

Menopause Matters

Patient-Centered Care Forum



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Event Date: October 21, 2025

Location: Holiday Inn Vancouver Centre

Menopause Matters

Patient-Centered Care Forum Event Summary

We recognize that this event took place on the unceded territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) and səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples, on whose traditional homelands we are grateful to be living, playing and working together.

Background

On October 21st, 2025, the Vancouver [Primary Care Networks](#) (PCNs) hosted an in-person engagement event, Menopause Matters: Patient-Centered Care Forum, at the Holiday Inn Vancouver Centre. The event aimed to bring together Primary Care Providers (Family Physicians and Nurse Practitioners) across Vancouver's PCNs to explore patient-centered approaches to menopause care.



The evening created an opportunity for participants to learn evidence-based strategies for supporting patients through the menopause transition, connect with colleagues and community partners, and discuss how care can be made more inclusive and accessible.

Overview

The **Menopause Matters: Patient-Centered Care Forum** brought together Vancouver's PCNs to explore patient-centered approaches to menopause care. The event created space for primary care providers, PCN partners, and community representatives to share insights, learn strategies, and discuss how to better support patients experiencing the menopause transition.

The evening featured a presentation by **Dr. Dedeshya Holowenko**, a Menopause Society certified practitioner and Co-Director in the UBC Faculty of Medicine. Dr. Holowenko reviewed current guidelines, addressed misconceptions about hormone therapy, and highlighted resources for navigating complex menopause care.

100+

Family Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, IPT Clinicians, community partners and speakers attended the evening



Click [here](#) to download the PowerPoint presentation.

Key Themes from Opening Presentation

1. Addressing Knowledge Gaps in Menopause Care

Dr. Holowenko emphasized that menopause remains under-taught in medical education. Many clinicians feel underprepared to manage symptoms or initiate hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Dr. Holowenko expressed the need for further training and practical guidance for safe, individualized prescribing.

2. Hormone Therapy and Safety

Dr. Holowenko shared that HRT remains the first-line treatment for moderate to severe vasomotor symptoms, and that vaginal estrogen can be safe, even for some breast cancer survivors, when other options are ineffective. Evidence-based discussions helped dispel common myths around cancer risk and HRT.

3. The Role of PCN Clinical Pharmacists

Dr. Holowenko also highlighted the value of pharmacists in supporting menopause care through medication reviews, HRT consultations, and team-based approaches to management.

4. Cultural and Inclusive Care

The opening presentation reinforced that menopause care should be inclusive of women, trans, and non-binary individuals, with care rooted in respect, sensitivity, and trauma-informed practice.

5. System and Access Challenges

Barriers to menopause care include limited access to specialist clinics, lack of remuneration for longer visits, and inconsistent patient information.

Key Takeaways

- HRT is generally safe and effective for most patients when used appropriately
- Vaginal estrogen can be considered in certain breast cancer survivors
- Menopause management benefits from multidisciplinary, team- based care
- There is strong need for ongoing education and follow-up sessions on menopause

Breakout Sessions

Following the opening presentation, participants joined one of four breakout discussions designed to explore different aspects of menopause care through an interdisciplinary and patient-centered lens. Each discussion was facilitated by clinical experts and community leaders who shared practical insights and invited participants to engage in open dialogue.

Topic 1: Cancer and Menopause

*Presented by Dr. Lesa Dawson,
Gynecologic Oncologist*

Dr. Dawson provided an overview of current best practices for supporting patients navigating menopause in the context of cancer care, highlighting considerations for hormonal and non-hormonal treatment options and the importance of coordinated follow-up.



Topic 2: Menopause: The Patient Experience

Facilitated by Beibhinn Lyons, Patient Engagement Facilitator, Vancouver Division of Family Practice

This session included a short video from Herstasis, followed by a roundtable discussion centered on the lived experience of menopause, patient communication, and strategies to improve comfort, access, and inclusivity in care delivery.



Topic 3: Pharmacy and Menopause

Presented by Sandy Lu, Clinical PCN Pharmacist, and Chen Shen, Clinical Pharmacist and Pharmacy Educator

Presenters discussed the role of pharmacists in menopause care, including medication management, hormone therapy guidance, and interdisciplinary collaboration in supporting patient safety and informed decision-making.



Topic 4: Cultural Considerations for Menopause

Led by Dr. Dedeshya Holowenko, Clinician, Complex Menopause Clinic; Dr. Alana Hirsh, Physician, Kilala Lelum (Urban Indigenous Health and Healing Cooperative); and Elder Mahara Allbrett, Senior Mental Wellness Counsellor and Health and Wellness Elder

This roundtable focused on cultural understandings of menopause and how care can be grounded in cultural safety, respect, and holistic wellness. Participants shared reflections on how inclusive and trauma-informed care practices can enhance patient experiences and outcomes.



Evaluation

Evaluation scores show the event was, for the most part, successful, and gave us input on things we can improve upon next time. We received a total of 52 evaluations.

95%

said they would attend another PCN Engagement Event in the future

What Did You Like About the Event?

Participants appreciated the opportunity to connect with colleagues, learn from experts, and engage in meaningful discussions about menopause care. The multidisciplinary approach & practical takeaways were consistently highlighted as valuable aspects of the evening.



What Could Have Been Improved?

While overall feedback was highly positive, several participants suggested that the event could have benefited from more time for in-depth discussion and Q&A, particularly around pharmacotherapy and complex menopause cases. Many attendees expressed interest in having the opening speaker present for longer or combining perspectives in a single, extended session.



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Top Takeaways

The most common takeaway from the evening was a greater understanding and confidence in managing menopause, especially around the safety and use of hormone therapy (HRT) and vaginal estrogen. Many participants noted they felt more comfortable initiating conversations about menopause with their patients and appreciated learning practical treatment tips, new resources, and guidance from the Complex Menopause Clinic and PCN clinicians.

Next Steps

Our aim is to build on this engagement session and to provide more learning opportunities and resources into the future.



Connect with your CNM!

If you want to know more about accessing any of the PCN Resources, your first point of contact is your PCN's Community Network Manager (CNM).

The CNM's role is to help the providers and clinics in their PCNs to access resources, get support and connect with other folks in their PCN.

Find your CNM contact information [here](#).

Special thanks to BC Cancer, the Canadian Cancer Society, Herstasis, and our community partners for their collaboration in supporting this event.

