

JOINT MEMO



To: *Vancouver Coastal Health Authority employees; BC Nurses' Union members*

From: *Strategic Nurse Staffing Committee (SNSC)*

Date: *October 16, 2025*

Subject: *Strategic Nurse Staffing Committee update*

The Strategic Nurse Staffing Committee (SNSC) for Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) met in May and June 2025, and discussed the following key priorities:

Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs)

Recent survey data supports that IENs generally have a positive experience working at VCH. However, support may be inconsistent between departments. Some nurses have reported feeling unwelcome and may benefit from additional onboarding. Available supports were outlined, including a Regional Education IEN program, workshops, as well as additional optional programs. The BC Nurses' Union (BCNU) planned to meet with IENs in July to gather insights on how to better support these new entrants.

Data Review

People Analytics reviewed data for Sechelt Hospital Inpatient Psychiatry, Lionsgate Hospital (LGH) Emergency Psychiatric Assessment and Treatment, and LGH Inpatient Psychiatry, as well as LGH 2E, LGH 4E, LGH 5E, and LGH Discharge Lounge. There was discussion about whether information from exit interviews would help with understanding the metrics. The SNSC discussed difficult-to-fill vacancies and the use of agency nurses, including identifying vacancies and length of time to fill these.

Clinical Mentor Working Group

The Clinical Mentor Working Group (CMWG) has been working on the final orientation guide for IENs. The guide is intended to help ensure safety in the clinical mentoring processes. Key elements discussed in the guide include background history, the current state of clinical mentorship, core principles, and core education. The recommendations outlined in the guide emphasize the importance of continued professional growth, evaluation processes, a provincial survey, and a commitment to ongoing improvement.

Clinical Mentor

The SNSC discussed a temporary reassignment of a clinical mentor resource in the Coastal Community of Care (CoC) to support a surgical department that has a number of new entrants and new grads. Specifically, the SNSC approved a 0.5 FTE from Pemberton Health Care Centre to Paul Myers Tower 5 (surgery).

Retention Strategies

The SNSC discussed its approach for retention in areas where turnover and vacancy rates are high. This will be added to the agendas as a topic for upcoming meetings.

Agency Nurses

VCH shared the departments with the highest use of agency nurses, highlighting areas in the Coastal CoC.

Vacation Planning Process

BCNU discussed the vacation planning process and the importance of communicating with nurses early given the process will occur earlier than usual this year only. VCH has determined that annual vacation planning must occur using the current system in advance of the anticipated launch of a new electronic time capture system.

May and June 2025 SNSC meeting attendees included guest speakers.

Vancouver Coastal Health members:

- Allison Ho-Rewcastle, Director, Labour Relations, People Operations (co-chair)
- Wayne Balshin, Vice President, People
- Lorraine Blackburn, Vice President, Professional Practice, Chief Nursing and Allied Health Officer, Chief Clinical Information Officer
- Tracy Taulu, Regional Director, Trauma; Operations Director and Site Lead, UBC Hospital

BC Nurses' Union members:

- Anastasia Brown, Coordinator, Labour Relations (co-chair)
- Gina Ramsay, Professional Practice Officer
- Chris Rutherford, Coordinator, Labour Relations
- Rotating Regional Council Member

The next SNSC meeting is to be scheduled and an update to members will follow.

If you have any questions, please contact people@vch.ca or your BCNU steward.

About SNSC

The purpose of the SNSC is to consult on nurse workforce planning including trends, activities and initiatives. You can expect regular updates from the SNSC as we work together to best support VCH nurses, with a focus on recruitment and retention strategies, regularization of casual nursing hours, nurse education and training, and health service delivery initiatives.