

OUR COWICHAN COMMUNITIES HEALTH NETWORK

YEAR END REPORT 2025



TABLE of CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	03
COLLECTIVE IMPACT	04
2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS	05
2025 SMALL GRANTS	13
OUR IMPACT BEYOND DATA	14
CONTRIBUTIONS AND IN-KIND SERVICES	16
2025 FINANCIALS	17
PARTNERSHIPS	18



Connected in health.

Our Cowichan -Facilitating Connections for Good Health Connected in Health

Our Cowichan Communities Health Network is a locally formed group of individuals and organizations representing the diverse peoples of the Cowichan Communities. Network members strive to optimize the health and wellbeing of all citizens in the Cowichan Region by:

- Exploring issues related to health
- Identifying concerns that can either improve or impede achieving optimum health
- Planning actions that enhance our quality of life through education, healthy living, health care and health services delivery
- Ensuring the community's voice is heard on matters related to health and wellness.

We are guided in our work by the World Health Organization's 12 Determinants of Health and research related to the determinants of health within the region.

For good health, people need more than good health care: they need adequate income, employment, education, social connections and healthy places to live. In fact, all 12 Determinants interact and affect health.

By considering the whole picture and working together, all citizens of the Cowichan communities can enjoy improved health.

Our Cowichan Welcomes You.

Contact

Regional Facilitator Cindy Lise
cindylisechn@shaw.ca or call 250-709-5062
www.ourcchn.ca

Co-Chair- Elizabeth Croft

Co-Chair- Jennifer Jones

Co-Chair- Sheila Service

Leadership Team: Anita McLeod, Valerie Nicol, Denise Williams, Nina Knock, Dug Andrusiek

OUR COWICHAN HAS BEEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITY

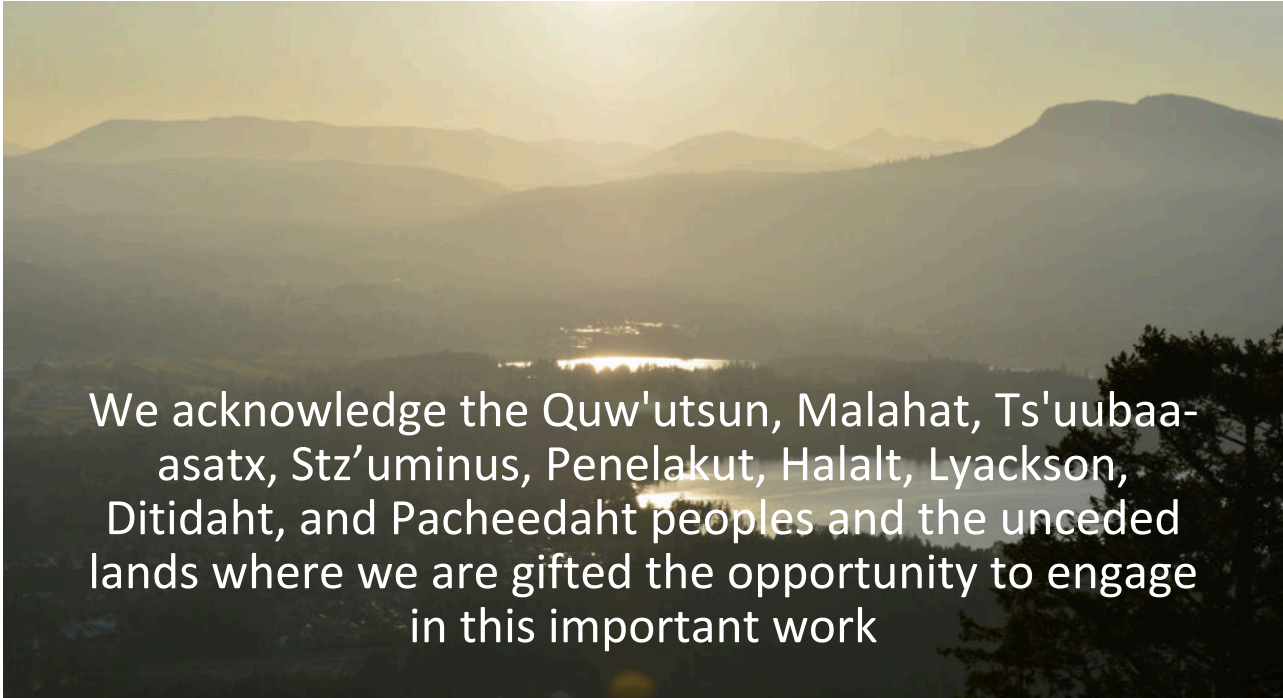
WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER. HERE'S HOW

We are a conduit to Island Health, Local Governments, First Nations and Community. Established in 2010 the network is now integrated throughout the region. The network continues to maintain the good work underway and finding ways to enhance and expand our impact- Relationships are the Key to Collective Impact.

