

British Columbia Health System Priorities

Research and innovation are integral to the delivery of a patient-centred, high performing and sustainable health system in British Columbia (BC). To achieve system level change and continuous improvement of outcomes and health services, we must address both the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of that change. Health research is a powerful means of generating knowledge about health system innovation and transformation, particularly as it increasingly seeks to bridge the gap between research and implementation. To inform health system planning and decision making, MSFHR has designed and delivered health research funding programs that support the achievement of five BC health system priorities*:

1. **Enhance access to effective primary care:** Primary health care is the BC health system's critical entry point for patients. Moving away from a focus on acute hospital care to a system of primary and community care will enable patients to get help sooner and more effectively. To get there BC is setting up “primary care homes” as a cornerstone of the healthcare system. This priority is intended to support research on practice and service delivery innovations and initiatives designed improve accessibility and quality of primary and community care.
2. **Services for seniors with complex medical conditions:** BC has the fastest-growing population of seniors in Canada. As this population ages, the likelihood of chronic conditions goes up, and with it the need for health services. This priority focuses on research designed to enable the provision of high-quality care for seniors that improves their health outcomes and helps them stay active, slowing the onset or deterioration of chronic illness and lessening the need for early entry to residential care or hospital.
3. **Mental health/substance use care:** Typically one in five British Columbians experiences mental health and/or substance use issues. However, most children, youth and adults with mild to moderate mental health and/or substance use issues can be helped through community-based services. This priority focuses on research designed to support the provision of community-based care and services to children, youth and adults with mental health and/or substance use issues. This includes services and interventions such as primary care homes, medical psychiatric care, community outreach, assisted living and residential services, enhanced medication management and access to diagnostic and hospital services.

* These BC Health System Priorities were adapted from the BC Ministry of Health’s 2014 [Setting Priorities for the B.C. Health System](#) document. MSFHR routinely confirms and updates these priorities as required with the Ministry of Health.

4. **Services for patients needing surgery:** Demand for surgery continues to grow in BC. The province's growing and aging population, and even improved surgical procedures that give patients access to previously unavailable options, are contributing to this demand, which can lead to longer wait times. This priority focuses on research focused on reducing wait times for scheduled surgeries and improving patients' and families' entire process of surgical care.
5. **Rural and remote health care services:** The rural and remote population in BC is small and dispersed, and has poorer health outcomes than their urban counterparts. There are many unique challenges to providing and accessing health care services in our rural and remote regions. This priority focuses on research aimed at improving access and quality of health services for rural patients.