

# NEWS RELEASE

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Provincial Health Services Authority  
BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre  
Ministry of Health/Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

## **New program assists pregnant women and new mothers using substances in BC**

VANCOUVER – Pregnant women and new mothers who use substances can now benefit from added support at 10 hospitals across B.C. through a new provincial pilot program.

The Healthy Care Pregnancy Program (HCPP) pairs a registered social worker or nurse with a pregnant woman or new mother to help them navigate through primary care, community care, and acute hospital settings while accessing treatment and recovery services. The program is crucial for women experiencing complex medical, health, and social risks as it connects them with housing services, child welfare, and family services.

“Pregnancy and motherhood already come with a tremendous set of challenges. And when you add substance use and a toxic drug supply on our streets it has never been more important to have supports in place, especially for new mothers and their babies,” says Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. “This program ensures that when pregnant women and new moms need help the services are there to support them and provide the opportunity for them to thrive at this crucial time in their lives.”

“Pregnant women and new mothers at risk can have someone to lean on during a very special, yet challenging time,” says Susan Wannamaker, Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) Executive Vice President, Clinical Service Delivery. “The 10 health-care workers in the Healthy Care Pregnancy Program have already begun connecting women with the care and services they need to help improve their lives as well as their communities.”

The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions provided \$990,000 to fund the Healthy Care Pregnancy Program, which is a partnership between the BC Association of Pregnancy Outreach Programs and the Provincial Perinatal Substance Use Project at BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre. Ten Healthy Care Pregnancy Program workers have now been hired (one for each hospital site). The first health-care worker was hired in February and recruitment for the last site was just completed in early September.

“The Healthy Care Pregnancy Program is providing the opportunity for health-care workers, like me, to make healthy, positive connections with high-risk pregnant women and new mothers across the province,” says Gaudenza Ramunno, a Healthy Care Pregnancy Program employee. “By doing this, we are strengthening partnerships between acute care facilities and community agencies, resulting in better services, solutions and care experiences.”

### **Healthy Care Pregnancy Program hospitals and local outreach programs**

- Royal Inland Hospital, Kamloops – The Family Tree Family Centre
- Mills Memorial Hospital, Terrace – Terrace Child Development Centre

- Powell River General Hospital – LIFT Community Services
- University Hospital of Northern British Columbia, Prince George – Elizabeth Fry Society
- West Coast General Hospital, Port Alberni – Port Alberni Early Years Centre
- Cowichan District Hospital, Duncan – Hiiye'yu Lelum (House of Friendship) Society
- Cariboo Memorial Hospital & Health Centre, Williams Lake – Cariboo Friendship Centre
- Surrey Memorial Hospital – Options Community Services
- Richmond Hospital – Atira Women's Resource Society
- Royal Columbian Hospital, New Westminster – Burnaby Family Life

**Additional Quotes:**

**Program Participant, Williams Lake** (*This program participant will not be conducting media interviews, but her quote can be used.*)

“I know people always feel like encouraging words fall on deaf ears, but honestly, they mean so much when you’re in a low place, like I have been. They really do help to pull you out of a bad headspace. The help and support is invaluable right now.”

**Denise Bradshaw, Director of Provincial Health Initiatives at BC Women’s Hospital**

“Pregnant women and new mothers who use substances experience significant stigma, blame and judgment. Empowering them by having a health-care worker walk shoulder-to-shoulder with them and support them in transitions through their recovery journey is important to ensure better outcomes for the women, their babies and our communities.”

**Heather Cameron, Executive Director, BC Association of Pregnancy Outreach Programs**

“The Healthy Care Pregnancy Program, while in its infancy, has proven that the impact of a dedicated health care worker and interprofessional team can be profound. Pregnant and newly parenting women who use substances have immense resilience and potential that comes to life in a supportive and trusting environment. Health-care workers with the HCPP provide an invaluable opportunity for participants and their loved ones: they get a second chance at life.”

**Quick Facts:**

- The \$990,000 in funding from the provincial government covers employee remuneration, administration, infrastructure and supplies.
- In the first quarter of 2020 (April 1-June 30), at least 28 women have been receiving assistance through the Health Care Pregnancy Program.
- The BC Association of Pregnancy Outreach Programs is a registered charity that includes over 80 different programs in communities across the province.

**Learn More:** <https://www.bcapop.ca/Pilot-Project>

*The **Provincial Perinatal Substance Use Project** is a three-year project (2019-2021) funded by the Ministry of Health & Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, and led by BC Women’s Hospital + Health Centre. It aims to develop a blueprint for a provincial perinatal substance use*

continuum of care. The Healthy Care Pregnancy Program has been funded as part of this provincial project.

**BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre**, a program of the Provincial Health Services Authority, is the province's only facility dedicated to the health of women, newborns and families. For more information, visit [www.bcwomens.ca](http://www.bcwomens.ca) or follow us on Twitter [@BCWomensHosp](https://twitter.com/BCWomensHosp)

**The Provincial Health Services Authority** plans, manages and evaluates selected specialty health care services across B.C., working with the five regional health authorities, First Nations Health Authority and Ministry of Health to deliver province-wide solutions that improve the health of British Columbians. For more information, visit [www.phsa.ca](http://www.phsa.ca) or follow us @PHSAofBC

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