



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Office of the Vice-President, Health
UBC Health



GOING RURAL 2026

OPPORTUNITIES IN RURAL HEALTHCARE

Event Information



Tuesday, January 27th



4:30 - 8:00 PM PST

Presented by:
Rural eMentoring BC and UBC Health

Register for free

Click here or scan:





xʷməθkʷəy̓əm: Land Beneath Our Feet

We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather, work and learn upon is the unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the xwməθkwəy̓ əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl'ílwəta?/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. The land has always been a place of learning for the Indigenous peoples, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next. Unceded means that this land was never surrendered, relinquished or handed over in any way.

Land acknowledgment is a part of reconciliation, and as such we give you all the responsibility to continue your self-education by asking questions and learning more about reconciliation. Questions like: What can you do to better care for the land? And Who lived on this land before you?

Land acknowledgment is about reflecting on the places where we reside and work and play, while respecting all peoples and their experiences, but in recognition of the Indigenous traditions and ties to the land.

Land acknowledgment can help build understanding about our relationships and responsibilities to the Indigenous people and lands where we live and work. It is a living celebration of Indigenous communities and relationships, and appreciation for the rich history and culture of the lands where we live and work.

We also invite you all to research what traditional lands you live, work and play in so that you can in your own way give acknowledgment.

Written by Angela Nash (Wəlastəkwewiyik)
eMentoring Indigenous Initiatives Manager



WHAT IS GOING RURAL?

Going Rural brings together students, educators, and programs dedicated to strengthening healthcare in rural and remote communities. At the event, attendees hear from rural-origin students, learn about interprofessional teamwork in rural practice, and explore education and career pathways that support thriving rural health systems.

Sessions highlight what training and placements are like in rural settings, how students navigate admissions and health-program requirements, and what it takes to succeed in a rural healthcare career. Participants can connect with program representatives, meet other students interested in rural health, and access resources to help guide their next steps.

Going Rural aims to build community, spark curiosity, and inspire future healthcare professionals committed to providing quality care close to home.





EVENT SCHEDULE

Make the event your own! Join the sessions that interest you, and stay for as long as you'd like.

CLICK TO NAVIGATE TO EACH SECTION

4:30 - 5:00 PM

Attendee Check-In

Arrive a few minutes early to check in and confirm your sessions. Get comfortable with the event platform, we will start right on time!

5:00 - 6:00 PM

What's it like to work in rural healthcare?

Experiences from Students on Rural Rotations

Hear from students who've worked in rural healthcare. Learn what different professionals do, how they work collaboratively, and what to expect on a rural rotation.

6:00 - 6:30 PM

Program Information Sessions

Short presentations from health professions programs in BC about what degrees they offer and their admissions processes.

6:00 - 7:00 PM

Exhibitor Virtual Booths

Visit virtual booths from schools and programs across BC to explore degree options, admissions pathways, and other opportunities.

Click here for Tips for Networking with Program Representatives

7:00 - 8:00 PM

Education Pathways and Advice for

Students Interested in Rural Healthcare Careers

Hear from students currently in rural health programs about educational pathways, program experiences, and transitioning from rural to urban life.

VIRTUAL VENUE

The event will be hosted virtually on Gather.town - think a conference inside a video game!





WHAT'S IT LIKE TO WORK IN RURAL HEALTHCARE?

Experiences from Students on Rural Rotations

Hear from students who've worked in rural healthcare. Learn what different professionals do, how they work collaboratively, and what to expect on a rural rotation.



Seamus Damström (he/him)
Public Health Dietitian in Population Health with Interior Health
UBC | Land and Food Systems, Dietetics

Seamus is a member of the Oneida Nation of the Thames (Turtle Clan, with relational ties to the Ninham and Powless families) and has Czech, Swedish, and Irish ancestry. He was born in Cranbrook, BC, grew up in Terrace, BC, and now lives on the unceded ?amak?is Ktunaxa territory. He studied at UBC and did a 10-month placement at the College of the Rockies.



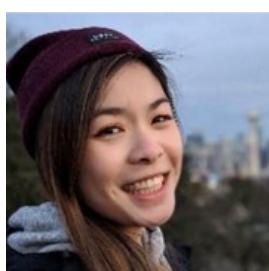
Carmela de Gracia-Patten (she/her)
Kinesiologist in Primary Care
BSc Kinesiology from UVic 17' | MKIN from UBC 22'

Carmela is from Nanaimo, BC, and is a Practicing Kinesiologist based in Terrace, BC. She is the first Kinesiologist in British Columbia working within a Public Primary Care setting, where she supports interdisciplinary, community-based care.



Laine Grace (she/her)
Future Physician
BSc from U of C 21' | UBC Southern Medical Program, Year 4

Laine is a 4th year Métis medical student at UBC, with a neuroscience degree from the University of Calgary. She plans to pursue rural family medicine and is interested in Indigenous health and team-based care in rural communities. Through UBC's Southern Medical Program, Laine has completed rural clinical rotations in Stewart, Grand Forks, and Duncan.



