



Jason Kur @drjasonkur

Artus Health Centre, Western Canada's largest group of rheumatologists has moved into new world class facilities near Vancouver General Hospital.



Jason Kur @drjasonkur
#ARTUS #Vancouver

Michelle Teo @drmichelleteo

The Kelowna group has been busy not only with patient care but with training medical students, internal medicine and rheumatology residents. Rheumatology nurses continue to be vital to the care of our inflammatory arthritis patients.

Robert Offer

The future looks bright for Fraser South. A recent environmental scan commissioned by TAS pointed out the need to restructure the delivery of arthritis care in BC; Surrey was top of the Missing in Action list. Any solution would be impossible without the critical element, rheumatology manpower, being addressed. As it appears that over the next year we will acquire three more rheumatologists, locating in Surrey, White Rock, and Abbotsford and with two of these speaking Punjabi, even the astrologers will agree that the stars are aligned.



Kim Northcott @drkimnorthcott
#Victoria #WestIsBest

Kim Northcott @drkimnorthcott

There are currently six rheumatologists (five adult, one pediatric) serving the Capital Region of Victoria. With the accumulation of three rheumatologists in Nanaimo, our patient population base north of the central island has been gratefully offset.

Robert Offer

In BC there are large geographic areas void of rheumatology services, hence the importance of the Travelling Consultation Service (TCS), which supports rheumatologists doing outreach several times per year in many remote areas.



Michelle Teo @drmichelleteo
#OkanaganRheums Dr. Godin, Michelle Jung (R5), Dr. Seigel, Dr. McLeod, Dr. Stewart, Dr. Shojania

Jason Kur @drjasonkur

Doctors of BC negotiate a new five-year contract with the Province. Work will begin in 2015 on new specialist initiatives in rheumatology.

Michelle Teo @drmichelleteo

Dr. Jacquie Stewart has started an outreach rheumatology clinic in Princeton. In conjunction with UBC Okanagan, Penticton is about to begin a multidisciplinary research study for the treatment of fibromyalgia. Dr. Anick Godin and Dr. Teo have come back from maternity leave; not sure which is busier, rheumatology clinics or taking care of little ones!

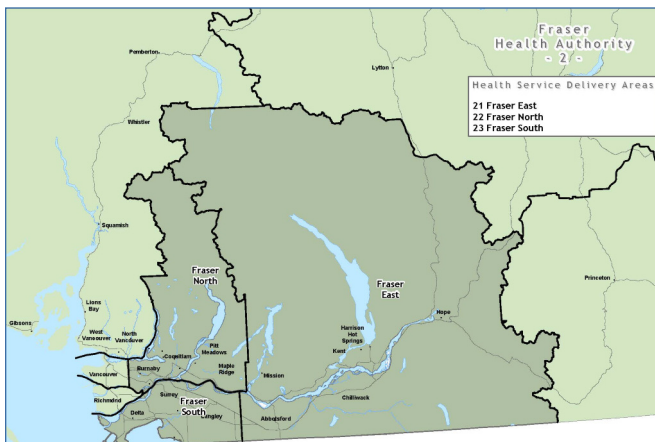
Jason Kur @drjasonkur

The doctors at Artus Health Centre once again organize the well-attended and much appreciated BRIESE conference featuring Dr. Cem Gabay, Dr. Christian Pagnoux, Dr. Rick Adachi, and Dr. Marvin Fritzer.

Rheumatology (Or Lack Of) South of the Fraser River, British Columbia

By Robert Offer, MD, FRCPC, FACR

In BC there are large geographic areas void of rheumatology services, hence the importance of the Travelling Consultation Service (TCS), which supports rheumatologists doing outreach several times per year in many remote areas. However, it may come as a surprise to learn that Surrey, second largest city in BC, had only one rheumatologist, Dr. Alan Yorke, who retired mid-2014, coinciding with my move from Penticton to White Rock-South Surrey. While there are ample rheumatologists practicing north of the Fraser (Burnaby and New Westminster), the only permanent fixtures south of the Fraser were Dr. Yorke and Dr. Martin Kucerak in Abbotsford, who also had a busy internal medicine practice. Although the Mary Pack Arthritis Program opened an Arthritis Centre in Langley years ago, it eventually failed due to the lack of rheumatologists in the area. Patients in the region have been trapped in a void with Fraser Health Authority not funding arthritis services since they are supposedly funded provincially, while the provincial funding flowing through Vancouver Coastal Health into the Mary Pack Arthritis Treatment



The Fraser Health Authority counts 1.6 million people; 472,000 are in Surrey, the fastest growing health region and second-largest city in BC, where 25% of the population speaks Punjabi or Hindi. Nine rheumatologists practice in New Westminster and Burnaby (North Fraser) but only three partial FTEs in South Fraser including Surrey, Langley, White Rock, Abbotsford, Chilliwack, and Hope.

Program has provided only very limited support outside of Vancouver.

A major issue is the reluctance of the majority of patients to cross the Fraser River for rheumatology care. A combination of heavy traffic on limited routes across the river, parking, and other factors cause many patients suffering pain and fatigue to forego care.

As with any large underserved population containing a majority of new Canadians of diverse ethnic backgrounds, there are many alternative health practitioners. Along with many hundreds of pharmacists who have had very limited interaction with rheumatologists, the region has a dire need for education programs. Misinformation has been as much a challenge as the lack of allied health support.

This past summer saw the arrival of Dr. Markus Klaus who has settled in Chilliwack and also practises internal medicine. Dr. Klaus did his medical schooling in South Africa followed by four years of rural family practice in Fort St John. He returned to South Africa for internal medicine training and then to Dalhousie for rheumatology and has his FRCPC in both.

The future looks brighter for Fraser South. A recent environmental scan commissioned by TAS pointed out the need to restructure the delivery of arthritis care in BC; Surrey was top of the Missing in Action list. Any solution would be impossible without the critical element, rheumatology manpower, being addressed. As it appears that over the next year we will have acquired three more rheumatologists, locating in Surrey, White Rock, and Abbotsford and with two of these speaking Punjabi, even the astrologers will agree that the stars are aligned.



Dr. Markus Klaus.

*Robert Offer, MD, FRCPC, FACR
Clinical Associate Professor, Division of Rheumatology,
Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia
Surrey, British Columbia*

West Is Best

By Kimberly A. Northcott, MD, FRCPC

With several retirements since the last Update from Victoria, the pace of clinical practice has picked up as has the interest of budding and established rheumatologists to move here.

There are currently six rheumatologists serving the Capital Region (five adult, one pediatric). With the accumulation of three rheumatologists in Nanaimo, our patient population base north of the central island has been gratefully offset.

With the enlargement of our Island group, we've now established a Fall and Spring journal club, in addition to our existing clinical Island Rheumatology meeting that we host twice a year. Certain members of our group teach as part of the Island Medical Program internal medicine clinical teaching unit, and participate in clinical research.

We have taken on greater roles mentoring residents and rheumatology Fellows from within BC and outside the province. We continue to provide educational talks to the allied health care professionals at the Victoria Arthritis Center, in addition to speaking at public arthritis forums supported by The Arthritis Society (TAS), and presenting at local conferences to our family physician and specialist colleagues.

We (admittedly arrogantly) boast that the "West is best" with Victoria providing an ideal balance between work and play.

*Kimberly A. Northcott, MD, FRCPC
Vancouver Island Health Authority
Victoria, British Columbia*

