

# RURAL HEALTH MATTERS

BRITISH COLUMBIA

RURAL HEALTH

NETWORK

SEPTEMBER 1, 2019 Newsletter



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**Our Purpose:**  
*To promote and support a health services system that improves and sustains the health and well-being of residents of rural communities across British Columbia.*

## Your Board of Directors:

**Colin Moss:** New Denver  
**Connie Kaweesi:** Fort St John  
**Ed Staples:** (President) Princeton  
**Elaine Storey:** (Secretary) Fraser Lake  
**James Leslie:** Hornby & Denman Islands  
**Johanna Trimble:** Roberts Creek  
**Jude Kornelsen:** Centre for Rural Health Research UBC  
**Pam Beech:** (Vice President) Sicamous  
**Pegasis McGauley:** Nelson  
**Stuart Johnston:** Rural Coordination Centre of BC  
**Sue McCrae:** (Treasurer) Blind Bay  
ADMINISTRATOR - Curt Firestone  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT - Nienke Klaver

## Letter from the President

### President's Letter

September 1, 2019

The beginning of September has very special significance for me. As a retired teacher, this time of year brings back memories of planning and preparing for the coming year. For teachers and students it's a time filled with excitement and change.

And so it is with the BCRHN as we look forward to our first Board of Directors retreat on September 13th, 14th, and 15th in Sicamous. Vice President Pam Beech and Curt Firestone, our intrepid administrator, have been hard at work this summer planning for this important event. This will be the time when the Board will set the goals and develop a strategic plan to serve our organization for the years to come. It will also be a time to get to know each other better as we determine who is best suited to take on the various roles and responsibilities.

This past month BCRHN members received a survey from our administrator asking why they joined the Network and what they would identify as the most important healthcare concerns and challenges in their community. Thank you to everyone who responded. The information we received will be invaluable for the work we'll be doing at the retreat.

This is an exciting time for change. And change always brings with it a certain amount of apprehension. It's my belief that to be an effective agent of change, we will need to manage it appropriately by identifying our common concerns and coming up with achievable solutions.

And now, as they say in my neck of the woods, "Let's get 'er done!"

All the Best, Ed Staples

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Elaine Storey

In younger populations, typical greetings start with a polite query "Hi, how are you?" The hasty response is "Good" and if you are lucky and remain healthy "Good" will carry you right through until your retirement and beyond.

In our centre where older adults frequent, many folks are well known to one another, and when someone has been away a few days or a few weeks, their absence may be linked to a recent illness or surgery. Oftentimes the "How are you's" are punctuated with stories about the latest cancer/knee/hip/eye and of late—stents and pacemakers.

There is a comradery in knowing someone at your community table is a 'knee' or 'both hips' or after several rounds of chemo, has joined a walking group and is once again feeling strong and healthy.

Sharing details of your illness and your recovery is not for everyone, but for those who speak openly about their experience, the retelling has benefits for both the person listening in and the person doing the telling. Empowerment comes from experiences either gained or shared.

The focus of our work here at the BC Rural Health Network is to take those health conversations from our community tables and share them around the province in such a way that our rural health services go from "I don't want to talk about it" to it's "Good."



**website:** [www.bcrhn.ca](http://www.bcrhn.ca)

**facebook:** [www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/bcruralhealthnetwork)

[bcruralhealthnetwork](http://www.facebook.com/bcruralhealthnetwork)

**twitter:** [twitter.com/bcrhnetwork](https://twitter.com/bcrhnetwork)

## On this page:

- ◇ Membership Committee Report - by Colin Moss
- ◇ BCRHN Membership list - compiled and kept by Nienke Klaver

## Membership Committee report

At our last Village of New Denver Council meeting we passed the motion that the Village of New Denver Health Select Committee join the BCRHN.

The Membership Committee is currently working on a prospective member presentation package. The idea being that membership committee members or any BCRHN member seeking to attract new members be provided with a basic package that they can then personalize to meet their individual or local needs.

