Island Community Clinic Society

# Strategic Plan

## 2026 – 2028

Building Sustainable Primary Healthcare
for Salt Spring Island

July, 2026

# Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that we live and work within the ancestral and unceded traditional territory of the Hul'qumi'num and SENĆOŦEN speaking peoples. We are committed to doing the personal and organizational work towards reconciliation with local Indigenous communities by acknowledging the truths of place-based colonial history.

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# INTRODUCTION

**Like many jurisdictions across Canada, British Columbia continues to face significant health-care challenges.**[1] Population growth, an aging population, increasingly complex health needs and health-care workforce pressures have placed considerable strain on British Columbia's health-care system.[2] Although the Province has made progress, including connecting more than 600,000 people with a family physician or nurse practitioner since 2023 and increasing the proportion of British Columbians attached to a primary care provider to approximately 77%, many residents remain unattached, while challenges obtaining timely primary care persist.[3]

*Strengthening Primary Care in BC* emphasizes that improving primary care requires more than attaching patients to a family physician or nurse practitioner. It also requires integrated, community-based services; coordinated and comprehensive care; interdisciplinary teams; timely access; and culturally safe models responsive to the needs of the people and communities being served.[4]

### Why This Matters

As healthcare needs become more complex, evolving primary care is no longer only about ensuring people have a regular primary care provider, it is about ensuring people receive timely, coordinated, and comprehensive care from the most appropriate member of an integrated primary healthcare team.

Salt Spring Island, home to approximately 12,000 residents, faces many of the same primary-care challenges experienced across British Columbia, compounded by its island geography, limited availability of some local services, and growing and aging population.[5] In 2025, approximately 3,460 Salt Spring Island residents were estimated to be without a family physician or nurse practitioner. Residents also have limited access to non-emergency primary care outside regular clinic hours, and access to some health-care services requires off-island travel.[6]

### Salt Spring Island Primary Care Context

- **An older population with distinct health-care needs:** Approximately 34.8% of Salt Spring Island residents are aged 65 or older, compared with approximately 19% nationally. Residents of the Southern Gulf Islands have a life expectancy at birth of 83.6 years, compared with 82.0 years across British Columbia.[5]
- **A substantial unattached population:** Approximately 3,460 Salt Spring Island residents—close to 30% of the island's population—were estimated to be without a family physician or nurse practitioner in 2025.[6]
- **Geographic and service-access barriers:** Some health-care services require residents to travel off-island. Although Lady Minto Hospital operates a 24/7 emergency department, access to non-emergency primary care outside regular clinic hours is limited.[7]
- **Health-care workforce pressures:** Like many rural and island communities, Salt Spring faces challenges recruiting and retaining sufficient primary-care providers to meet community needs.[6]

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# THE EVOLUTION OF PRIMARY CARE

**Primary care is the foundation of a healthy community.** It is where people build ongoing relationships with the health-care professionals who support them throughout their lives and is often their first point of contact with the health-care system. Primary care helps people stay healthy, prevent and manage illness, navigate complex health needs, and access additional services when required. While primary care is often understood as simply having a family physician or nurse practitioner, effective primary care is much broader. It encompasses prevention and wellness, chronic disease management, mental health support, health promotion, care coordination, and access to interdisciplinary teams working together to meet the diverse needs of communities, individuals and families. Evidence consistently demonstrates that strong primary care improves health outcomes, promotes health equity, reduces avoidable hospital and emergency department use, and enables people to receive care closer to home.[10]

### Key Insight

Attachment alone is an insufficient measure of successful Primary Care delivery. Meaningful primary care requires timely access, continuity, and coordinated care.

Across British Columbia, primary-care policy has placed considerable emphasis on ensuring that every resident who wants a regular family physician or nurse practitioner, becomes “attached” to one as quickly as possible.  Attachment remains an essential priority, reflecting persistent health-care workforce pressures, growing demand for services, and constrained capacity across the health-care system.[11]

However, attachment alone does not ensure timely access to the full range of health services people need. Effective primary care also requires comprehensive, coordinated and culturally safe services delivered through interdisciplinary teams. Evidence indicates that well-designed team-based models can expand access, improve continuity and coordination, and contribute to better patient experiences and health outcomes.[12]

### The Shift in Primary Care

From individual provider attachment toward integrated, team-based models that deliver comprehensive, coordinated care: improving access for patients and the Salt Spring Island community.

