A hearty welcome to Dr. Mike Ertel in his new role as Interior Health’s Vice President of Medicine and Quality.

Mike brings more than 20 years of extensive clinical and leadership experience in the Interior Health medical community to the VP role – from a physician in the Kelowna General Hospital emergency department, to the hospital’s Chief of Staff, to the IH Medical Director for Emergency Services, to his most recent position as Executive Medical Director for Interior Health Central.

His academic interests include clinical research and teaching as a clinical instructor for the UBC Southern Medical Program; and he is a highly regarded speaker for national conferences in Emergency Medicine. Mike has been a regular participant on provincial committees, a member of the IH Research Ethics Board (since its inception), and chairs the Central Okanagan Ethics Committee.

Outside of work, Mike enjoys spending time with his wife and three daughters, running, biking, skiing, and playing hockey. In his spare time, he serves as one of the team doctors for the Kelowna Rockets Hockey Club and he has been a ski doc at Big White for more than 10 years.

“As a strong believer in the importance of teamwork and growth, a priority of mine is leadership development in the Medicine and Quality portfolio,” says Mike.

“Through collaboration with the executive medical directors, we will strengthen the portfolio and ensure the processes which govern the delivery of medical care provided by Interior Health meet our high standards for quality and safety.

“Another area of focus is to develop physician engagement to enhance integration and improve relationships. I want to have a better understanding of physician and medical staff points of view in all our geographic and program areas.

“I look forward to sharing more about our goals and progress in the weeks ahead.”
Transitions in Medical Leadership for Medicine & Quality Portfolio

After a more than a year as Vice President for Interior Health’s Medicine and Quality portfolio, Dr. Alan Stewart has left the position to assume the new role of Interior Health’s Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Quality & Patient Safety.

In this role, Alan will focus on collaboration with IH physicians to facilitate quality improvement at local and regional levels, while also working provincially on several quality-focused projects. He continues his position as co-chair of the Physician Medical Services Executive Council (PMSEC) and will continue his work as a general internist practicing regularly in the TIA-Rapid Access Clinic at Kelowna General Hospital (KGH).

“By its very nature, quality improvement is a continuous journey and I look forward to partnering with our medical staff and quality committees in the identification of rewarding projects and strategies,” says Alan.

Medicine and Quality sees another portfolio change with Dr. Ron Collins expanding his clinical work in anesthesiology at KGH, while also assuming a new role as Physician Advisor for the joint IH-Specialist Services Committee Physician Quality Improvement (PQI) initiative. During his time as Executive Medical Director, Ron has been a fierce advocate for bringing about change in medical quality and patient safety at local and regional levels while also collaborating provincially on several important projects. Ron led important work in Critical Incident Management and will guide the development and implementation of the PQI. (Read more about this work on p. 3.)

The Medicine and Quality team, and many others throughout Interior Health, bid a fond farewell to Dr. Peggy Yakimov, Executive Medical Director, Physician Support and Practice Enhancement. Peggy worked with Interior Health for more than 20 years and developed positive relationships with medical staff and administrative leaders across the region.

Over the years, Peggy made significant contributions to develop a single, standardized physician credentialing and privileging system, known as CACTUS. More recently, she was pivotal in developing standardized violence prevention training for physicians. All the best to Peggy in the road ahead.

psychotherapy.net streaming video

A great resource for teaching, training, self-study, and continuing education in psychotherapy, counselling, and addiction. Each video is accompanied by an instructor’s manual that includes a full transcript.

Contact Library@interiorhealth.ca for username and password. Log-in at: www.psychotherapy.net/stream/interiorhealth-up.
Physician Quality Initiative TAKES OFF

With the final details of the funding agreement now in place, Interior Health’s Physician Quality Initiative (PQI) is ready for launch, which means a range of opportunities for physicians to participate in and lead QI projects.

This initiative was submitted to the Specialist Services Committee (SSC) as a Regional Quality Improvement Proposal from Interior Health and was endorsed by our SSC partners earlier this year. It was developed by a diverse working group of physicians from across the IH region with a goal to support the participation of practising physicians in quality improvement projects and efforts.

The approved proposal will see annual funding from the SSC until March 31, 2019. The 1.3 million per year we’ll receive over the next two years includes provision for training and education, physician time, support staff, and evaluation in the following areas:

- Physician-driven QI projects (like Enhanced Recovery After Surgery)
- Physician performance enhancement projects (like the ones in progress in our emergency departments)
- Quality reviews
- Unit-based quality initiatives

“It is my vision that this effort will change the culture of IH, bringing physicians into teamwork environments as collaborators in the effort to improve patient care and outcomes while improving the efficiency of the health-care system,” says Dr. Ron Collins, PQI Physician Advisor. “We will enable and support physicians to work with IH in bringing their own inspiration and ideas to the initiative.”

All physicians will have the opportunity to participate, whatever community or area of interest. And, because this is a province-wide effort, there will be opportunity to share successes and lessons learned.

Watch for more information and invitations to participate as the PQI moves from proposal phase to working initiative. In the meantime, check out the full proposal on the physician section of the IH website (navigate via Physician tab at top of page and then to “News & Resources” page).

PQI Goals

- Build capacity for QI amongst physicians;
- Support physicians to undertake self-identified QI projects in partnership with patients and families;
- Enable physicians to participate in the IH’s QI structures; and
- Develop a culture of engagement, support, and continuous QI amongst physicians.
Hands-on violence prevention training impresses docs

Positive feedback from physicians tells us we’re on the right track with the new violence prevention classroom training designed specifically for our medical staff.

The in-person sessions kicked off at the beginning of April and are targeted to the 350-plus physicians in Interior Health who work in high risk areas, like the emergency department, residential care, or in mental health settings. As of June 1, 102 are fully trained, meaning they have completed the pre-requisite online modules via i-Learn as well as the classroom training.