The Power of Networks and Collective Impact

Our Cowichan has proudly includes over 80 active members but have also grown exponentially beyond this table. A network of networks has now interwoven its connections across the region and includes over 400 unique individuals and organizations.

Connections are made through our Community Action Team (CAT), Eldercare Partnership in Cowichan (EPIC), Climate Action Initiative, Cowichan Youth @ Home Team, and others. Throughout 2025 OCCHN provided these members opportunities to come together to share, celebrate successful initiatives, to renew and reinvigorate collective impact and determine how we can continue to create better ways to address complex challenges as a collective. 2025 was also a year where the Cowichan Collaborative Services Committee joined Our Cowichan for 3 shared learning sessions.



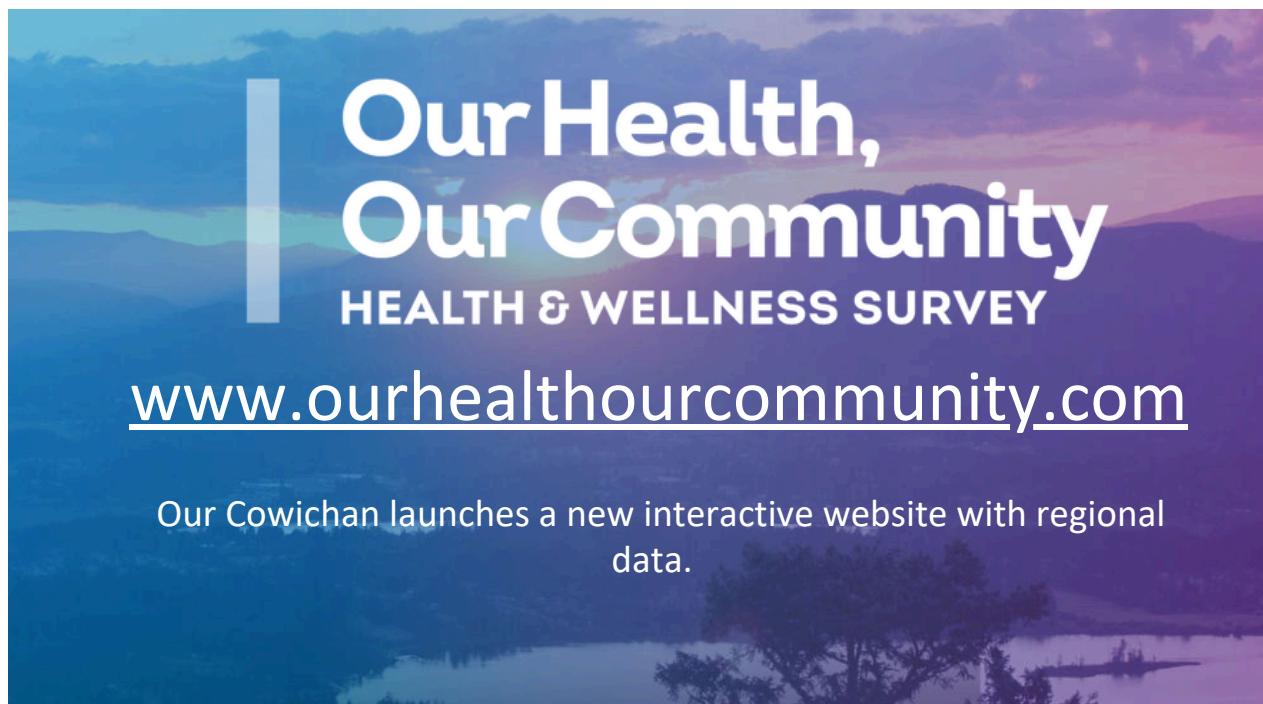
We acknowledge the Quw'utsun, Malahat, Ts'uubaa-
asatx, Stz'uminus, Penelakut, Halalt, Lyackson,
Ditidaht, and Pacheedaht peoples and the unceded
lands where we are gifted the opportunity to engage
in this important work

OUR HEALTH, OUR COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS SURVEY LAUNCHES A NEW WEBSITE

Building on the Cowichan Communities Health Profile, OCCHN has undertaken its largest project to date. In partnership with Island Health, OCCHN piloted the development of the Our Health, Our Communities Regional Health Survey.

