

For Immediate Release | September 30, 2019

New physicians start in New Denver in October

NEW DENVER – Interior Health is pleased to announce that two new physicians are joining the local health care team at the Slocan Community Health Centre (SCHC).

Dr. Svet Gueordjev and Dr. Sean Wachtel will start seeing patients as of Oct. 1. They join long-time New Denver physician Dr. Chuck Burkholder in providing local primary care services and coverage for the community's 24/7 emergency department.

"This is great news for people and families in communities that rely on services at the Slocan Community Health Centre," says Kootenay West MLA Katrine Conroy. "I would like to extend a warm welcome to the new physicians and applaud the ongoing efforts to ensure we are stabilizing health services in New Denver."

The three physicians have signed an 18-month contract that will allow Interior Health to maintain all current services and continue primary care planning discussions with the Kootenay Boundary Division of Family Practice physician group and other key stakeholders. IH's ongoing priority is to ensure we have long-term sustainable services that meet the needs of the patients who access services at the SCHC.

"Our local communities stepped up in a big way to help find new physicians to support local health care services. We look forward to building on this recent success to make sure people in New Denver and surrounding areas have access to the care they need at our health centre," says New Denver Mayor Leonard Casley.

The physicians will work under a shared practice model, which means patients with booked appointments will see the physician who is working at the clinic at the time of their appointment. The process to book an appointment remains the same: patients call the health centre at 250-358-7211.

Interior Health would like to acknowledge Dr. Burkholder, local elected officials and the broader community for their tremendous efforts in recruiting additional physicians for patients in the Slocan Valley. We would also like to thank the Ministry of Health and Kootenay Boundary Division of Family Practice for their work and support in the successful recruitment of new physicians to the SCHC.

Dr. Gueordjev received his medical degree from his hometown of Plovdiv, Bulgaria. He immigrated to South Africa and worked in the hospitals of Pretoria University and the South African National Defence Force for 10 years where he developed his interest in Family Practice, Emergency Medicine and Obstetrics and Gynecology. In 2000, he fulfilled a life-long dream when he immigrated to Canada, working in several small communities in northern BC before settling in his current home in Nelson.

Dr. Wachtel took family medicine training in the UK and, following a five-year commission in the Royal Air Force, came to Canada in 2009. He worked in Nelson for almost four years in the emergency department and family medicine before undertaking a master's degree in public health at UBC and certification through the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Dr. Wachtel will divide his time between New Denver and the First Nations Health Authority in Vancouver.

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Dr. Burkholder has enjoyed 25 years of practice in Slokan Community Health Centre and welcomes this opportunity to continue on in this sustainable, shared arrangement. Dr Burkholder graduated from the University of Western Ontario in 1988 and completed a Family Medicine residency at Dalhousie University. Soon after that, he moved to B.C. with his wife Miranda Hughes and has lived in the West Kootenays while they raised their four children.

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