While many successful team-based models have been developed in larger urban communities, Salt Spring Island requires an approach that reflects the unique characteristics of a rural island community, our geography, healthcare workforce, existing partnerships, and community priorities.

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# ABOUT THE ISLAND COMMUNITY CLINIC SOCIETY

**Recognizing the need for a new approach to primary care, local physicians and community members established the Island Community Clinic Society (ICCS) in 2024.** What began as a primarily physician-led initiative has evolved into a community-governed organization dedicated to planning and implementing a sustainable model of team-based primary care for Salt Spring Island.

Today, ICCS is leading the development of expanded Primary Care on Salt Spring Island by creating a community-governed, team-based primary care organization designed to improve access to comprehensive, coordinated, and culturally safe healthcare for all residents of Salt Spring Island. ICCS will bring together healthcare providers, First Nations, patients, community organizations, governments, funders, and health system partners to collaboratively plan, develop, implement, and continuously improve primary care services that reflect the evolving needs of the community.

This Strategic Plan outlines the goals, objectives, and strategic priorities that will guide ICCS over the next three years as it works collaboratively with its partners and the community to bring this vision to life.

## Our Purpose

Our purpose is simple but vital: to create and support a community health centre that delivers patient-centred, accessible, evidence-informed and culturally safe care. By working collaboratively with health professionals, community partners, and residents, we aim to build a strong and connected network of healthcare on Salt Spring.

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## Our Vision

Salt Spring Island will be a healthy community where people can easily access a strong, connected network of primary healthcare providers who collaborate to treat and prevent illness and promote wellbeing.

## Our Mission

To develop and operate a community health centre[1] to provide patient-centered, accessible, evidence-informed care, responsive to community needs. We provide collaborative community-focused leadership to support the health of Salt Spring Island residents.

## Our Values

**Caring For All**
Equitable, Accessible, and Inclusive

**Collaborative**
Partnering with the Community and Health Authority

**Comprehensive Care**
Patient-Centered and Team-Based

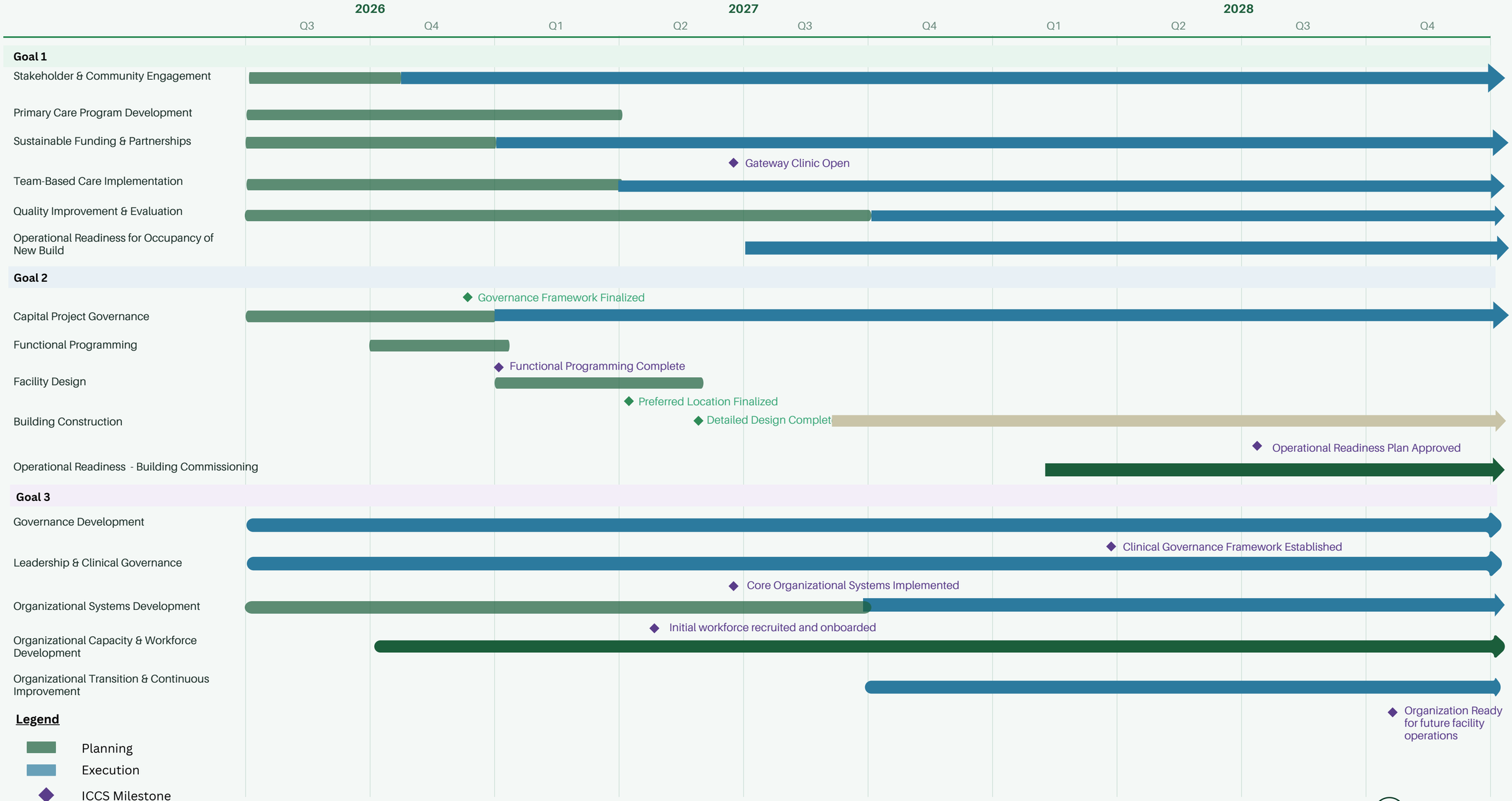
**Community Focused**
Fostering trust and building sustainable relationships

