



**Health Matters Newsletter**

**July 18, 2014**

**Today’s Health Matters Includes:**

* Meeting Schedules
* Community Meetings and Events
* Our Cowichan Small Grants Available
* Let’s Talk BC Families Survey
* Skin Cancer
* Living Wage Policy is the Thing to Do
* Heavy Drinking Kills you Faster than Smoking

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**Our Cowichan- Network Member Meetings-**

* **Next Our Cowichan Network Meeting –September 11,** CVRD Board Room. Light dinner at 5:30 pm – Meeting starts at 6:00 pm
* **Next Admin Committee Meeting-** Wednesday September 17, 5:30 pm CVRD Committee Room 2
* **Next Grant Committee Meeting-** Wednesday October 1, 9 am to 11 am CVRD – Room to be announced
* **Strategic Planning Sessions-** Thursday October 2nd 5pm to 8 pm and Friday 8:30 am to 4:00 pm – ***Hold These Dates!***

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Calls for Proposals

Cowichan Valley

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Our Cowichan recognizes the health and well -being of our citizens is impacted by the 12 Key determinants of health within the context of healthy and supportive communities, organizations, families and relationships.

Our Cowichan has the opportunity to make a positive and meaningful contribution to our communities’ future. OCCHN is committed to helping all citizens of the Cowichan Communities enjoy good health.

**Project focus:**

Applications whose priorities for action respond to demonstrated community needs, gaps and priorities and that are evidence based and focus on the determinants of health will be accepted for review.

Application templates are available on our website [www.cchn.ca](http://www.cchn.ca) or contact Cindy Lise at [cindylisecchn@shaw.ca](mailto:cindylisecchn@shaw.ca) . Applications will be accepted up to October 1, 2014. Funding announcements will be made by October 15, 2014 or sooner.

* 1 copy must be submitted by email to: cindylisecchn@shaw.ca
* 1 hard copy must be mailed to:

Our Cowichan

PO Box 20106

Duncan BC,

V9L- 5H1

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## Let’s Talk Families BC Survey from BC Council for Families

First Call partner organization, the BC Council for Families, wants to know what you think about family life in BC. The Let's Talk Families BC! survey is asking people what challenges they and their families are facing. The council is a non-profit organization that provides training and support to professionals working with all types of families in BC.  
   
Here is the link to the survey: [http://fluidsurveys.com/s/FirstCallInvite/](http://firstcallbc.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=f2171290d1b26bc08847d34b6&id=8afbe8c566&e=fe5e944aa3)  
   
First Call will be particularly interested to see the responses to the question in the survey about proposed solutions to child and family poverty!  
  
Anyone can respond to the survey - you, your board and staff, families you serve, friends, neighbours, relatives - the more people the better.  
  
[Take the survey now](http://firstcallbc.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=f2171290d1b26bc08847d34b6&id=3470b64641&e=fe5e944aa3)  
   
Thank you for your support of the BC Council for Families.

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# Skin cancer

Skin cancer is the most common of all cancer types. About one third of all new cases of cancer in Canada are skin cancers, and the [rate continues to rise](http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-101/cancer-statistics-at-a-glance/?region=on).

Skin plays a vital role in keeping you healthy. It is the largest organ in your body, and it protects you from things like dehydration (too little water in your body), the sun, bacterial infections, and pollution.

But there are limits to your skin's ability to protect you. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation -- also known as UV rays -- damages the DNA of your skin cells, which can cause skin cancer.

Most cases of skin cancer are preventable. You can reduce your risk of getting skin cancer by following these safety tips.

## Sun safety tips

Most people can prevent skin cancer by avoiding the sun and other sources of UV rays, like tanning beds and lamps. To avoid the harmful effects of UV rays:

