

# Island Health Acute Mental Health Services Engagement Frequently Asked Questions

*Updated: April 21, 2022*

## What is Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES)?

Island Health provides a wide range of different mental health and substance use services, including services in hospital settings, as well as community-based treatment options. More information is available here: [Mental Health & Substance Use Services | Island Health](#)

**Psychiatric Emergency Services**, also referred to as ‘PES’, is a specialized type of mental health and substance use care, **specifically designed for people who are in crisis**. It includes:

- Specialized assessment and care for people experiencing mental health and substance use-related crisis
- Crisis intervention, diagnosis, support, and education
- Substance use screening and risk assessment
- Referrals to appropriate ongoing care, including inpatient admission or outpatient services and community resources, as required
- Safety and discharge planning

PES at Royal Jubilee Hospital is available to people aged 17-75. PES is accessed through the emergency department, after an initial assessment by a doctor.

PES care may also be accessed through involuntary (mandatory) admission either by court order, or when certified by a medical professional. Island Health provides care in accordance with the Mental Health Act and the Hospital Act, as appropriate.

## How do people access emergency mental health and substance use care?

If you are experiencing a crisis or an emergency, the [Vancouver Island Crisis Line](#) is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-888-494-3888.

People in crisis can also attend their local emergency department or call 9-1-1.

## What is Island Health engaging on?

When someone is experiencing a mental health crisis, being able to access the right care is critical. Island Health is engaging with patients, the public, staff, physicians and other stakeholders to better understand from the community’s perspective, how existing acute Mental Health and Substance Use (MHSU) services, and specifically Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES) could be improved – this could be better access, more supportive and safer and anything else a stakeholder feels would contribute to a better care experience.

This engagement initiative is asking for input and perspectives from individuals and families with lived and living experience of mental health and substance use, as well as from Indigenous communities, partner organizations, peer support workers and health care providers. We want to know your ideas and hear your stories so that we can continuously improve how we deliver care.

## What does Island Health hope to learn from the engagement?

Island Health wants to know about what matters most to people who access mental health and substance use services, and what changes will help make the services better. This may cover a wide range of topics, from the physical spaces where care is provided, to ways to make clients, families, peers and others have a better experience. Input about the specific needs of youth who access mental health and substance use services is of particular interest.

## Why the specific focus on young adults?

It is recognized young adults aged 17-26 have unique needs, crisis presentations and care path journeys that are not always best met through the current PES and inpatient unit system of services. Over the past year as Island Health has undertaken focused work on PES, the need for an inpatient unit with a focus on young adults has been identified, and a “Young Adult Unit” (YAU) is being planned for 2023. This unit will provide acute mental health care services for young people aged 17-26, with a focus on age-appropriate, and culturally appropriate care.

## Why is the engagement important? How will the information be used?

Information collected in this engagement will be used to improve psychiatric emergency services at Royal Jubilee Hospital, to inform how inpatient services for young adults will look and work, and it will be used in mental health and substance use care across the Island Health region.

## Who can participate?

We welcome all voices and experiences. This is an open engagement process, which means everyone is welcome to participate. In particular, we want to hear from people who have had experiences or interactions with emergency mental health services on South Island in the past five years. This includes patients, family members and caregivers, as well as people who work in the health system or for partner agencies and organizations such as police, first responders, not-for-profits, educators, etc.

For some people, talking about their experiences related to mental health and substance use can be triggering and very difficult. There will be clinical resources and peer support workers available at all engagement sessions. If in the course of filling out the survey, you feel the need to speak to someone, please contact the [Vancouver Island Crisis Line](#), which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-888-494-3888.

## Is there a minimum age to participate?

Yes, we are looking for feedback from those involved in adult acute mental health and substance use services, which has a minimum age of 17. Any adult over 17 is eligible to participate.

## Is the process confidential?

Yes. We are not collecting names or identities of anyone who participates in this engagement. Any identifying details provided about care experiences will remain confidential.

The perspectives and input shared through the survey or engagement sessions and survey will be collected in a final report that does not make it possible for any of the participants to be identified.

## How can I participate in this engagement process?

There are different ways you can participate. Choose the option(s) that work best for you. People who complete the online survey may also participate in an in-person engagement session. Here are the ways to participate in this engagement project:

1. Share your perspective by [taking an online survey](#).
2. Attend an in-person drop-in engagement session at Umbrella Society on April 30<sup>th</sup> from 2-5pm.
3. Visit the [Psychiatry Emergency Services Island Health webpage](#) for timely information and updates.

## How is this different than other surveys related to mental health and substance use?

If you have received care from Island Health's Mental Health and Substance Use you may have recently completed a patient experience survey. This survey has provided valuable input over the past few months. It is being replaced by this Engagement Survey, as a special project focussed on improving the delivery of care within PES and to support the new Young Adult Unit. This engagement survey will be available from April 25 to May 20 2022.

Physicians may have recently completed a separate survey from Doctors of BC focusing on psychological safety, workforce challenges, and job satisfaction. The Doctors of BC survey and Island Health's engagement survey are both focused on improving the experience of care for both clinicians and patients; however, these initiative are distinct.

Staff and clinicians may have been asked to complete a Workforce Optimization Survey issued by your departmental managers and directors. The intent of this survey is to better understand staffing levels. This survey is distinct from the patient experience engagement work which is focused on what acute mental health services could and should look like in the future.