**Creativity**
Dynamic, Flexible & Responsible

**Scientific Excellence**
Rigorous inquiry, critical thinking and ethical practice

[1] For the purposes of this Strategic Plan, the term Community Health Centre refers to a community-governed, team-based primary care organization designed to meet the evolving needs of the Salt Spring Island community. ICCS recognizes that the term is defined and implemented differently across jurisdictions and that the ICCS model will continue to evolve through community engagement, evidence-informed planning, and ongoing refinement of the ICCS Model of Care.

# Strategic Implementation Timeline



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STRATEGIC GOAL 1

# Develop a Sustainable Team-Based Primary Care Program

Achieving a stronger primary care system for Salt Spring Islanders requires thoughtful planning, meaningful community engagement, strong partnerships, and a shared commitment to improving health care for current and future generations.

Over the next three years, ICCS will work collaboratively with healthcare providers, First Nations, partner organizations, governments, funders, patients, and the broader community to develop and begin implementing a phased approach to a sustainable team-based primary care program that reflects the unique needs of Salt Spring Island.

Together, this work will help ensure that primary care services and a future purpose-built health facility are shaped by community priorities, supported by strong partnerships, and built on a sustainable foundation.

1.1

### Develop the Community-Informed ICCS Primary Care Program

*Desired Outcome*: A community-informed primary care program and future health facility that reflect the unique needs, priorities, and values of the Salt Spring Island community.

1.2

### Establish a Sustainable Operating Model

*Desired Outcome*: An operating model supported by appropriate planning and long-term funding strategies that supports the successful delivery and growth of the ICCS primary care program.

1.3

### Strengthen Local and Health System Partnerships and Integration

*Desired Outcome*: Effective, collaborative partnerships with both local and health system organizations that support coordinated, sustainable team-based primary care delivery.

1.4

### Engage Patients, Providers and the Community

*Desired Outcome*: Patients, providers, community members, First Nations, and key stakeholders are actively engaged in the ongoing development, implementation, and refinement of the ICCS program and future facility.

1.5

### Plan for and Implement a Team-Based Care Program

*Desired Outcome*: Team-based primary care services are introduced through a phased approach that reflects community needs, organizational capacity, available funding, workforce availability, and clinical space.

1.6

### Establish Quality, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Systems

*Desired Outcome*: Quality, safety, evaluation, and performance measurement systems support continuous learning, accountability, evidence-informed decision-making, and ongoing improvement.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

# Work with Partners to Develop a Primary Care Health Facility that Serves as a Lasting Community Asset

A modern health facility is an exciting investment in the future health and well-being of the Salt Spring Island community, creating space and infrastructure needed to expand primary care services, strengthen collaboration among healthcare providers, and respond to the evolving needs of a changing population.

The future facility will support the delivery of team-based patient-centered primary care by providing flexible, welcoming, and functional spaces that can accommodate a broader range of healthcare professionals, expanded clinical programs, culturally safe care, community-based services, and future growth.