Now the data is available to residents across the region, community partners and local governments via the new website.

www.ourhealthourcommunities.com



Members of the planning team:

Vanessa Daether, Cindy Lise
Caitlin Hickman, Angela Reid,
Denise Williams, Jennifer
Jones, Shannon Waters

Missing:

Maritia Gully, Cara McLeod,
Fernanda Guiterrez Matos,
Randahl Kirkendall



EPIC -ELDERCARE PARTNERSHIP IN COWICHAN

The Community Stream of EPIC continues to thrive work together to find ways to enhance the lives of seniors.

The collective Falls Prevention Strategy implemented in November of 2024 demonstrated great success with a 13% in hospital days that resulted from falls within a year. The efforts were recognized by the BC Quality Council with an award for leadership in co-designing health with public and community.

The EPIC team continues to work together on collective strategies with a revised framework under development.

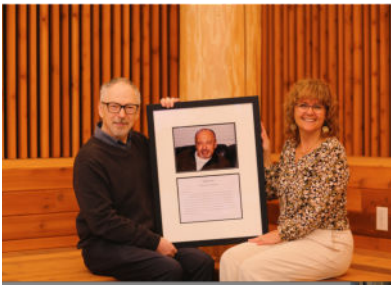


Members of EPIC at annual Collective Impact Day

COWICHAN YOUTH @ HOME

2025 was a significant year in our region for many reasons. Under the facilitation and leadership of Our Cowichan, a dedicated team of community partners have been coming together to address the dire situation relating to youth who are unhoused, vulnerable and on the streets. This team has been advocating for a safe space for youth and our dreams were made a reality with the announcement that up to four million dollars would be coming to our region to pilot a Youth Emergency Shelter, (YES), funded by the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

A generous donation by the Mischa Weisz Foundation in the amount of \$450,000.00 combined with Coldest Night of the Year donations allowed the host agency Canadian Mental Health Association Cowichan Valley Branch to purchase a home and buy a van. The shelter opened its doors in the late spring of 2025. In Mischa's honour the house has been named Mischa Lelum, (Mischa's Home). The Mischa Weisz Foundation has also provided funding for a meal program for at risk vulnerable youth via local outreach teams. This program allowed critical connections to support staff while the development of the shelter was in progress. Our Community partner Cowichan Green Community lead the way, making meals until the shelter opened.



Guido Weisz and the
naming of Mischa
Lelum



Ministry announcements of funding and the official opening of the Youth Emergency Shelter with the house now known as Mischa Lelum, (Mischa's Home in Hulqu'iminum)



The dedicated shelter planning team includes: back-Lorena Jenkins Ministry of Children and Family Development, Douglas Hardie Island Health, Marcia Hower Ministry of Children and Family Development, Cindy Lise Our Cowichan, Colleen Davis Island Health, Catharine Berghuis Island Health, Lise Haddock Canadian Mental Health Association Cowichan Valley Branch, Jeff Rowan Cowichan Valley School District, Zoe Lauckner Cowichan Valley Youth Services, Erin Kapela Cowichan Tribes



The Cowichan Youth @ Home Team and Cowichan CAT host Better Together. Keynote Christine Barelli and FNHA Presenter Edward Joe share experiences and resources relating to substance use

Cowichan Community Action Team (CAT)

9 years after the poisoned drug crisis was named, it has continued to decimate lives in our region. OCCHN continues to facilitate and support the CAT and CAT Leadership table. The goal of the CAT is to ensure the integrated and collaborative community response and ongoing communication between service providers across the region. This was clearly demonstrated as the efforts of the CAT were critical in saving lives on a dark November night when a massive poisoning event took place with over 80 individuals affected. It is believed that the quick collective response and integrated relationships were paramount in saving lives that night. Our focus for 2025 was to address stigma, misinformation and to have opportunities to learn and share with the broader community including the Better Together Community Forum that focused on youth.

People with lived and living experience guide all aspects of our work and are an integral part of our CAT and Our Cowichan Communities Health Network

Efforts included...

