



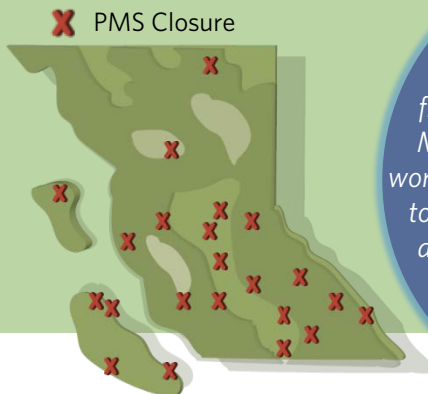
BUILDING BLOCKS TO SUSTAINABLE RURAL MATERNITY CARE

The North Island Project

Attrition of Primary Maternity Services (PMS)

In BC alone, close to 25 rural maternity services have closed since 2000, and many more are in a sustainability-threatening crisis. This is reflected in other rural jurisdictions across Canada and Internationally.

- The loss of local services and related need for women and families to travel has resulted in poorer maternal-newborn health outcomes.
- There are social challenges related to leaving the community including dissociation from family ties and larger community social supports.
- There is a policy gap between rural maternity service need and system interventions to support sustainable services.



"We stayed in a hotel. It was, well I didn't really like it. It was far away from home. And, I just felt lonely. My husband was at work, he was working up at [location]. He didn't get to meet our daughter until she was about a week old, when he finally was done his job, because they wouldn't allow him to leave."
-North Island Mom

The North Island Case

Need for Sustainable Care

In the last five years, over 93% of mothers in North Island left their community to deliver their babies.

What We Did

We worked collaboratively with communities on the North Island to ensure local voices were represented.

What We Learned

Birthing moms suggested the following reasons for leaving the community to give birth:

- low confidence in local maternity care;
- a desire for midwifery care;
- being considered high risk; and
- lack of awareness that they can give birth in the North Island.



Actioning Local Care

We worked with local care providers to determine the system supports they need to provide sustainable local care. They include:



Timely & Reliable Patient Transport -

Understanding challenges faced by moms, care providers and key stakeholders in order to improve the reliability of emergency transport.



Inter-Professional Care Teams -

In our feasibility analysis, we pictured midwives practicing alongside Physicians and Nurse Practitioners in the community.



Increased Provider Competence & Confidence -

We heard from nursing staff in challenges that they face. We are working to provide education opportunities to improve care providers' confidence.



Expanded Inclusion Criteria for Low-risk deliveries -

We reviewed existing policies and guidelines used by other rural communities and met with local care providers to create appropriate risk criteria at a local level.



Linkages to Referral Centre -

We are using tablet technology to link care providers in the North Island with specialists in Campbell River.