ICCS will work collaboratively with the Lady Minto Hospital Foundation, healthcare providers, First Nations, Island Health, community organizations, patients, and residents to ensure the facility reflects community priorities and provides an accessible, adaptable, and valued community asset for generations to come.

The future health facility is not simply a building, it is the infrastructure that will enable ICCS' primary care program to grow and evolve, ensuring that future generations of Salt Spring Islanders will continue to have access to high-quality primary care close to home.

2.1

### Strengthen Capital Project Partnership and Governance

*Desired Outcome:* Strong partnerships, governance, and communication structures support collaborative planning, effective decision-making, risk management, and accountability throughout the planning, design, and development of the future health facility.

2.2

### Define the Facility Requirements that Support ICCS' Primary Care Program

*Desired Outcome:* Facility requirements are clearly defined to ensure the future health facility provides the space, flexibility, and infrastructure needed to support the ICCS Model of Care, future service growth, culturally safe care, and the evolving healthcare needs of the Salt Spring Island community.

2.3

### Prepare for a Successful Transition to the New Facility

*Desired Outcome:* The organization, workforce, healthcare providers, partners, patients, and operational systems are prepared for a coordinated and successful transition (and ultimately operation) into the future health facility. Operational, financial, workforce, technology, and organizational readiness support the safe, effective, and sustainable delivery of services from the new facility.

*Note: The future health facility is a collaborative initiative involving multiple organizations and partners. The strategic objectives outlined for Goal #2 reflect ICCS's role in supporting the planning, clinical design, operational readiness, and successful long term operations of the facility. Activities related to overall capital project management and construction are led by the appropriate project partners and are outside the scope of this Strategic Plan.*



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STRATEGIC GOAL 3

# Cultivate a Healthy, Vibrant, Community-Governed Organization

Achieving ICCS's vision will require more than strong programs and modern facilities. It will require a healthy, trusted, and well-governed organization capable of leading change over the long term.

Over the next three years, ICCS will continue to strengthen its governance, leadership, organizational systems, and clinical partnerships to support the sustainable delivery of high-quality, team-based primary care.

By investing in people, effective governance, and organizational excellence, ICCS will build the capacity needed to serve the community today while adapting to future opportunities and challenges.

3.1

## Develop Board Governance Capacity

*Desired Outcomes:* A high-performing Board with the skills, diversity, experience, and governance maturity needed to provide strategic leadership and oversight for a growing, community-governed organization.

A culture of ethical governance, accountability, transparency, continuous learning, and stewardship that inspires confidence among partners, funders, and the community.

Effective Board recruitment, succession, orientation, and renewal processes that support long-term organizational sustainability and governance excellence.

3.2

## Develop Leadership and Management Capacity

*Desired Outcomes:* Leadership and management capacity that supports excellent service delivery, organizational growth, service expansion, and increasing operational complexity.

A healthy, collaborative, and accountable organizational culture that supports staff, providers, volunteers, and leaders to contribute effectively to the organization's mission.

Clinical leadership and organizational governance operate collaboratively, ensuring organizational decisions are informed by clinical expertise while respecting professional accountability and clinical autonomy.

3.3

## Build Organizational Systems and Infrastructure

*Desired Outcomes:* Sustainable administrative, financial, information, technology, quality, and operational systems support effective governance, informed decision-making, accountability, service delivery, and the continued growth of the organization.

Organizational systems are scalable and capable of supporting the continued growth and evolution of a team-based primary care organization.

Organizational systems support a healthy, safe, effective, and sustainable work environment for staff, healthcare providers, volunteers, and patients.

# PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This Strategic Plan has been developed within a dynamic and evolving healthcare, economic and political environment. As community needs, healthcare priorities, partnerships, and funding opportunities continue to evolve, ICCS will remain responsive and adapt its implementation priorities while maintaining its long-term strategic direction. The following contextual points were considered when developing the plan:

1. The need for accessible, high-quality primary care on Salt Spring Island will continue to evolve, and implementation of the ICCS Model of Care is intended to improve access while strengthening the quality, coordination, and sustainability of care available to the community.
2. ICCS will continue to collaborate with healthcare providers, First Nations, patients, Island Health, the South Island Division of Family Practice, the Lady Minto Hospital Foundation, community organizations, funders, governments, and other partners.
3. ICCS Program Implementation will be guided by ongoing engagement with community members, patients, healthcare providers, First Nations, and partners to ensure services continue to reflect community needs and priorities.
4. ICCS will implement its Strategic Plan through a phased approach that aligns organizational growth with available operational and capital resources.
5. Implementation will be informed by healthcare workforce availability and opportunities to recruit, retain, and support healthcare professionals.
6. ICCS will continue to strengthen its governance, leadership, organizational systems, and partnerships as the organization grows and evolves.
7. Planning for the future health facility including the location of the future site will continue in collaboration with the Lady Minto Hospital Foundation and other partners.
8. Implementation priorities will continue to evolve as planning and development of the future health facility progresses.
9. Provincial healthcare priorities are expected to continue supporting the development of interdisciplinary, team-based primary care and integrated community-based health services.