- Better Together Community Dialogue with a focus on young people
- Purple Ribbon Day
- Using Alone Media Campaign





COWICHAN CLIMATE GATHERING 2.0 DECEMBER 2025

Following the 2024 gathering a small planning group was established and now meets monthly throughout the year to explore ways to increase information sharing and engagement in climate initiatives in the region. A Terms of Reference was established. A second annual Cowichan Climate Gathering held in December was an opportunity to celebrate the remarkable climate action work continuing in the Cowichan Region. By hosting a smaller one day gathering, we aimed to strengthen the important relationships that allow us to build a stronger and more aligned collective approach to caring for our environment and increase our resiliency to the changing world. The gathering provided us an opportunity to learn, unite, and build relationships across diverse partners engaged in this important work. Key note speaker from xxx led the participants through dialogue on engaging messaging in difficult times, both large and small conversation sessions were held and display tables, and interactive art project filled the day with many opportunities to share and learn.



The event was grounded in cultural teachings and guided by Elders as a panel of elders shared stories of traditional food gathering.

This event required partners for planning and funding. Pictured here are David Reay, Fernanda Gutierrez Matos ,Katie Mosewich, Cindy Lise, Sandra Thompson and Keith Lawrence. Funding support was provided by CVRD, Our Cowichan, Social Planning Cowichan and Quw'utsun Cultural Connections Society . Missing from the photo- David Slade, Karen Deck, Caitlyn O'Connor, Judy Brayden



OTHER OCCHN ACTIVITIES IN 2025

- OCCHN meets with Seniors Advocate
- OCCHN continues to support and mentor other health network development in Trail, Whistler and Saltspring Island
- OCCHN engages in community of practice with health networks on Vancouver Island
- OCCHN plays leadership role in the Local Immigration Partnership Project
- OCCHN engages in regional recruitment and retention task force
- OCCHN Pilots joint Collaborative Services Committee Initiative that shares learning on mental health, maternal health and primary care where we honoured each primary care clinic in the region with their physicians. A snapshot of photos from these gatherings are below.



OCCHN in Community



Our Cowichan has supported numerous health initiatives in the region and celebrates the ground breaking of the new urgent and primary care centre along with previous Health Minister Adrien Dix, Island Health Leadership, Cowichan Tribes, the Division of Primary Practice and Cowichan Hospital Foundation



Michael Smith
**Health
Research BC**

Our Cowichan works alongside Island Health, Cowichan Tribes and Patient Partners to develop innovative ways to support people living with congestive heart failure.



Our Cowichan participates as a member of the leadership table and representative engaged in the development of a Local Immigration Partnership Plan for the Cowichan Region. This plan will enhance community connectedness, employment and housing opportunities, reduce racism and make our community more welcoming for all.

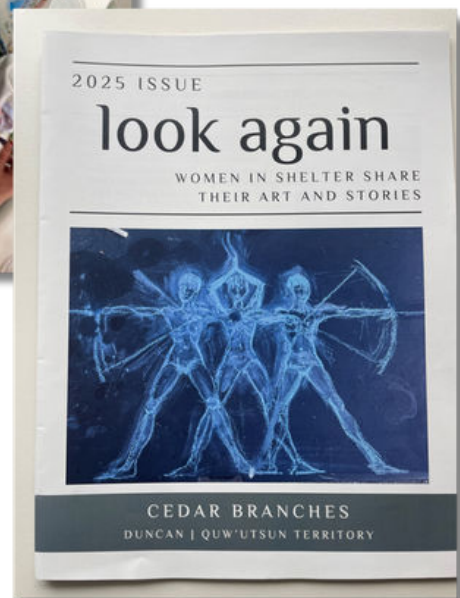
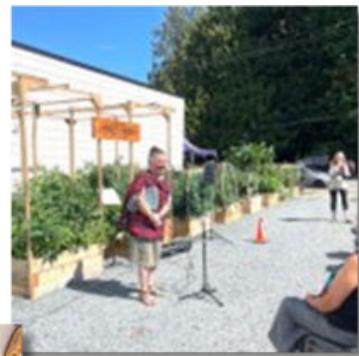


"The Way Out: Cowichan Vision for Wellness" is a proposed three-phase regional approach in the Duncan area aimed at addressing homelessness, addiction, and mental health through supported housing and treatment options. This initiative is part of a broader, collaborative effort involving local governments, the City of Duncan, community agencies, Our Cowichan and Cowichan Tribes to create a safer, more supportive community.

