

Putting Patients First **2026**



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

March 3, 2026
Vancouver Marriott Pinnacle Hotel
& online

About the conference

Putting Patients First (PPF) is hosted by the BC SUPPORT Unit, part of Michael Smith Health Research BC.

Together, we explore how bringing diverse groups of people together to solve a shared health problem — including people with lived and living experience — can improve health and health research ecosystems.

As the eighth and final conference, PPF 2026 will continue the conversation on learning communities in BC.

Highlights

KEYNOTE

Dr. Antoine Boivin

Reconnecting our ecologies of well-being with people and communities

KEYNOTE

Sarah Greene

Connection, collaboration, and collective vision:
Achieving a patients-first learning health system

650⁺
registrants

signed up
in-person
and online

32
projects

presented by teams that were
funded and supported
by the BC SUPPORT Unit



This event was organized and co-developed with patients following Patients Included™ principles.

Conference objectives

Show how the **Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR) has made a real difference** in BC's health and health research ecosystems.

Highlight the **power of connection** across BC's health and research communities in driving solutions.

Celebrate the **conference's legacy as a vital gathering place** that brings people together across the province.

About the BC SUPPORT Unit

The BC SUPPORT Unit, part of Health Research BC, empowers research and care teams to collaborate with a patient-oriented research approach. We move this evidence, developed with patients and communities, into practice.

By bringing together researchers, patients, policy makers, clinicians, health system leaders, and Indigenous communities and partners, we catalyze solutions to real health system challenges.

Our expert services, data access, training, and implementation support ensures research evidence improves care and informs health policy.

We're founded under Canada's Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research, a national initiative led by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. We're funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of BC.

About Michael Smith Health Research BC

Funded by the provincial government, we support a health research system that drives better health and a stronger economy.

We fund people and research, and we partner on shared opportunities. Our programs build research careers, our investments advance priority research, and our expertise accelerates the use of research evidence.

This event was made possible in part by funding from:





Opening session		
7:30-8:30	Registration and breakfast	Ballroom
8:30-8:45	Opening prayer ▶ Dr. Elder Roberta Price	Ballroom / Hybrid
8:45-9:00	Welcome and opening remarks ▶ Monica Mamut, Unit Director, BC SUPPORT Unit ▶ Sherri Mytopher, Patient Partner	Ballroom / Hybrid
9:00-9:30	Opening keynote: Reconnecting our ecologies of well-being with people and communities ▶ Dr. Antoine Boivin, primary care physician and co-director, Canada Research Chair in Partnership with Patients and Communities ▶ Moderator: Monica Mamut, Unit Director, BC SUPPORT Unit	Ballroom / Hybrid
9:30-10:00	Break ☕	
10:00-11:00 Impact of SPOR in British Columbia (Part I) These concurrent sessions will showcase 32 projects and programs that were funded or supported by the BC SUPPORT Unit. They demonstrate how rigorous research, strengthened by lived experience, can inform practice and policy		

IN-PERSON SESSIONS				
	In-person: Breakout session #1 Dundarave	In-person: Breakout session #2 Ambleside II	In-person: Breakout session #3 Point Grey	In-person: Breakout session #4 Ambleside I
10:00-10:30	Partnership by design: Building the community partner committee in airways health research ▶ Dr. Phalgun Joshi, Director of Operations, Legacy for Airway Health, Vancouver Coastal Health ▶ Tony Lanier, Patient Partner	The Library of Lived Experience: A virtual space integrating lived experience narratives with research and clinical knowledge of neurodevelopmental conditions ▶ Dr. Dan Goldowitz, Professor Emeritus, Senior Scientist, Department of Medical Genetics, UBC, BC Children's Hospital Research Institute ▶ Andrew Wilk, Project Coordinator ▶ Symbia Barnaby, Patient Partner	Preparing patient partners for successful and meaningful engagement in scientific research ▶ Jocelyn Jones, Can-SOLVE CKD team ▶ Melanie Talson, Can-SOLVE CKD team	When research became a shared adventure ▶ Dr. Julia Schmidt, Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Therapy, UBC ▶ Danny Wong, Patient Partner
10:30-11:00	Patient-oriented research in reproductive population health: Evaluating the impact of BC's universal contraception coverage policy ▶ Dr. Laura Schummers, Assistant Professor, Collaboration for Outcomes Research and Evaluation, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, UBC ▶ Victoria Greene, Patient Partner	Equitable people-centred health measurement ▶ Dr. Rick Sawatzky, Professor, School of Nursing, Trinity Western University ▶ Desmond Williams, Co-Director of the PEPR Partnership, Member of Pain Canada's National Advisory Committee	What Indigenous-led systems change teaches us about putting communities first ▶ Dr. Sana Shahram, Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia Okanagan ▶ Dr. Christopher Horsethief, Research Consultant, Ktunaxa Nation Council	Indigenizing health research ethics in British Columbia: Co-create wise practices and distinctions-based ethical protocols in Indigenous health research ▶ Dr. Krista Stelkia, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Co-director for the Centre for Collaborative Action on Indigenous Health Governance ▶ Liz Hunter, Program Manager, BC NEIHR