Tara Luk (she/her)
Clinical Pharmacist
UBC | PharmD, '21

Tara was born and raised in Kitsilano/East Vancouver with no plans of ever working rurally. But she discovered the wider scope, larger impact, and lifestyle benefits of rural practice while on rotation in Port Alberni, Powell River, Penticton, and Dawson Creek during her training. She completed a residency in Prince George and is now practicing in Fort St. John.

PROGRAMS

Learn about exhibiting schools and programs and tips for Networking with Representatives!

Coast Mountain College



Ever imagined studying health and medical sciences surrounded by rugged mountains, wild rivers, and endless outdoor adventure? In northwest BC, you can learn in one of the most beautiful places in Canada while enjoying ski hills, lakes, and trails. Explore our pathway to becoming a Registered Nurse through the Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Program, as well as Practical Nursing, Health Care Assistant training, and first- and second-year sciences. Visit our Coast Mountain College booth for more!

D'HoPE (Diversifying Health and Human Service Professions Education)



Are you interested in learning about many different health professions? D'HoPE offers a 1-week summer program and year-round 1-on-1 mentorship to equity-denied youth to support their interests and journey into healthcare. This year, participants learned from and attended sessions with 5 different health professions.

Education Planner BC



Are you curious about going to post-secondary in B.C.? Come explore our website! Education Planner BC helps you explore post-secondary options in B.C. by allowing you to search programs, trades, and career pathways, save favourites, and apply to institutions through the provincial application service. The site also provides helpful resources on admission requirements, financial aid, and planning your education path.

Interior Health *



Interior Health offers career exploration experiences for Grade 10-12 students, post-secondary students, and community members interested in health care careers. Participants connect with Interior Health employees through virtual or in-person chats, tours, or short observational job shadows (2-4 hours) in a variety of departments, based on site capacity.

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Island Health



Are you looking to #FindYourPlace in Healthcare? Island Health has a variety of rural locations that have openings for RNs, LPNs, Allied Health professionals, general support services and more. We try our best to help everyone find that perfect place to land.

North Island College - Island Pre-Health Science Program



Do you want to prepare for professional health science programs, but with a Vancouver Island focus? Are you interested in how you can complete all the required university-level courses and credits you need in 3 years, so you have OPTIONS? Are you looking for a personalized education experience and want to live in the beautiful Comox Valley? North Island College's Island Pre-Health Science program may be the right choice for you! Come chat to learn more.

Northern Health - Grow our Own *



Curious about a future with Northern Health? Explore pathways for every career - clinical and non-clinical. At our booth, match your interests to real jobs, see education and training routes, and learn about supports like bursaries, placements, and mentorship. Stop by to ask questions and leave with a simple action plan tailored for rural students. Meet our team and discover next steps. Learn more: careers.northernhealth.ca

Rural eMentoring BC



Are you a rural student or a student who is interested in rural healthcare? Could you use some help or advice planning for your future? Of course you could! Join eMentoring and be mentored by a student in the health professions program of your choice. Drop by the eMentoring booth to learn about the program and to sign up for free. Everyone who signs up will have a chance to win a prize!



PROGRAMS

Learn about exhibiting schools and programs and tips for Networking with Representatives!

Selkirk College Rural Pre Medicine



Study with Rural Pre-Medicine (RPM) at Selkirk College and begin your path toward a fulfilling career in the health sciences. Graduates from RPM have continued on to medicine, pharmacy, midwifery, physical therapy, and more! Stop by to learn about our amazing program in the beautiful West Kootenay.

SFU School of Medicine



SFU School of Medicine is Western Canada's first new medical school in almost 60 years! Discover how we are preparing a new generation of skilled physicians who reflect the communities they serve, with the clinical expertise and collaborative abilities to be outstanding primary care physicians.

UBC Faculty of Dentistry - DMD (Dentistry) & BDSc (Dental Hygiene)



Dentistry Program: A four-year Doctor of Dental Medicine program providing clinical and classroom training to prepare students as competent, ethical dentists. Applicants must complete required courses and 90 credits by August of the application year.

Dental Hygiene Program: A four-year program at UBC-Vancouver, open to secondary and post-secondary applicants, combining classroom and clinical training.

UBC Faculty of Medicine MD Undergraduate Program



Are you interested in becoming a physician and practicing in northern and/or rural settings? Would you like to hear from medical students and program staff about unique pathways to becoming a doctor? Drop by our booth to learn about the program and hear directly from current medical students who currently study in our Northern Medical Program.



