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[News from the RHSRNbc Office](#)

Dear RHSRNbc members,

We hope that this month's newsletter finds you and your loved ones safe and you are enjoying the fall, the rain and the odd sunny day.

In late July, our project on enhancing rural resiliency was selected as a recipient of the FAFM Co-RIG Phase II grant! We have recently hired a research coordinator and research assistant to lead this project. Over the next year, we will be exploring the lessons learned from rural community responses to COVID-19, specifically characteristics of rural communities that demonstrated resilience in the first year of the pandemic and how they may be applied to other challenges and threats affecting rural health and health services. We also continue to support rural health research through the development of a “for students, by students” Rural Research Knowledge Hub page.

Current Projects:

- Recipients of the FAFM Co-RIG Phase II Grant: “[Rural Community Resiliency to Climate Change](#)” project
- [Rural Research Knowledge Hub](#)

In our November newsletter, we respond to COP26 held in Glasgow and what it means for rural communities, provide updates on the network's activities, upcoming events, research, funding and volunteer opportunities, online resources, recent rural research publications and more.

Have a wonderful week!

Activity Updates

Rural Community Resiliency to Climate Change study updates page!

This work will directly engage physician leaders through stories of resilience and strategies for strengthening rural health. By engaging with rural community physicians, healthcare professionals, Indigenous partners, and rural youth, we aim to obtain a dynamic picture of how to build resilient rural communities in the face of climate change and ecosystem disruption.

As this project progresses, we want to use our website to share study updates. Check out the [site](#) to learn more and follow along as we listen to stories of rural community resiliency in the face of COVID-19 and climate change!

RHSRNbc Rural Research Knowledge Hub page!

If you are a student researcher or a new rural health research investigator, we welcome you to check out the [RHSRNbc Rural Research Knowledge Hub page](#). We will be posting regularly on various topics related to rural health research, on approaching research questions involving the health of rural communities of BC and the various methodologies involved. Stay tuned for two new posts coming this Fall written by our undergraduate student researchers!

Recent Posts:

- [Asking the right questions in rural health](#)

Introducing new team members!

Welcoming, Anna de Waal, Rural Community Resiliency to Climate Change Research Coordinator



Anna de Waal completed a Master of Science in Public Health and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, both at McGill University. Her research interests are in HIV epidemiology, Indigenous health, and improving access to primary care. She is passionate about supporting rural community resilience for a more sustainable and equitable future. Anna has worked in clinical HIV epidemiology in South Africa, with the Pan-American Health Organization at the Office for the Eastern Caribbean, and in qualitative analysis with the Department of General Practice at Monash University, Melbourne. She enjoys spending time in nature, painting, and running whenever she can.

Welcoming, Alexandra Bland, Rural Community Resiliency to Climate Change Research Assistant



Alexandra Bland is the Research Assistant for the Co-RIG project examining rural resiliency during the COVID-19 pandemic. She holds a BA in International Relations from the University of British Columbia and an MSc in Health and International Development from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her past research has primarily focused on global health and health disparities in low and middle-income countries. The topic of her MSc dissertation was evaluating effective pneumonia prevention strategies to reduce under-five pneumonia mortality in high burden countries. She is passionate about health equity, health systems strengthening and the social determinants of health. Outside of work, Alex loves to bake and go hiking with her dog Alfie.

Surveys

Engagement survey

If you are interested in spotlighting rural health workers, community members working on community health initiatives, or if you want to feature a personal story, pictures or other opportunities, please fill out this [survey](#). We would love to feature it in the next newsletter.

COP26 Reflections



COP26: Key Outcomes and the Path Forward for Rural Communities

“The future of health must be built on health systems that are resilient to the impacts of epidemics, pandemics and other emergencies, but also to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events and the increasing burden of various diseases related to air pollution and our warming planet” - Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization

In the past 6 months, British Columbia has experienced a heat dome, wildfires, and most recently an atmospheric river that brought widespread flooding and landslides. These environmental changes have caused a loss of life, catastrophic destruction, mass community evacuations, and severe economic repercussions. In 2020, severe weather events cost Canadian insurance companies an estimated \$2.4 billion. The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) recognized the importance of building resilience to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events and disruption to agricultural systems.