VIRTUAL SESSIONS

	Virtual: Breakout session #1 Online	Virtual: Breakout session #2 Online	Virtual: Breakout session #3 Online	Virtual: Breakout session #4 Online
10:00-10:30	<p>Learning Together: Co-developing meaningful partnerships and networks for spinal cord injury research with Indigenous peoples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Davina Banner, Interim Associate Vice-President, Research Operations, University of Northern British Columbia ▶ Richard Peter, Indigenous People's Liaison, PRAXIS ▶ Emily Giroux, Researcher, Applied Behaviour Change Lab, UBC 	<p>Building the physical activity alliance of northern British Columbia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Chelsea Pelletier, Associate Professor, University of Northern British Columbia ▶ Gloria Fox, Regional Physical Activity Lead, Northern Health 	<p>Towards the establishment of a patient-centred research planning committee to inform research priority setting within Fraser Health's Mental Health and Substance Use Services Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Adeleke Fowokan, Leader for Clinical Research, Mental Health and Substance Use program, Fraser Health Authority ▶ Shirley Paulsen Wilson, Person With Lived and Living Experience (PWLLE) Advisor, Fraser Health Authority 	<p>From research as patient to patient as researcher: Decolonizing health research with multiple sclerosis stories from Lheidli T'enneh Territory in Prince George, BC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Rheanna Robinson, Associate Professor, Faculty of Indigenous Studies, Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Northern British Columbia
10:30-11:00	<p>EDI in Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Erin Michalak, Professor, UBC Department of Psychiatry ▶ Sahil Kanani, Project Manager, Tapestry Tool 	<p>Imagine change: Inspiring changes in young adult cancer care through immersive performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Cheryl Heykoop, Associate Professor and Lead, Anew Research Collaborative, Royal Roads University ▶ Kat Dornian, Researcher, Anew Research Collaborative 	<p>Knowledge transcreation: Sharing findings of the Rahi research program with the Panjabi community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Jasleen Badesha, Rahi research team, UBC ▶ Pendr Singh Khalsa, Rahi research team, UBC ▶ Dr. Nitasha Puri, Rahi research team, UBC 	<p>Cultivating connection: Mobilizing knowledge and building relationships to transform early childhood development in northern BC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Caroline Sanders, Professor, School of Nursing, University of Northern British Columbia ▶ Dr. Erica Koopmans, Child Health BC Regional Coordinator, Northern Health ▶ Lisa Provencher, Manager of Surveys, Research and Knowledge Exchange, First Nations Health Authority ▶ Lance Potskin, Field Supervisor, Research & Knowledge Exchange, First Nations Health Authority

11:00-11:30

Networking break





11:30-12:30 Impact of SPOR in British Columbia (Part II)

IN-PERSON SESSIONS

	In-person: Breakout session #5 Dundarave	In-person: Breakout session #6 Ambleside II	In-person: Breakout session #7 Point Grey	In-person: Breakout session #8 Ambleside I
11:30-12:00	<p>Engaging the researchers in the community – not the other way around</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Bruce Wallace, Scientist & Professor, Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, UVIC School of Social Work ▶ Katy Booth, Research Assistant & Project Coordinator, Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, Substance Drug Checking UVIC 	<p>Building community resilience through youth-led learning systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Sana Shahram, Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia Okanagan ▶ Logan Burd, PhD Student, University of British Columbia Okanagan 	<p>Building a patient-oriented practice-based research learning community in BC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Kimberly Miller, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Therapy, University of British Columbia ▶ Miranda Amundsen, Nurse Clinician Scientist, BC Children's Hospital & Health Centre, and CIHR Postdoctoral Fellow ▶ Kristi Coldwell, Senior Advisor, Organ Donation and Transplant Research Foundation of BC 	<p>Health Data Research Network Canada</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Kim McGrail, Health Data Research Network (HDRN) Canada ▶ Claire Bertran, Health Data Research Network (HDRN) Canada
12:00-12:30	<p>"TEC4Home": Digital health to optimize patient convalescence at home post hospitalization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Kendall Ho, Emergency Medical Specialist, Vancouver Coastal Health 	<p>Foundry's approach to learning health system for integrated youth services in BC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Clayton Hamilton, Knowledge Exchange and Mobilization Lead, Foundry Central Office, Providence Health Care 	<p>Embedded research program for operations research at Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) – challenges and opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Krisztina Vasarhelyi, Clinical Researcher, Department of Family and Community Practice, Vancouver Coastal Health ▶ Dr. Saad Ahmed, Medical Director, Homelessness, Supported Housing and Complex Care, Vancouver Coastal Health ▶ Jessica Stockdale, Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematics, SFU 	<p>Better for everyone: Why EDI makes better AI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Lovedeep Gondara, Head of AI Research and Development, Vanguard