PROGRAMS

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UBC Master of Physical Therapy



The UBC Master of Physical Therapy (MPT) is B.C.'s only fully distributed, entry-to-practice physical therapy program. Delivered in partnership with UNBC, the MPT-North stream allows students to train in northern, rural, and remote communities, with a focus on addressing physical therapist shortages and strengthening rehabilitation services in these regions. A key focus of MPT-North is graduating Physical Therapists dedicated to improving rehabilitation services in northern and rural areas.

UBC Okanagan Nursing



Discover your future in healthcare at UBC Okanagan's School of Nursing! Set in the beautiful Okanagan Valley, our program combines hands-on experience, top-tier education, and a welcoming community. Prepare for an exciting career while studying close to home or exploring new horizons. Join a supportive network, learn from expert faculty, and make a difference in healthcare. Take your first step toward a fulfilling career with us!

UBC PharmD Program



Founded in 1946, UBC's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences is internationally recognized for excellence in pharmacy education, practice innovation, and pharmaceutical research. Each year, it educates nearly 900 undergraduate students and over 50 graduate students. Its close to 7,000 alumni have gone on to successful careers as pharmacists, scientists, educators, entrepreneurs, and leaders around the world.

University of Northern British Columbia - Human and Health Sciences



UNBC is a small, research-intensive university specializing in undergraduate education. From diverse health research opportunities with faculty to hands on training that launches hundreds of students into health care careers each year, UNBC is a hub for health innovation. A few of our most popular programs in these fields include Biomedical Studies, Nursing, and Social Work. Come by our booth to learn more!



NETWORKING TIPS

How to Make the Most of Your Time with Program Representatives

Ask about rural-focused opportunities

All attending programs want to recruit rural students. Ask about what each program offers to attract and support rural students. In your application, you can reference these opportunities to demonstrate your commitment to rural healthcare and show that you've done your homework.

Explore pathways and financial support

Ask about opportunities, pathways, and financial aid specifically for rural students or for those interested in working in rural communities after graduation.

Learn about rural study experiences

Many programs offer practicums, rotations, or other experiential learning opportunities in rural communities. Ask what options are available and how to take advantage of them.

Find out about support for transitioning students

Ask what supports are available to help rural students adjust to a new environment. This is your chance to get personalized advice about applications and student life.

Ask what they look for in applicants

Find out the skills, experiences, and personality traits that fit their program. This insight can help you tailor your application.

Address your weaknesses

Be honest about areas where your application may be weaker, such as grades or extracurricular experience, and ask for advice on improvement. Programs may suggest academic upgrading, volunteering, joining clubs, or framing your personal statement strategically.

Focus your questions wisely & do your homework

Avoid asking for information available on program websites. Each booth provides a website link where you can access detailed information. Come prepared with questions about admissions requirements specific to your situation, such as course eligibility, pathways, or scholarships to get meaningful, personalized answers.



EDUCATION PATHWAYS AND ADVICE FOR STUDENTS INTERESTED IN RURAL HEALTHCARE CAREERS

Hear from students currently in rural health programs about educational pathways, program experiences, and transitioning from rural to urban life.

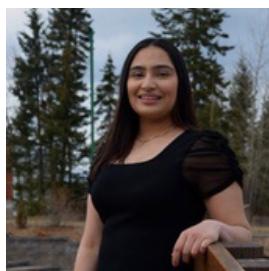


Alexis Magrath (she/her)

Future General Dentist

UBC | Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) Program, Year 4

Alexis is originally from Prince George, BC. While completing her Bachelor of Health Sciences at the University of Northern British Columbia, she decided to pursue a career in general dentistry. Before entering the DMD program at the University of British Columbia, she took a gap year working full-time as a substitute teacher in the local school district.



Alisha Thapar (she/her)

Future Physician

BScN from UNBC 23' | UBC Northern Medical Program, Year 3

Alisha was born in Quesnel, BC and graduated from UNBC with a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (BScN). After working with many amazing physicians in the healthcare setting, she realized she wanted to become a physician too. She hopes to one day work with rural populations in BC.



Ilianna Doornbos (she/her)

Clinical Pharmacist Resident

UNBC BSc in Biomedical Studies | UBC PharmD '25

Ilianna is a passionate individual and has recently graduated from the UBC PharmD program in May 2025. Born and raised in Prince George, Ilianna aspires to complete a hospital residency to practice as a clinical pharmacist and continue to advocate for the profession of pharmacy in underserved/rural communities.



Aashna Thapar (she/her)

Registered Nurse

UNBC | Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Program

Aashna graduated from her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in May 2024 and has worked as a registered nurse since September 2024. She works in Primary Care within an interprofessional team where she helps clients access assisted living, long term care, and home care.



Thank You!

Thank you to everyone involved for your participation, dedication, and ongoing support in making Going Rural 2026 such a success. Your contributions, as speakers, organizers, and attendees, helped create an inspiring and informative event that highlights the importance of healthcare in rural and remote communities.

We can't wait to see you again next year to continue building connections, sharing knowledge, and inspiring the next generation of rural healthcare professionals!

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