SMALL GRANTS INITIATIVE

This was an exciting year as OCCHN was able to host the small grant initiative. Small grants of up to \$2,000.00 may not seem like a lot but in fact have created some of our most impactful initiatives that have leveraged millions of dollars in community resources. We have now allocated a total of \$216,500.00 in grants over the past 13 years. With a focus on mental health and wellbeing, in 2025 OCCHN contributed \$28,000.00 to local projects that included:

- Whole Being Wellness; Coaching Community Support Workers
- Growing Community-Harvesting Connection
- Mental Health Resources Lending Library
- Canvas of Hope
- Chemainus Community Garden
- Honouring Elders
- A Place to Remember
- Stopping the Violence
- Parent Child Mother Goose
- Peers Lunch Project
- Art and Chill Youth Cafe
- Together in Stride



OUR IMPACT BEYOND DATA

EACH YEAR COMMUNITY PARTNERS REFLECT ON THE IMPACT THAT OCCHN HAS ON THEIR ORGANIZATION OR WORK IN THE COMMUNITY. HERE'S WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY.

Since its inception, Our Cowichan Communities Health Network (OCCHN) has played a critical role in strengthening and aligning supports for children, youth, and families across the Cowichan Valley. Through its continued leadership in chairing the Youth @ Home Team and the Foundry Small Planning Team, Our Cowichan has provided steady backbone support that has enabled partners to move from conversation to coordinated action. The network has also been instrumental in advancing advocacy at the regional government level through the Youth Gap Analysis Project, helping to surface system gaps and elevate the needs of young people in meaningful and tangible ways. In addition, financial support provided to Cowichan Valley Youth Services (CVYS) through the Our Cowichan Small Grants Initiative has directly supported youth to access a wider range of mental health and wellness opportunities, strengthening their ability to feel connected, supported, and to thrive. From our perspective at CVYS, OCCHN consistently builds bridges between service providers, fosters trust and collaboration, and ensures our community remains connected, supported, and united in advancing youth well-being. We are infinitely grateful to do this work alongside OCCHN and the many community partners who make up this impactful network!

Zoe Lauckner Executive Director Cowichan Valley Youth Services.

Overall community wellness truly does take a village, and OCCHN offers that village, convening the people who drive change and providing consistent opportunities to exchange resources, ideas and inspiration. The relationships nurtured through OCCHN reinforce the importance of coordinated, community-rooted leadership. These connections support stronger, regional alignment across initiatives, and genuinely valued collaboration.

Dianne Hinton Coordinator Cowichan Coalition to End Homelessness

Our Impact Beyond Data Continued

As the Cowichan Community Action Team facilitator, Cindy Lise exemplifies true community leadership and community building. She is deeply committed to creating an inclusive space at the Cowichan Community Action Table, ensuring that all voices are heard. Cindy and the Cowichan CAT members understand that when communities face complex social challenges, meaningful and effective responses require broad and diverse perspectives.

The Cowichan CAT has accomplished a lot over the past year. One example of the impactful work was in response to a sharp increase in toxic drug events over a brief period. The Cowichan CAT convened a debriefing, coordinated resources to support community organizations and members, and is actively developing a peer-led community response readiness plan.

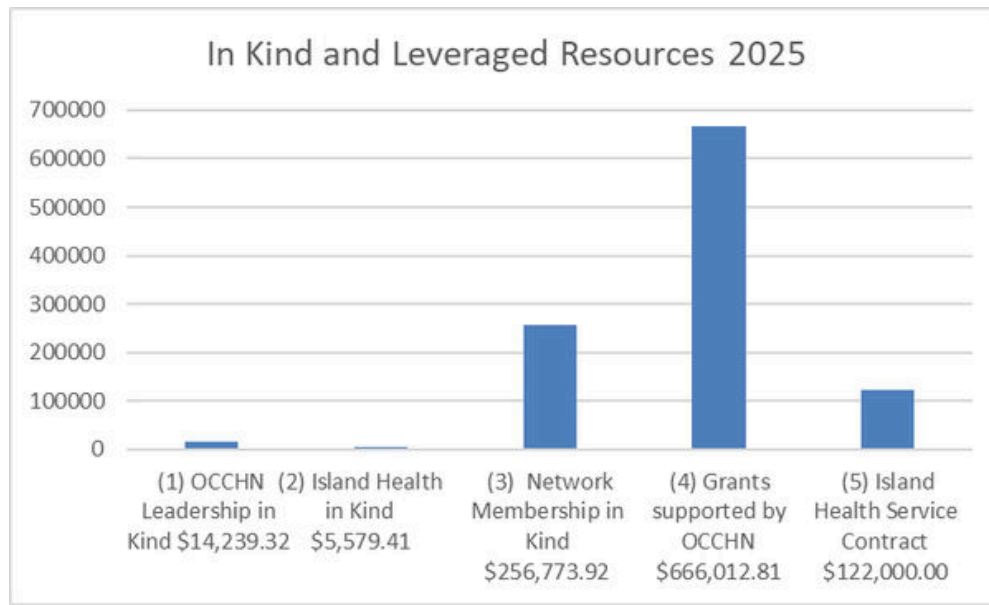
Additionally, members of the Cowichan Community Action Team, in collaboration with Moms Stop the Harm, helped adapt Island Health's Caring Conversations Cards to be used by the general public. By adding new, accessible questions, they helped create a resource that sparks meaningful dialogue and encourages reflection on personal values and beliefs. These cards can be used for community engagement events, such as the annual Purple Ribbon Day organized by the CAT, every August to mark International Overdose Awareness Day.