VIRTUAL SESSIONS

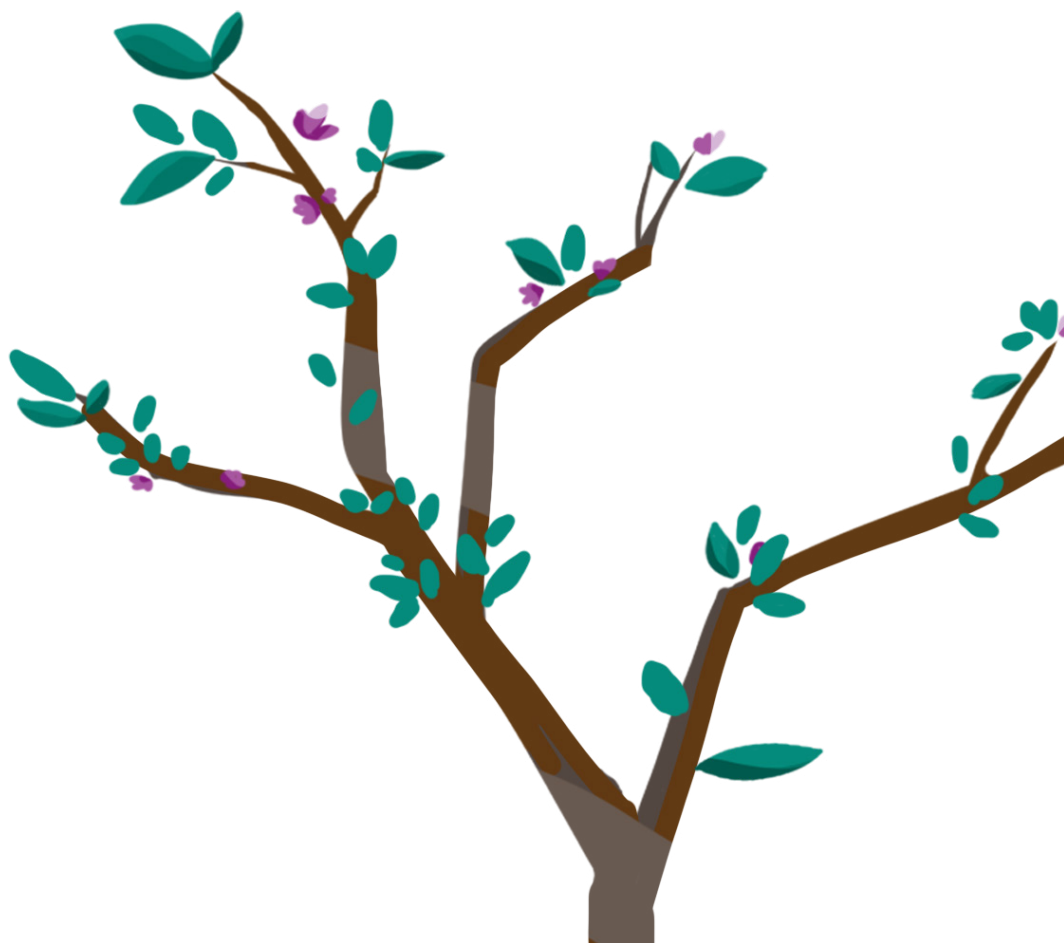
	Virtual: Breakout session #5 Online	Virtual: Breakout session #6 Online	Virtual: Breakout session #7 Online	Virtual: Breakout session #8 Online
11:30-12:00	<p>Emergency data ActionADE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Corinne Hohl, Emergency Physician, Vancouver Coastal Health 	<p>A community-engaged exploration into opportunities to prepare long-term care for growing number of HIV+ residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Valorie Crooks, Professor & Associate Vice-President, Research, Simon Fraser University 	<p>Research as repair: Patient-oriented research through a trauma-informed lens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Colette Smart, Research Scholar-in-Residence for Mental Health & Substance Use, Island Health 	<p>Research participation through a rural lens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Jude Kornelsen, Associate Professor, Department of Family Practice, UBC ▶ Dr. Julia Bickford, Executive Director, Research Innovation and Evaluation, Northern Health
12:00-12:30	<p>Catalyzing learning health systems at the Comox Valley Hospital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Sharon Karsten, Michael Smith Health Research BC Scholar, Vancouver Island University ▶ Christopher Hauschildt, Peer Researcher, Operations Coordinator & MA Student, Global Leadership, Walk With Me, Royal Roads University 	<p>Engaging with rural communities in northern BC for hybrid care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Nelly Oelke, Associate Professor, School of Nursing / Scientific Director, UBC Okanagan / Rural Coordination Centre of BC ▶ Dr. Anurag Singh, Assistant Professor, Division of Nephrology, Faculty of Medicine – Northern Medical Program, University of British Columbia and University Hospital of Northern BC, Northern Health ▶ Linda Helm, Community Member, Tumbler Ridge 	<p>Community-based, patient-oriented approaches to care for persons eligible for Medical Assistance in Dying and their families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Caroline Variath, Health Professional-Investigator, Michael Smith Health Research BC, Vancouver Island University 	<p>Embedding community voices into an equity-oriented model of cancer care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Emily Lonsdale, Project Manager, Nursing and Allied Health Research & Knowledge Translation, BC Cancer

