



## Health Matters Newsletter November 6, 2015

### Today's Health Matters Includes:

- Meeting Schedule
- Community Meetings and Events
- Article Province Must Lead on Poverty, Say BC Cities
- Family Caregivers Support Society Fall Newsletter ( attached)

This photo is very fitting. On one of my hikes up Mount Tzouhalem last November this poppy and memorial were in a tree that overlooks our great valley. It made me stop and remember.



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### Our Cowichan- Network Member Meetings-

- ✓ **Next Our Cowichan Network Meeting November 12, 2015, School District 79 Annex Beverly Street.** Light dinner at 5:30 pm Meeting starts at 6:00 pm.
- ✓ **Next Admin Committee Meeting-** November 5, 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm- CVRD Committee Room 2



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### Community Events

- **Duncan Remembrance Day Ceremony**  
Date: November 11  
Time: 11:00am  
Place: Charles Hoey Park on Canada Avenue, Duncan  
Please do not bring your dogs to the ceremony as it has caused problems with the crowd in previous years.
- **EPIC Seniors Meeting- Friday November 20 Mesachie Room at Island Savings Centre- ( poster attached)** All seniors serving organizations are invited to learn about significant changes coming

to the Cowichan Region regarding seniors health care and services. The EPIC (Eldercare Project In Cowichan) is exciting and needs the collective

- **Sobering and Detox Task Force Meeting**-Thursday November 26 -9 am to 11 am in the Mesachie Room at Island Savings Centre- All organizations and services supporting citizens struggling with substance use and addictions are invited to come together to identify gaps, barriers and strengths in services in the region. New Substance use beds mandated by the Ministry of Health will also be on the agenda.
- **Seniors Safety Fair- Tuesday November 10<sup>th</sup> 9 am to 3 pm Island Savings Centre**- Cost \$10 per person includes hot lunch and refreshments, three breakout sessions, booths and door prizes. Advanced registration through Cowichan Community Policing as space is limited. Register at Cowichan Community Policing



## Province Must Lead on Poverty, Say BC Cities

Union of BC municipalities folds on pilot project, says BC-wide plan needed for real change.

By [Andrew MacLeod](#), 29 Oct 2015, [TheTyee.ca](#)

When it comes to legislated poverty plans, Minister Stephanie Cadieux says 'there is no evidence that having one helps.' Photo by [John L](#) in [Your BC: The Tyee's Photo Pool](#).



### RELATED TYEE STORIES

- [BC Launches Hyper-local Poverty Strategies](#)

Minister says plan avoids cookie cutter approach, advocates say it avoids making real change.

- [Who's Up for Debating an Anti-Poverty Plan?](#)

Advocates ask what leaders will offer the 4.8 million Canadians struggling to make ends meet.

- [In My Class, Child Poverty Is No Numbers Game](#)

Learning to 'carry the one' is so much harder for a hungry eight-year-old.

- Read more: [BC Politics](#)

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities is ending its partnership with the provincial government on a three-year-old poverty reduction project and instead wants the province to pursue a broader anti-poverty plan.

"The pilot project is completed," said Al Richmond, the president of the UBCM. "There's not really a role for us to play at this time... If they come back with initiatives to reduce poverty in British Columbia, UBCM will be more than happy to participate."

The Community Poverty Reduction Strategies project began in 2012 in seven B.C. communities -- Prince George, Surrey, Port Hardy, Kamloops, Cranbrook, New Westminster and Stewart -- where the Ministry of Children and Family Development funded family consultants to lead the development of action plans to help families living in poverty and to connect low-income families with existing services.

The results were mixed, according to a recent UBCM policy [update](#), with some success but also frustrations with the gaps in services. Among the problems cited were that "low-income families were being referred to programs that were over-subscribed" and "there was an absence of services in small and rural communities."

The plan to expand the program to another 40 communities and appoint a province-wide steering committee was never fulfilled.

The report also said that over the last year there had been changes on some councils following the municipal elections and that some family consultants had left and been replaced. "When this happens, it is difficult to keep the momentum in the communities and at the community planning tables."

