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Interior Health releases first ever five-year Climate Change and Sustainability Roadmap to create a resilient health-care system

KELOWNA – Interior Health (IH) has released a five-year Climate Change and Sustainability Roadmap that provides long-term, strategic direction for preparing for and mitigating the health impacts of climate change. IH is committed to being a leader in creating a sustainable and resilient health-care system that equitably contributes to the well-being of clients, patients, staff, communities and the planet.

The 2023–2028 IH Roadmap, which is the first of its kind, builds on direction from the provincial government, action already taking place within IH, and the increasing impacts of climate change on our region. The 20 actions detailed in the report are designed to strengthen Aboriginal partnerships, build a healthy and resilient health-care system, and support climate adaptation in B.C.'s Interior communities.

"The link between the health and well-being of British Columbians, and the health and well-being of our environment, is clear," said Susan Brown, president and CEO of Interior Health. "The IH Roadmap is grounded in a health equity approach, and positions IH to not only respond effectively to the threat of climate change, but to support our most vulnerable communities, as well as Aboriginal partners in their efforts to prepare for climate change. It builds on the significant momentum we've already created as we strive for a healthier environment for those that we serve."

The IH Roadmap was co-created with staff, physicians and external partners, including representatives from Aboriginal communities, local government, municipalities in the Interior region, and specialists in emergency management, climate resilience and public health.

"This is an important moment for everyone at Interior Health, and I am extremely proud of the work our teams are doing to promote climate resilience, energy reduction and environmental sustainability," said medical health officer Dr. Sue Pollock. "The IH Roadmap will serve as a guide towards a more sustainable future as an organization, health-care provider and community member."

Of the 20 actions detailed in the report, many are already in progress, including the development of an electric vehicle strategy; conducting climate risk assessments for our facilities; the integration of environmental sustainability into clinical operations; creating and implementing surveillance and early warning systems for extreme heat, cold and air quality events; and a climate change and health vulnerability and adaptation assessment.

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka'pamux, Secwépemc, St'át'imc, Syilx, and Tsilhqot'in Nations where we live, learn, collaborate and work together.

"The Roadmap provides IH a compass by which we will continue to build environmentally sustainable health-care operations and services," said Lorne Sisley, corporate director, Facilities Management and Operations. "It's a cohesive document that will be integrated into all areas of our operations and service delivery so that together, we can help strengthen our health-care system to adapt and mitigate climate change impacts."

The IH Roadmap will also support IH in meeting its 2030 greenhouse gas emissions targets. As a public sector organization, IH contributes to B.C.'s legislated target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent below 2007 levels by 2030. IH has been carbon neutral since 2010, as outlined in the 2022 PSO Climate Change Accountability Report.

View and download the IH [Climate Change and Sustainability Roadmap 2023–2028](#).

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