

Intersectoral Engagement in Health Emergency Management for Older Adults with Complex Care Needs in the Community: From Research to Practice

Better Health. Best in Health Care.

May 29, 2026

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Why This Matters

- Older adults with complex care needs are disproportionately impacted
- Meeting their needs requires coordinated, intersectoral collaboration
- Promising practices for engagement remain underdeveloped and underexplored



Stock photo, University of California- Bing, 2022

Project Overview

Aim: Identify best practices for intersectoral engagement that enable an integrated approach to emergency management for older adults with complex care needs in the community

Study Design: Case study of Chilliwack and New Westminster

2021 Events: Heat dome, atmospheric river, flooding

Health Sector

- Managers and administrators clinical operations/specialized services/programs
- Front-line care providers, including home health/home support and community nurses
- Others recommended by health sector key informants

Community Sector

- Municipal
 - Emergency management program
 - Fire services
- Community organizations
- Others recommended by community sector key informants

Chilliwack: Relationships Before Crisis

- Older adults identified as priority, through Table
- Foundation of trust from consistent engagement
- Relational leadership
- Momentum from long-standing effort
- Familiarity through monthly meeting
- Collaborated beyond emergencies
- Readiness created by regular rhythm
- Informal familiarity enabled learning and adaptation
- Mutual understanding instead of formalized agreements



Photo: AGCanada, Reuters/Jennifer Gauthier, 2021



New Westminster: Crisis As Catalyst

- Community organizations identified hidden populations
- Trust forged in heat of crisis
- Champions for change
- Leveraged crisis to create change
- Reactive meetings evolved
- Trauma = shared 'never again' motivation
- Shift to broader co-ownership
- System silos spurred co-design innovation
- MOUs for formalization
- Collaboration for innovation



Photo: Facebook, Century House Association New Westminster, 2022



Promising Practices

Initiating	Continuing	Sustaining
Identify your population and who supports them	Create consistent, inclusive convening spaces / culture	Support ongoing learning across perspectives
Build relationships early before the crisis	Foster a shared purpose across sectors	Formalize agreements to support clarity in crisis
Commit to leadership, not just titles	Establish a culture of readiness, not just response	Innovate across systems and technology barriers
Make the most of post-crisis momentum		



Key Takeaways

- Intersectoral engagement is dynamic and relational
- Practices grounded in real-world experiences
- Adaptable and transferable across contexts and emergencies
- Communities can start where they are, at any point
- Requires intentional initiation, continuation, and sustainment over time

PANEL REFLECTIONS



Shannon Parsons- Clinical Resource Nurse, Regional Home and Community Care, *Fraser Health*



Joel Van Huizen- Health Emergency Management Specialist, Regional Home and Community Care, *Fraser Health and HEM BC Lower Mainland*




Amaan Fazal- Coordinator, Emergency Response and Partnership Development, Community Impact and Investment, *United Way BC*

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AUDIENCE REFLECTIONS

Thank you!

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