Tracey Thompson
Island Health
Harm Reduction Coordinator
Addiction Medicine Substance Use



2025 Contributions of volunteers and in kind services have great value for Our Cowichan.
By working together we are more effective.

Collective Impact continues to leverage the resources we are able to bring to our region.



*Rate based on average hourly wage of members-(\$62.69)average calculated
\$25.00 volunteers/peers-\$65.00 Executive Directors- \$55.68 Managers-\$67.79 Health
Directors- \$100.00 Physicians

What Makes Our Network So Effective?

The findings of evaluation of networks on Vancouver Island strongly indicate that the existence of health networks such as Our Cowichan increased community capacity to address social determinants of health in a number of significant ways. Our network has now been in operation for over 14 years and remains an integral backbone that acts as a conduit for learning, data collection and analysis, planning, regional communication, collective impact and networking. There was agreement that the outcomes of many of the initiatives would not have experienced the same level of success without the network functioning as the common sustaining thread. The ability of Our Cowichan to work with community partners for collective planning and grant writing has resulted in resources coming to our region in ways we have not experienced before. Duplication of resources are diminishing and joint initiatives are demonstrating success with organizations aligning efforts and providing resources or sharing the lead.

Our Cowichan Communities Health Network Financials 2025	
Account Description	2025 Expenditures
Surplus Deficit 2024	23,384.00
Provincial Conditional	\$122,000.00
General	\$13,581.81
Community Health Survey	\$26,348.00
Total Grants	\$158,965.81
Contract Services Survey	\$25,153.08
Consultants	\$0
Training And Development	\$0
Contract Services - Lead	\$94,167.89
Contract Services- Support	\$1,800.00
Alloc- General Government	\$2,000.00
Meeting Expenses	\$13,112.82
Office Supplies	\$882.05
Grant In Aid	\$28,800.00
Contingency	\$0
Community Forums	
Refreshments	\$6,445
Communications	
Community Information	\$362
Web Page	\$2,000.00
Total Operating Expenses	\$174,731.60

*remaining funds are carried over to 2026

Partnerships that Make Our Cowichan Possible

Health Networks such as OCCHN build the foundation of a strong community-based approach to challenges we all share. Intersectoral collective action via the Health Network is working and we are busier than ever! We thank Island Health for the funding that allows us to engage in this important effort as well as the Cowichan Valley Regional District for their contribution by providing administration and staff support since 2010. We are also grateful for the opportunity to work with multiple sectors within Island Health from Executive, to Directors to talented employees at all levels. Success does not just happen so we recognize the thousands of hours of volunteer time of Co-Chairs, Leadership Committee Members, Task Force Members, and the numerous committee members that are committed to this work and who are the core drivers of OCCHN.

Operational Funding Provided by Island Health via Service Grant

2025 was the second year of a three year service contract from Island Health providing our region the resources to maintain our momentum, including wages for the facilitator and funds to continue to address the social determinants of health and improve health outcomes. Our contract will take us to March 31, 2027.

2025 was also an exciting year as a partnership was established between the Collaborative Services and Our Cowichan. This partnership brought together the two organizations for three co-facilitated learning opportunities. This also strengthened membership and new relationships. The gatherings focused on:

- Mental Health
- Primary Care
- Maternal Health