The goal is to have all physicians working in high risk areas fully trained by the end of June. From there, the focus will shift to ensuring the broader physician group, working in low and medium risk areas, has completed the online modules.

“I want to acknowledge and thank our medical staff who have participated to date,” says Dr. Mike Ertel, VP, Medicine and Quality. “We are hearing great feedback about the benefits of the training as well as suggestions for improvement going forward.

“I’ve also heard comments about people enjoying the collegial atmosphere of the interdisciplinary training and the opportunity it offers to connect with their peers.”

In the session evaluations completed to date, ratings were high overall with repeated mention of the training being useful, worthwhile, relevant, and appreciated. As for improvements, almost all participants requested more of the hands-on practice and the active role playing. They found the self-defence techniques and practical scenarios to be particularly helpful.

Comments from Dr. Cathy Rooke, who attended the session at Penticton Regional Hospital, sum it up: “Excellent demonstration of defence techniques and a valuable educational experience – wish I could have done this earlier in my career.”

In addition, there was high praise for Workplace Health & Safety facilitators, Chris Foley, Ben Phillips, and Surrena Craig. The facilitators in turn appreciated the opportunity to hear what is important to our physician group. It has helped them to broaden their perspective because there are some circumstances that are unique to the physicians and psychiatrists, even though the concepts within the curriculum apply to all in the health-care field.

“The commitment of physicians to partnering with us on this training is essential – and also greatly appreciated – because ensuring a safe workplace for physicians and staff is a priority for Interior Health,” says Dr. Ertel.

If you are a physician working in a high risk area and still need to register for a classroom session, contact the medical administration assistant (MAA) at your site.
An extraordinary surgeon who led the way in improving patient care here and abroad passed away on March 31. Dr. Bill Nelems’ respectful demeanour and dedication to his craft earned him the love and respect of his peers and patients.

Dr. Nelems was a pioneer in the medical field. He became the province’s first thoracic surgeon and performed the country’s first lung transplant. He was the first in the world to use extracorporeal membrane oxygenation – now routinely used for treatment of advanced respiratory failure – in support of lung transplantation.

Born in South Africa before moving to Canada, Dr. Nelems had strong ties to Africa. A passionate humanitarian, he played a key role in establishing the Okanagan-Zambia Health Initiative, a partnership between medical personnel in the Okanagan and countries in Africa.

Bill will be greatly missed by the medical community, his patients, family, and friends. Read more about his incredible life, and the people he impacted, in The Globe and Mail article from May 15.

Interior Health has opened seniors health and wellness centres in both Kamloops and Kelowna, which offer specialty supports to this specific population of patients by referral. Each centre has specific criteria as well as a referral form, which can be accessed on Pathways BC, https://pathwaysbc.ca/login. Flyers outlining services at the centre are also available.

The goals for both centres are to help seniors to maintain independence and live at home; to optimize the patients’ health through an interprofessional team approach; and to provide support to family and care team.

Geriatricians and family physicians with a special interest in seniors’ care, along with IH clinicians from multiple disciplines, make up the team that develops the care plan for each patient who meets the criteria for team-based care at the centres.

For more information about the centre or referral process, contact: 
Kamloops Seniors Health & Wellness Centre: 250-312-3290 or fax: 250-851-7952
Central Okanagan Seniors Health & Wellness Centre: 250-862-4131, option 1, or fax: 250-862-4076

IH administrator Cathy Thibault and Dr. Phil Sigalet were instrumental in the start of the Kamloops Seniors Health and Wellness Centre.
Training & Education Opportunities

Violence Prevention Training

Online Modules

**Description:** Seven (7) online modules for medical staff working in low risk areas, and eight (8) online modules for those in moderate and high risk areas; requires approximately 2-3 hours to complete.

**Reimbursement:** Medical staff will be reimbursed at Clinical Sessional rates for time spent completing the online modules (not including IH employees), up to a maximum of three hours; download instructions for making a Violence Prevention Training Claim Submission via Physician Invoicing Portal.

**Credits:** TBC – application has been made to CCFP and RCPSC

**Date:** Online, self-paced

**Registration:** [http://ilearn.interiorhealth.ca](http://ilearn.interiorhealth.ca) (Course ID #s 1308 to 1315; 1311 not required for low risk areas); download Instructions for Accessing i-Learn.

Learn more on the Physician section of the IH website under About Us > Physicians > News & Resources.

2017 Residential Care Conference

**Description:** A brand new conference for health-care providers involved in long-term residential care with up-to-date topics including palliative approaches to care, polypharmacy, and dementia.

**Cost:** Conference tuition start at $300 for a 1.5 day program, with daytime meals and materials.

**Credits:** CFPC Mainpro+ Accredited

**Location/Date:** Sparkling Hill Resort, Vernon, Nov. 17-18

**Registration:** Online at [ubccpd.ca/course/RCR2017](https://ubccpd.ca/course/RCR2017) or email cpd.info@ubc.ca.

Physician Leadership Program

**Description:** For current physician leaders and those interested in future leadership opportunities. The objective of this innovative program, presented by UBC Sauder School of Business, is to deliver the leadership knowledge, behaviours, and skills that senior physicians need to effectively engage in the planning, delivery, and transformation of our health-care system.

**Credits:** 16 Mainpro+ credits; $500 bursary

**Dates:** Module 1 - Sept. 14-16; Module 2 - Oct. 19-21; Module 3 - Nov. 23-25; Module 4 - March 2, 2018.

**Registration:** Email Chelsea.Martinick@interiorhealth.ca or call 250-469-7070 (x. 12806).

All registrations must be received by Sept. 1.