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# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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| **Access** | The ability to obtain timely, appropriate, and coordinated primary care services when they are needed. Access includes more than having a regular primary care provider—it also means receiving the right care from the right healthcare professional at the right time through an integrated system of care. |
| **Attachment** | Having an ongoing relationship with a family physician or nurse practitioner who provides and coordinates a patient's primary care over time. Attachment is the foundation of longitudinal primary care and supports the delivery of coordinated, team-based care. |
| **Clinical Governance** | The systems, processes, and leadership that support the delivery of safe, high-quality, evidence-informed healthcare. Clinical governance ensures that clinical decisions are informed by appropriate clinical expertise while working alongside organizational governance to support accountability, quality improvement, patient safety, and continuous learning. |
| **Community Health Centre** | The BC Ministry of Health uses Community Health Centre to describe a community-governed, not-for-profit or co-operative model that provides interdisciplinary, team-based primary care and may integrate health and social services.[13] For the purposes of this Strategic Plan, the term Community Health Centre refers to a community-governed, team-based primary care organization designed to meet the evolving needs of the Salt Spring Island community. ICCS recognizes that the term is defined and implemented differently across jurisdictions and that the ICCS model will continue to evolve through community engagement, evidence-informed planning, and ongoing refinement of the ICCS Model of Care. |
| **Culturally Safe Care** | An outcome of respectful engagement that recognizes and seeks to address power imbalances within the health-care system. Culturally safe care is free from racism and discrimination and enables people receiving care to feel safe, voice their perspectives, ask questions, participate in decisions, and have their beliefs, values and experiences respected.[14] |
| **Health Equity** | A state in which everyone can attain their full potential for health and well-being. Achieving health equity requires eliminating unfair, avoidable or remediable differences in health, access to care and the conditions that affect health among different population groups.[15] |
| **Integrated Care** | An approach to healthcare in which healthcare providers, organizations, and community partners work together to coordinate services and ensure patients receive seamless, connected, and person-centred care. |

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# GLOSSARY OF TERMS (CONTINUED)

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| **Longitudinal Care** | Healthcare provided over time through ongoing relationships between patients and their primary care providers and healthcare team. Longitudinal care promotes continuity, coordination, prevention, and better health outcomes. |
| **Model of Care** | A Model of Care describes how healthcare services are organized, delivered, and coordinated to meet the needs of a community, patients and familites. It outlines the types of services that will be provided, who will provide them, how healthcare professionals work together, and how patients access and experience care. It provides the framework that guides the planning and delivery of care. |
| **Patient Medical Home** | A model of family practice in which patients have an ongoing relationship with a personal family physician [nurse practitioner] who serves as the most responsible provider for their medical care. The family physician works within a connected interdisciplinary team to provide accessible, comprehensive and continuous care, coordinate services, and connect patients with other health and social supports.[16] |
| **Primary Care** | The initial healthcare services people access for most of their everyday health needs focused on promoting health, preventing illness, diagnosing and treating common health conditions, managing chronic diseases, and coordinating care over time. Primary care may be provided by a family physician, nurse practitioner, or an interdisciplinary healthcare team working together to meet a patient's needs. |
| **Primary Care Provider** | A healthcare professional who provides primary care services within their legislated scope of practice. Primary care providers work independently and collaboratively with other healthcare professionals to promote health, prevent illness, diagnose and treat common health conditions, manage chronic disease, and coordinate care to meet the needs of patients and communities. |
| **Team-Based Care** | An approach to healthcare in which healthcare providers from different professional backgrounds work together with patients, families, caregivers, and communities to deliver coordinated, comprehensive, and person-centred care. Team-based care supports a patient's ongoing relationship with their primary care provider while enabling each member of the healthcare team to contribute according to their knowledge, skills, and scope of practice. |

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# Island Community Clinic Society

Strengthening Primary Care *TOGETHER*

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