The time is appropriate to step away, the report said. "UBCM will continue to advocate for a provincial poverty plan," it said. "We feel this has the greatest potential to affect change on poverty reduction in B.C., and encourage the provincial government to undertake this work."

### **Provincial approach needed**

The pilot project arose from a desire among UBCM members to have a B.C. poverty reduction plan similar to other provinces, Richmond said. "I think we looked at the strategy Ontario developed in 2009 and felt we needed something like that," he said. "There needs to be a province-wide approach."

B.C. is the only province in Canada that hasn't at least started to develop a poverty reduction plan. While most of the original seven communities in the pilot will continue in the project, and the province has said it's willing to informally expand to others, Prince George has opted out.

"You don't want to turn expertise down," Mayor Lyn Hall said to explain why Prince George originally joined. But the city had been working on the issue for a long time, and at this point feels it may as well go it alone. "We just felt we're a long way down the road; we'll just continue with it," Hall said.

Children and Family Development Minister Stephanie Cadieux said she accepts UBCM's decision.

"Poverty really is an issue that can't be addressed by any one level of government," she said. "It really does require collaboration, it requires community involvement, and we're committed to working with those that want to do that. UBCM has decided that's not the way they want to do that, and that's completely fine."

The province will continue working with the communities that remain in the program, and any others that want to join, she said. Participants have learned a lot about addressing poverty in various communities and the program has led to the creation of a guide for communities, she said.

Cadieux said the decision not to expand the program in 2013 and 2014 was made at the request of the UBCM health committee. The provincial government also recently published a [report](#) on the program.

### **Poverty plans don't work: minister**

"I understand UBCM wanted us to move forward with a provincial poverty reduction strategy, which we had said from the beginning wasn't the direction we were going to go," Cadieux said. "That isn't a position that has changed over time, but they have decided for a number of reasons they don't want to continue, and that is fine."

Explaining the province's reluctance to develop a provincial poverty reduction strategy, Cadieux said, "The reality is... when you look across the country at what provinces have put in place in terms of legislated poverty plans, there is no evidence that having one helps."

Some of the provinces that do have plans have seen their poverty rates rise, she said. "In some provinces, like ours where we don't have a legislated plan, our poverty rates are going down. Slowly and not as fast as we would like, but they are trending in the right direction."

Cadieux said the province's approach is to support people to find jobs. "We believe the way you target poverty reduction is an economy that is growing, jobs for people so they can support their families and targeted programs to support those who need a hand."

Michelle Mungall, the NDP's critic for social development and social innovation, has three times introduced a private member's bill aimed at establishing a provincial poverty reduction strategy, but it has never made it past first reading.

**Ministry's approach 'chaotic', says critic**

Cadieux is wrong that poverty reduction strategies don't work, Mungall said. "That's not an independent statement. That's a very self-serving interpretation of what's going on in the country."

For the last decade B.C. has had the highest, or close to the highest, rate of child poverty in the country, she said.

The community pilot program did things like connect people to stop-gap measures like food banks, when what is needed are more supports like childcare, transportation and education that help people find good work, she said.

"'Get a job' [on its own] is the solution of someone who doesn't care to get to know what the problem is, and that's Christy Clark in a nutshell," Mungall said.

Doug Donaldson, the NDP's critic for children and family development, said that the pilot project helped about 100 families during a period when some 93,000 children in the province were living in poverty. The project was well intentioned but under-resourced, he said. "It would have been a good plan if there'd been additional resources put into it," he said. "The implementation just wasn't a serious attempt."

It's not enough to hire seven consultants while failing to increase the resources that are available, he said. "When it comes down to it, a lot of these services just aren't available in smaller and rural communities."

The UBCM report makes it clear that the Ministry of Children and Family Development lacked the focus needed to make the project a success and expand it, Donaldson said. "It definitely details a pretty chaotic approach by [the ministry] to this topic," he said.

Read more: [BC Politics](#)



**Do you have a resource, event or information you would like to share?**

Send it to [cindylisecchn@shaw.ca](mailto:cindylisecchn@shaw.ca) and it will be included in the weekly

**Health Matters Newsletter**