12:30-1:30

Lunch and networking activity

Afternoon sessions

1:30-1:45	Instructions and introduction: Roundtable dialogue	<i>In-person in Ballroom or online</i>
1:45-3:00	<p>Roundtable dialogue</p> <p><i>At the time of registration, participants were asked: "In your experience, what is the biggest problem facing our healthcare system in BC?"</i></p> <p><i>In this session, participants will brainstorm with fellow attendees on how learning communities can tackle some of the priorities that have been identified.</i></p>	<i>Ballroom / Hybrid</i>
3:00-3:30	<p>Closing keynote: Connection, collaboration, and collective vision: Achieving a patients-first learning health system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sarah Greene, Cancer research advocate & person with lived experience Senior Advisor, Research Advocate, and Consultant ▶ Moderator: Dr. Ellie Griffith, Vice President, Research & Innovation Health Research BC 	<i>Ballroom / Hybrid</i>
3:30-3:45	<p>Closing remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Stirling Bryan, Interim Executive Director, VCHRI, Associate Dean, Research, UBC Faculty of Medicine ▶ Sunny Loo, Patient Partner and Health Research BC Board Member ▶ Dr. Danielle Lavalley, Chief Scientific Officer & Senior Vice President, Research & Innovation, Health Research BC 	<i>Ballroom / Hybrid</i>
3:45-4:00	<p>Closing prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Elder Roberta Price 	<i>Ballroom / Hybrid</i>



Special thanks

Putting Patients First Planning Committee

Emily Green, BC SUPPORT Unit
John Ward, BC SUPPORT Unit
Kristine Ho, BC SUPPORT Unit
Larry Mróz, BC SUPPORT Unit
Michelle Duffy, BC SUPPORT Unit
Sara Lima Branco, BC SUPPORT Unit
Sarah Mullins, BC SUPPORT Unit
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Sherri Mytopher, Patient Partner

Putting Patients First Advisory Committee

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Kim Egger, Patient Partner
Sherri Mytopher, Patient Partner
Catriona Hippman, UBC, SFU, BC Children's and Women's
Heather McCain, Live Educate Transform Society
Jocelyn Jones, Can-SOLVE CKD
Jude Kornelsen, UBC
Rivka Landberg, Health Research BC

Learning Health System Planning Group

Lin Chen, Patient Partner
Chantelle Recsky, UBC
Curt Smecher, Doctors of BC
Lawrence Yang, Doctors of BC
Lee Ann Martin, Doctors of BC
Michelle Smith, Interior Health
Teo Quay, UBC Health

Speakers and special guests

All presenters and speakers
Sunny Loo, Patient Partner and Health Research BC board
Antoine Boivin, Keynote
Danielle Lavallee, Health Research BC
Dr. Elder Roberta Price, Elder
Ellie Griffith, Health Research BC
Gillian Corless, Health Research BC
Sarah Greene, Keynote
Sherri Mytopher, Patient Partner
Stirling Bryan, UBC, VCHRI

BC SUPPORT Unit team

Alexandra Korall, Fraser Centre
Allen Alvarez, Provincial Coordinating Centre
Denise Quesnel, Fraser Centre
Heather Strosher, Island Centre
Isabel (Annie) Moore, Island Centre
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Leana Garraway, Northern Centre
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Facilitators and volunteers

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Hiro Ito, Consultant
Jessica Chu, Clinical Trials British Columbia
Jennifer Budiarto, Health Research BC
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Mukesh Maguluri, Health Research BC
Muneerah Kassam, Health Research BC
Rishi Sahni, Clinical Trials British Columbia
Terri Fleming, Health Research BC
Valerie To, Health Research BC

Photography and event support

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Face2Face Events Team