Against the backdrop of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment report outlining the current trajectory of the world to likely hit the 1.5°C mark by the early 2030s, the COP26 decision-makers set out to pledge more substantial collaborative efforts. Several notable outcomes from COP26 are as follows:

1. Maintain the goal of limiting global temperature increase to 1.5°C
 - a. Call for countries to revisit and strengthen their 2030 targets by the end of 2022 in alignment with the Paris Agreement global temperature goals

- b. Consider actions to reduce emissions through curbing coal use and transitioning out of fossil fuels
- 2. Climate finance
 - a. Developed countries failed to meet the 2009 goal of mobilizing \$100 billion to support climate efforts for developing countries by 2020 – but they are still on the hook; progress must be reported
 - b. Doubling funding for adaptation by 2025, an increase amounting to \$40 billion
 - c. Compensation for loss and damage due to climate change
- 3. Emissions reporting and transparency
 - a. Reduced timeline and standardization of emissions reporting to make it easier to make sense of the data
- 4. Carbon trading
 - a. Ability to buy carbon credits from countries that have cut down more than their share of pollutants in order to support countries where it is difficult and expensive to cut greenhouse emissions
- 5. COP26 Health Program
 - a. 50 countries have signed on to build climate-resilient health systems and increase the voices of health professionals and advocates

So, what do these newly refined international pledges mean for rural communities? Nearly half the global population (3.2 billion) live in rural regions and are indirectly or directly financially dependent on agriculture. Rural adaptability to climate change will be essential to ensuring global food systems remain intact and productive. Rural communities require support to mitigate the effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and ecosystem disruptions that reduce earnings or increase conflict over natural resources.

In addition to the pressing resource constraints, the increased pressure on rural physicians and health care professionals to deliver adequate and timely care to patients will not only be affected by active climate disasters but also by the changing nature of climate-related medical conditions. Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths annually from malnutrition, malaria, heat stress, and diarrhea. The areas most affected will be those with already weak health systems, including many rural areas.

So, what can be done? Further research into building resilient health systems with greater capacity to absorb climate shocks, community-led engagement in establishing and strengthening systems of adaptation based on local needs, and leadership buy-in to implement green innovation are all important

components. COP26 represented an opportunity for our world leaders to come to a common consensus on our mutual path forward – rarely in history has there been a pressing issue that requires such a coordinated effort to curtail. In the wake of the summit, many are left waiting for clearer direction and more stringent action, with the voices of youth and women noticeably absent from many of the negotiation tables. As with all past climate decision-making, only time will tell if the headway made at COP26 will be adequate. With so much on the line, it's more important than ever that we get this right.

You can read more of this COP26 commentary [here](#).

Research Recruitment Opportunities

Mental Health, Climate Change Events and COVID-19 Invitation to Participate in Research

Dr. Nelly Oelke and her team are investigating the effects of wildfires, floods, smoke, and COVID-19 on people's mental health in rural regions of BC. If you are interested in participating, see more information [here](#).

Dementia Inclusive Choices for Exercise (DICE)

If you live in Northern BC and are interested in participating in research to support dementia-inclusive choices for exercise, see more information [here](#).

Ageing in Place in Rural and Remote Regions (APR3): A multicase study of health care repositioning

Have you accessed the Kamloops, Kelowna, or Salmon Arm Seniors Health and Wellness Centre (SHWC)? Then we invite you to participate in a research study on how well the SHWCs help older adults to age in place (stay in their own homes) in rural and remote communities. See more information [here](#).

Funding Opportunities

Community-University Engagement Support (CUES)

CUES is a competitive funding program that provides successful recipients at eligible community organizations in British Columbia the funds to build partnerships and pursue shared projects with UBC. We support the partners behind collaborative research, teaching and learning projects that benefit

communities across the province.

A total of \$500,000 is available for the 2021 competition, paid directly to community partners. Why fund partners? Community-university partnerships enrich UBC research and education, support the non-profit sector, and help communities thrive. CUES removes financial barriers and prioritizes reciprocal, inclusive engagement so all communities — especially those that have been and continue to be underserved, marginalized, or excluded — can benefit.

Explore stream offers up to \$13,000/project; sustain stream offers \$25,000/project. Check out the [CUES website](#) for more details.

