

New Health and Wellness Service Established for Gabriola Island

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) recently established a new Gabriola Island Community Health and Wellbeing Service on Gabriola Island. The purpose of the service is to coordinate and advocate for health and wellbeing services on Gabriola Island for its residents. The Gabriola non-profit organization People for a Healthy Community has been awarded the contract to provide this new service and will hire and oversee a Health and Wellbeing Coordinator who will implement this new service.

The service was identified as a need for Gabriola Island through research and public consultation. Residents of Gabriola Island are more likely to experience poverty and ill health compared to residents of Nanaimo or B.C. There is a complicated layering of service delivery on Gabriola Island by multiple agencies without formal coordination between organizations, making it challenging for organizations to collaborate and ensure that residents' needs are met.

"The Regional District of Nanaimo is pleased to support this new service for Gabriola Island. We heard from many organizations on Gabriola that work to provide health and wellbeing services, many of which rely on volunteer boards or extensive volunteer participation, that they would like assistance in organizing and coordinating programs to benefit the community," said Vanessa Craig, Board Chair and Electoral Area B Director. "I look forward to the development and impact of this new service in our community."

People for a Healthy Community and the Health and Wellbeing Coordinator will work closely with the Gabriola Island Health and Wellbeing Collaborative, a collective formed from representatives of organizations that support the health and wellbeing of Gabriola residents. They will also coordinate across other organizations and networks in the region to provide these health and wellbeing services.

People for a Health Community, in collaboration with the Gabriola Island Health and Wellbeing Collaborative, will create a work plan for the coordinator and develop and implement a strategic plan. The coordinator will also provide administrative and coordination services between organizations, support funding applications to support health and wellbeing services on Gabriola Island and communicate with various service providers, working groups, external partners and residents.

By starting with a part-time position, the community will be able to measure the impact of the service over time and expand it to full-time if there is the need and support to do so. The service and position will be reviewed after the first year is complete.

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