The package will consist of a generic Word file for the verbal portion of a presentation which will be accompanied by a PowerPoint file for the visual portion of the package.

Hopefully the membership committee will be able to show our progress to date at the upcoming retreat in Sicamous.

Colin Moss  
BCRHN Membership Committee Chair

## BC Rural Health Network 2019 Membership List of Organizations/Individuals

Ashcroft - Wellness and Health Action Coalition (WHAC)

Castlegar - Castlegar & District Hospital Foundation  
Castlegar - Castlegar City Council

East Shore Kootenay Lake - Community Health Society

Fort Nelson - Northern Rockies Seniors Society  
Fort St. John - Save Our Northern Seniors  
Fraser Lake - Autumn Services Society

Hornby Denman Community Healthcare Society

Jane Osborne (Individual member) - BC Community Response Networks  
Johanna Trimble (Individual member) - Roberts Creek/Sunshine Coast

Kaslo and Area D - Health Care Select Committee

Nelson - Age Friendly Community Initiative, Advisory Committee  
Nelson Area Society for Health (NASH) Connected Communities  
Nelson - Community First Health and Education Centre  
Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council Nursing Services

Powell River Voices  
Princeton – Support Our Health Care Society (SOHC)

Rural Coordination Centre of BC

Salt Spring Island - Community Health Society (SSCHS)  
Sicamous District Eagle Valley Community Support Society  
Slocan District Chamber of Commerce - Health Committee (New Denver)  
Sorrento and Area Community Health Centre Society  
South Shuswap Health Services Society

Trail - Society for Protection and Care of Seniors (SPCS)

UBC - Centre for Rural Health Research/Rural Evidence Review

Village of Slocan

# Member of the Month

## SONS – A Brief History

*Contributed by Connie Kaweesi*

<http://saveournorthernseniors.ca/>

SONS is a group of dedicated people wanting to make a difference in our community of Fort St John.

During the 1990's we had local Health Councils that gave us an opportunity to provide local input and to provide the Council with an awareness of the needs in the health community. SONS President Jean Leahy was on the first Peace Liard Community Health Council which pushed hard for the creation of long-term beds, leading to the construction of Heritage Manor I and Heritage Manor II retirement housing in Fort St. John.

It was a painful time for a number of our families as there was a shortage of long-term beds in the North Peace and many loved ones had to be placed in Dawson Creek or Pouce Coupe. It tore couples apart causing a lot of grief. If the spouse left at home could not drive, it made the 50 mile drive seem like 500.

The drive for more beds picked up steam. A plan was put together for the North Peace Care Project. More beds were to be built and additions were to be made to the North Peace Care Facility.

Nothing happened. There was no money for facilities. Statistics proved that we would continue needing more beds in our area, and so the fight began.

The group of concerned citizens that would eventually become SONS applied for Society status and held information sessions. It made the community sit up and take notice.



*Jean Leahy (above) sadly passed away at the end of August. Jean leaves a huge void in the community where she was a tireless advocate for health issues.*

SONS members attended every meeting and public event that they could to spread the word-Trade Fairs, Select Standing Committees, Peace River Regional District among others.

SONS advocate for infrastructure to help seniors living in Northern BC to age-in-place.

### SONS Purpose

The purposes of Save Our Northern Seniors Society are:

- To build a facility which will ensure the safety, respect and dignity of our seniors;
- To provide current and reliable information for the number of facilities and beds available in our area;
- To pursue all avenues of support for our community – rural and urban – such as Supportive Living, Assisted Living, Intermediate Care, Extended Care, Special Unit, Psycho-Geriatric Care, Adult Daycare, Home Care, and Emergency Care.

### SONS Goals

SONS is well known for advocating on behalf of Seniors.

Our goals are:

- *To pursue all avenues of health support for our community no matter what the ages;*
- *To have Seniors live in their community with support to keep them safe, independent, healthy, and happy;*
- *To have a third house at Peace Villa which would accommodate a minimum of 60 residents including a Daycare to support recruitment and retention of NH Employees.*