FLEX Project Bursary

The RHSRNbc fund travel bursaries to be awarded to year 1, 2 and 4 FLEX students working on projects involving rural and remote health activities. Year 1, 2, and 4 bursaries are funded up to a maximum of \$500 or \$1000 each. These bursaries are intended to subsidize the costs of travel and accommodation related to your FLEX Project. Funds will be reimbursed after submission of original receipts and final report for RHSRNbc. However, due to the unintended consequences of COVID-19, these bursaries are intended to subsidize the costs associated with working remotely on a rural health project. Please reach out to the Network [research coordinator](#) for application details.

Events



BC Rural Health Research Exchange (BCRHRx)

Researchers, clinicians, and trainees (students) from across BC will present their ongoing and/or completed rural health research in a concise, visually interesting and rapid presentation style (10-minute). Presenters will have up to seven minutes to present their research work, with up to three minutes of

questions/answers from the virtual audience (via the chat box in Zoom). Topics covered will include rural transportation, virtual health, team-based care and cultural safety.

Registration for this free, virtual event is now open for *presenters* [at this link](#) and *participants* [at this link](#).

[BCRHRx](#) will begin at 8:30 a.m. PST and run until approximately 1:00 p.m. (subject to change) on Nov. 23 (**tomorrow!**). Please email [Tracey DeLeeuw](#) with questions about presenting.

Northern BC Research and Quality Conference

The Northern BC Research and Quality Conference is a forum enhanced with resources and skill development workshops to share health and health services research, evaluation, evidence-based practice and quality improvement initiatives in the North. This year's theme is titled Learning from Adversity: Pathways to Success.

Virtual conference held December 7-9, 2021. Click [here](#) for more information.

UBC Climate Change Research Symposium

While UBC is a recognized leader in climate change research, there is limited connectivity between the clusters of relevant research activity across the many faculties on our campuses. This symposium, which featured panel discussions and keynote speakers, will help make those connections and enhance the potential of UBC researchers to impact climate change through research and innovation.

The symposium was held on October 13 and 14, 2021. You can now find the recordings online of those speakers who have granted permission for their presentations to be disseminated. You can find the recordings organized by day and session here: [Day 1](#) and [Day 2](#)

Online Resources

RCCbc Real-Time Virtual Support Toolkit for Healthcare Providers

This toolkit is designed for physicians, nurses, and nurse practitioners in rural, remote, and First Nations communities to access different real-time virtual support pathways and collaboratively deliver care with partnered physicians.

Locums for Rural BC

Locums for Rural BC administers the Rural GP Locum Program, Rural GP Locum Program, and the Rural Specialist Locum Program. Check their website for more information and current locum openings.

Preventing COVID-19 Infection in the Workplace

This course is offered by UBC.

BC AHSN: COVID-19 Research Inventory

BC AHSN offers a repository of COVID-19 related research undertaken in BC.

Free Mental Health Support for BC residents

UBCO collaborates with BCPA and province to offer psychological first-aid service

Recent Publications

RHSRNbc Publication, Chapter 4: [Healthy Rural Communities Responding to Climate Change and Ecosystem Disruption](#)

[Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine July-September 2021](#)

[IPCC Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis](#)

['The word that comes to mind is polymath': medical students' perceptions of rural postgraduate careers.](#)

[The impact of interpersonal relationships on rural doctors' clinical courage](#)

[CBC: In taking action on climate, this Arctic community wants to be a beacon to the world](#)

[CBC Opinion: When it comes to climate change, the heavy hand of colonizers is as important as our carbon footprint](#)

Volunteer Opportunities

REACH BC

REACH BC connects volunteers like you with health researchers across British Columbia.

COVID-19 volunteering opportunities in Canada

Resource connects Canadian students, academics, and technical staff and trainees from relevant programs to volunteer opportunities to address the impacts of COVID-19 across Canada.

Volunteer BC COVID-10 Resource Page

List of resources on how to safely volunteer in BC during the time of COVID-19.

Volunteer Canada

Includes a list of volunteer opportunities during COVID-19 and how to stay safe and volunteer.

List of Volunteer Centres in BC

List of organizations in BC that provide volunteer programs and citizen engagement opportunities.

Volunteer Postings

Current volunteer openings in BC.

Employment Opportunities

UNBC Health Research Institute Research Associate

Systems IT Coordinator



Twitter



Website

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