* **Cover up.** Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts, pants, and a wide-brimmed hat made from breathable fabric. When you buy [sunglasses](http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/health-sante/environment-environnement/sun-soleil/glasses-lunettes-eng.php), make sure they provide protection against both UVA and UVB rays.
* **Limit your time in the sun.** Keep out of the sun and heat between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. When your shadow is shorter than you, the sun is very strong. Look for places with lots of shade, like a park with big trees, partial roofs, awnings, umbrellas or gazebo tents. Always take an umbrella to the beach.
* **Use the** [**UV Index forecast**](http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/health-sante/environment-environnement/sun-soleil/index-uv-indice-eng.php)**.** Tune in to local radio and TV stations or [check online for the UV index forecast in your area](http://www.theweathernetwork.com/uvreport/canuv_en). When the UV index is 3 or higher, wear protective clothing, sunglasses, and sunscreen.
* **Use sunscreen.** Put [sunscreen](http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/health-sante/environment-environnement/sun-soleil/screen-ecrans-eng.php) on when the UV index is 3 or more.
* **Drink plenty of cool liquids (especially water) before you feel thirsty**.  If sunny days are also hot and humid, stay cool and hydrated to avoid heat illness.  Dehydration (not having enough fluids in your body) is dangerous, and thirst is not a good indicator of dehydration.
* **Avoid using** [**tanning beds**](http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/health-sante/environment-environnement/sun-soleil/bed_lamps-lits_lampes-eng.php)**.** If you do use them, understand the risks and learn how to protect yourself.

The best way to find skin cancer in its early stages is to examine your skin often. See your doctor right away if you notice any of the following:

* abnormally dark or discoloured patches or spots
* bleeding, crusting or change in the colour, size or shape of a mole

### Did you know?

In 2014 approximately 6500 Canadians will be diagnosed with melanoma and 1050 will die from it. Fortunately, early detection can improve treatment and survival.

## Types of skin cancer

There are three main types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and malignant melanoma.

Most cases of skin cancer in Canada are either basal or squamous cell carcinomas. These skin cancers tend to develop later in life on areas of skin that have been exposed many times to the sun (like the face, neck or hands). Basal and squamous cell carcinomas progress slowly and rarely cause death because they usually do not spread to other parts of the body. These cancers are usually easily removed by surgery. But they are still a concern because they can cause scarring, disfigurement, or loss of function in certain parts of the body.

Malignant melanomas are different. They account for about 5% of all skin cancers, and are the type most likely to be fatal. Unlike other skin cancers, they happen earlier in life and progress rapidly. They may develop on almost any part of the body.

Melanoma is especially hard to stop once it has spread (metastasized) to other parts of the body. But it can be readily treated in its earliest stages. The main factors that predispose an individual to the development of melanoma seem to be recreational exposure to the sun and a history of sunburn.

### Did you know?

The amount of people getting skin cancer has been increasing in Canada at a fairly constant rate over the past 30 years. Based on current rates, one in 73 Canadian women will develop melanoma during their lifetime while one in 59 Canadian men will develop the disease.

## Causes of skin cancer

One of the main causes of skin cancer is being exposed to [UV rays](http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/health-sante/environment-environnement/sun-soleil/effects-uv-effets-eng.php). UV rays are invisible, and are produced by the sun, tanning beds, and lamps.

UV rays cause skin cancer by creating changes in the cells of your skin. In some cases, the UV rays cause direct damage to your cells. Tans and sunburns, for example, are both signs that UV rays have damaged your skin. In other cases, UV rays cause skin cancer indirectly, by weakening the immune system.

Many studies on skin cancer show that people who have suffered many severe sunburns in childhood are at greater risk of developing skin cancer. Family history, some chemical exposures, and immune dysfunction conditions can also create a greater risk of developing skin cancer.

## Detection and treatment

Moles, spots, and growths on your skin are usually harmless - but not always. That is why it is important to look at the skin all over your body once a month and have a doctor check you over once a year.

Using a bright light and mirrors, work from top to bottom, and examine your:

* head and face (use a blow-dryer to inspect your scalp)
* hands and nails
* elbows, arms, and underarms
* neck, chest, and torso (trunk)
* genitals and breasts
* back of neck, shoulders, upper arms, back, buttocks, and legs
* feet (including soles, heels, and nails)

Look for these "ABCDE" warning signs:

* **A**symmetry. Do the two halves not match if you imagine drawing a line through the mole?
* **B**orders. Are the edges uneven, scalloped or notched?
* **C**olours. Are there many shades (brown, red, white, blue or black)?
* **D**iameter greater than 6mm. Is the mole the size of a pencil eraser or larger?
* **E**volution. Has there been a change in size, shape, color, or height? Has a new symptom developed (like bleeding, itching or crusting)?

