also a new single FAX number: 1-844-770-3470.
 - People calling this number will reach a central intake office in the South Okanagan, and will be connected to the appropriate service. Programs included are:
 - care management services
 - community nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, dietitian, social work, speech language, and respiratory therapy
 - home support for activities of daily living such as personal care, special exercises, medication assistance, and in-home respite
 - adult day services
 - eligibility assessment for funded assisted living and long-term care homes
 - chronic disease management programs
 - diabetes, cardiac health, kidney care
 - palliative care services
 - community nursing, social work, and hospice care
 - acquired brain injury services

Note: The new single-point-of-access numbers **do not replace** existing contact numbers, including the Interior Health crisis line (1-888-353-2273), 811 (HealthLinkBC), acute or emergency services, or 911. People requiring services after regular business hours should consider these alternatives.

The phone services have been developed in response to feedback from clients and the public, to make it simpler for people to find and access the services they need.

Interior Health is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and providing a wide range of quality health-care services to more than 801,000 people living across B.C.'s vast interior. For more information, visit www.interiorhealth.ca, follow us on Twitter [@Interior_Health](https://twitter.com/Interior_Health), Instagram [@interiorhealthbc](https://www.instagram.com/interiorhealthbc) or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/interiorhealth.ca.

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