If you find any of these warning signs, see your health care provider as soon as possible. It is particularly important for you to choose a doctor who specializes in skin cancer and is trained to recognize a melanoma at its earliest stage.

If skin cancer is suspected, your doctor will take a biopsy (sample of tissue) and examine it with a microscope. If skin cancer is confirmed, there are many treatment options. The choice of treatment is based on the type, size, location and depth of the tumor, as well as your age and general state of health.

## How the Government of Canada protects you

The [Public Health Agency of Canada](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/index-eng.php) (PHAC) monitors cancer in Canada. PHAC identifies trends and risk factors for cancer, develops programs to reduce cancer risks, and researches to evaluate risks from the environment and human behaviours. [Health Canada](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index-eng.php) also promotes public awareness about sun safety and the harmful effects of UV rays.

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[Opinion](http://www.cowichannewsleader.com/opinion/) Cowichan News Leader Pictorial

# Living wage policy is the responsible thing to do

* posted Jun 29, 2014 at 10:00 AM— updated Jun 30, 2014 at 12:11 PM

Local governments have the potential to take a leadership role by establishing policies requiring staff and contractors to be paid a locally calculated living wage.

The City of Duncan, the District of North Cowichan and the Cowichan Valley Regional District unfortunately do not have living wage policies in place.

Local municipal governments provide a significant number of local jobs both directly and through contracts.

These jobs should be paid at least a living wage since local governments must deal with many of the repercussions of poverty.

The 2014 Cowichan Living Wage is $17.04 an hour. This is the amount needed to provide a modest living for a family with two children when both parents are working 35 hour weeks and receiving no benefits.

There are no frills and no extras.  No saving for the children’s education, the purchase of a home or for the parents’ retirement. The hourly wage is even less if the employer pays health and pension benefits.

The $6.79 difference between the current B.C. minimum wage and the 2014 Cowichan Living Wage illustrates the inability of full-time, minimum-wage workers in this region to meet basic needs such as food and housing. It explains our high level of working poverty and families where parents have multiple jobs.

Families living with incomes which do not meet basic needs not only live with a greater degree of stress, they have less time and energy to contribute to the community.

Their children miss opportunities for the kind of learning and growth which improve not only their future but that of the whole community.  In B.C., a third of the children living in poverty have parents working full-time. In Cowichan, approximately 40% of households do not earn a living wage.

Increasing the number of workers earning a living wage also impacts community sustainability. Families are better able to maintain bonds by remaining in the community.

The costs associated with treating ill health are a drag on our economy through the required increased taxation and the lack of productive employees.

Municipal and regional governments have a responsibility to spend tax dollars in a way which achieves their mandated goals in an efficient and effective manner.

The local governments and businesses that have instituted living-wage policies report reduced labour costs through increased staff retention and reduced training costs.

Locally there would be little or no increased costs incurred by taxpayers as only a small proportion of municipal staff and contractors’ employees would be impacted. But the benefit would be substantial for those workers whose wages would increase.

The local economy would benefit when the workers’ families have more money in their pockets to spend in local businesses.

Lower income families are an economic driver as they spend almost 100% of their income locally.

A living wage policy will not alleviate the complexity of factors which result in poverty: escalating housing costs or the increasing costs of medical care.

It will make a smaller but measureable improvement for single parents or the part time employed. It is part of the solution but not the whole solution.

Downloading of responsibilities by higher levels of government has left local municipalities increasingly dealing with the impact of poverty, both among those working and those unemployed.

If all local governments in the region were to enact a living wage policy they would be taking direct action to improve community well-being in a socially responsible, fiscally prudent manner.

Rhoda Taylor is treasurer for Volunteer Cowichan.

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# Heavy drinking 'kills you quicker than smoking' and poses greater risk to women than men

* Alcoholics die 20 years sooner on average than general population, groundbreaking study finds
* Researchers in Germany spent 14 years following 149 alcohol-dependent adults to produce report
* Death rate among alcohol-dependent women was 4.6 times higher than normal, academics found
* Rate among men with alcohol problems was almost twice as high as the general male population

By [Rob Preece](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/search.html?s=&authornamef=Rob+Preece)

Published: 20:00 GMT, 16 October 2012 | Updated: 06:39 GMT, 17 October 2012

Heavy drinking kills you more quickly than smoking and is especially dangerous among women, a study suggests.

Researchers found that alcoholics die about 20 years sooner on average than the general population.

People dependent on alcohol also live shorter lives on average than smokers, the findings indicate.

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Warning: Dependency on alcohol is particularly dangerous among women, a study of mortality rates has found. (Picture posed by model)

Academics in Germany studied data spanning 14 years in relation to 149 adults with alcohol problems.

They found that the death rate among alcohol-dependent (AD) women was 4.6 times higher than average.

Research: Professor Ulrich John said that the findings appeared to show drinking could cause early death more frequently than smoking

The death rate for men with alcohol problems was almost double the level for men who did not rely on drink.

The study, reported in the journal Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research, is groundbreaking because it looks at the impact of alcohol dependency over a long period.

Previous research has highlighted the dangers of excessive alcohol, but those findings were largely based on clinical trials.

Professor Ulrich John, of University Medicine Greifswald, said: 'Clinical data have revealed a higher proportion of individuals who have died than among the general population of the same age.

'Gender-specific data are rare, even among clinical samples. Furthermore, these studies have two main limitations.

'First, we know that only a minority of AD individuals receive treatment of this disorder, but we lack knowledge about how this selection occurs.

#### More...

* [Binge drinking 'can harm brains within months and turn social drinkers into alcohol abusers'](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2218188/Binge-drinking-harm-brains-months-Tests-little-day-far-safer.html)
* [Woman arrested for drink driving after chugging half a bottle of hand sanitizer (that's equal to 16 vodka shots)](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2218179/Woman-arrested-drink-driving-chugging-half-bottle-hand-sanitizer.html)
* [Primed for the fight of his life: Kenny Egan squandered his glory in a miasma of booze and girls. Today he is sober, but he's also lost his title and he can't box for ever. Where does he go now?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2217431/Primed-fight-life-Kenny-Egan-squandered-glory-miasma-booze-girls-Today-sober-hes-lost-title-box-Where-does-now.html)

'Second, we have no evidence about potential effects of specialised alcoholism treatment on mortality among people who had been diagnosed as AD.

Alarming: Researchers in Germany found that the death rate among alcohol-dependent women was 4.6 times higher than average

'We would like to know whether treatment might enhance survival time.

'For ethical reasons, no controlled trials are possible.

'Thus, longitudinal descriptive data as in this study are helpful.'

Professor John's team looked at a random sample of 4,070 respondents between the ages of 18 and 64, of which 153 were identified as AD.

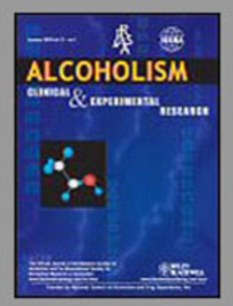
Of these, 149 - 119 men and 30 women - were followed for 14 years.

Professor John said: 'First, we found that annualised death rates were 4.6-fold higher for females and 1.9-fold higher for males compared to the age- and gender-specific general population.

'Second, we found that the mean age at death was 60 for females and 58 for males, both of which are about 20 years lower than the mean age at death among the general population.

+2

Risk: Researchers found that adults who are dependent on alcohol die about 20 years earlier on average than the general population. (Picture posed by model)

Groundbreaking: The study's conclusions are reported in the journal Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research

'None of those deceased had reached the age of life expectancy.

'Third, having participated in inpatient AD treatment was not related with longer survival compared to not having taken part in treatment, meaning that it did not seem to have a sufficient protective effect against premature death.'

Professor John said that the findings appeared to show drinking could cause early death more frequently than smoking.

He said: 'Smoking-related death cases are more due to cancers which seem to occur later in life than many alcohol-attributable causes of death do.

'Furthermore, drinking can also contribute to other risky behaviours such as smoking, becoming overweight, and obesity.

'Alcohol is a dangerous product and should be consumed only within guidelines.'

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2218660/Heavy-drinking-kills-quicker-smoking-poses-greater-risk-women-men.html#ixzz37SVfg32K>   
Follow us: [@MailOnline on Twitter](http://ec.tynt.com/b/rw?id=bBOTTqvd0r3Pooab7jrHcU&u=MailOnline) | [DailyMail on Facebook](http://ec.tynt.com/b/rf?id=bBOTTqvd0r3Pooab7jrHcU&u=DailyMail)

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

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