

Langley LIP Healthcare Forum Summary

Thursday, January 23rd, 2025

Overview and Objectives

On January 23rd, 2025, the Langley Local Immigration Partnership (LLIP) hosted a forum on immigrant access to healthcare. The event was organized by the LIP Project Team and moderated by Jody Johnson of PEERs Employment and Education Resources.

46 individuals representing 19 agencies and institutions attended.

Agencies and institutions represented:

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| 1. BC Kinsmen Housing Society | 11. Langley Senior Resources Society |
| 2. City of Langley | 12. Le Relais Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique |
| 3. Division of Family Practice | 13. Moving Forward Family Services |
| 4. Encompass Support Services Society | 14. New Directions English Language School |
| 5. Fraser Health Authority | 15. Raphael House |
| 6. Inclusion Langley Society | 16. RonCares Society |
| 7. ISSofBC | 17. Township of Langley |
| 8. Langley Community Services Society | 18. United Churches of Langley |
| 9. Langley School District | 19. YWCA |
| 10. Langley Seniors in Action | |

The three main objectives for the event were to:

1. Identify and discuss health and wellness and access to healthcare services for Newcomers in Langley
2. Learn what is underway to address these issues
3. Discuss and explore additional actions / activities for individual agencies and for the Langley LIP to take on

The three-hour event included **five main elements**:

1. **A keynote presentation delivered by Mei-Ling Wiedmeyer** titled Disparity of Immigrant Access to Healthcare. She is a Family Physician and Assistant Professor in the UBC Department of Family Practice. She also works at the [Umbrella Multicultural Health Co-op](#). Dr. Wiedmeyer's recently completed report (2024) "How Immigration Shapes Health Disadvantages and What Healthcare Organizations Can Do to Deliver More Equitable Care" can be accessed here in the Health category: <https://langleylip.ca/research-and-resources>
2. **A Panel Presentation** – using guiding questions developed in collaboration with each presenter, the panelists shared information about health programs and services offered to immigrants in Langley. The panel included:

- **Lydia Kang**, Family Support Advisor, [Inclusion Langley Society](#)
 - **Hong Wang**, Healthcare Navigator, [Langley Community Services Society](#)
 - **Gary Thandi**, Founder and Executive Director, [Moving Forward Family Services](#)
 - **Kaitlin Frost**, Program Manager, [Langley Division of Family Practice](#)
 - **Osob Mohamed**, Lead, [Health Equity and Community Engagement, EDI, Fraser Health](#)
3. **Small group discussions** – following the panel presentation, all attendees participated in small, guided groups discussions to brainstorm and share ideas on what activities, actions and advocacy the Langley LIP could take on to address healthcare issues faced by newcomers to Langley. Notetakers at each table collected key points. These have been themed and included below.

Questions:

1. Based on what you've heard today and from your perspective and experience, what do you think are the biggest issues related to health care access for immigrants living in Langley?
2. What activities, actions, advocacy should Langley agencies or the Langley LIP take on to improve access to health care for immigrant living in Langley?

Challenges and Barriers to Health Care Access for Immigrants in Langley

1. Language Barriers & Interpretation Services

- Limited English proficiency makes navigating the system difficult and healthcare jargon compounds the challenge.
- Interpretation services exist but are hard to access and require initiative from the newcomer.
- Some doctors do not assist in securing interpretation services.
- Certain refugee and smaller ethnolinguistic communities (e.g., Karen refugees) lack a critical mass, making language support even more limited.

2. Finding & Accessing Primary & Specialized Health Care

- Difficulty securing a family doctor, pediatrician, or specialist.
- Many doctors are not accepting new patients and may not take entire families.
- Limited in-person appointments; reliance on short phone consultations with only one issue addressed per visit.
- Online booking systems can be confusing and restrictive.
- Langley does not have a list of doctors accepting patients.
- Limited services for children with special needs.
- Cost for counselling and other services not covered by MSP cause newcomer families to not access needed services.

3. Transportation Challenges

- Many immigrants rely on public transit, which may not be convenient for reaching medical facilities.
- Transportation barriers particularly affect those needing specialist care outside their local area.

4. Support for Children & Special Needs Care

- Lack of specialized care options for children with disabilities.
- Gaps in after-school and graduate-age care for individuals with special needs.
- Limited school-age support for children requiring additional care.
- Some families deny that their child has a disability.

5. Mental Health Support Gaps

- Lack of culturally appropriate mental health services.
- Stigma around mental health in some communities discourages seeking help.
- Difficulty in accessing services due to long wait times and lack of multilingual counselors.

6. Food Security & Nutrition Challenges

- Many newcomers lack access to safe, affordable, and culturally appropriate food.
- Food waste occurs due to a mismatch between available food and cultural preferences.
- Some immigrants struggle with cooking Western-style meals due to unfamiliarity with ingredients and preparation methods.

7. System Navigation & Documentation Issues

- Healthcare system is different than home country; understanding the Canadian system is complex and not easy to navigate.
- Processes and procedures are regularly changing; accessing up-to-date information is difficult.
- Disconnect between available services and immigrant communities.
- Newcomers may initially access Coastal Health services but later need to transfer to Fraser Health, which lacks a centralized documentation system.
- Transferring medical records is complicated and often requires multiple steps.
- Many newcomers are unfamiliar with how municipal governments operate and don't know where to seek support.

8. Referral & Specialist Care Barriers

- Complex referral processes for specialists, requiring extensive paperwork and approvals.
- Language barriers make navigating referrals even more challenging.
- Greater need for healthcare navigators to assist newcomers in understanding and accessing services.

Recommended Actions for Langley Agencies & Langley LIP to Improve Immigrant Health Care Access

1. System Navigation & Coordination

- Create a "One-Stop" Navigation Hub to help immigrants access health services easily.
- Establish a Community Health Centre (HUB) where multiple services are available in one location.
- Provide more Healthcare Navigators to guide newcomers through the health system.
- Improve coordination between agencies, municipalities, and health authorities to ensure consistent information and support.

2. Language & Interpretation Support

- Expand patient-accessible interpretation services (online, virtual, and in-person).
- Ensure doctors are aware of all available interpretation services in Langley.
- Increase the availability of multilingual professionals in the healthcare system.

3. Enhancing Healthcare Provider Awareness & Training

- Offer workshops for doctors to educate them on newcomer health challenges.
- Encourage healthcare providers to see families as units rather than treating individuals separately.
- Provide cultural competency training to family physicians and healthcare workers.
- Advocate for an increase in newcomer nurses to provide more culturally appropriate care.

4. Community Engagement & Public Awareness

- Establish a Healthy Community Table where stakeholders collaborate on solutions.
- Promote healthcare resources on City Facebook pages, websites, and newspapers for standard and consistent messaging.
- Strengthen the role of Langley LIP in tracking and ensuring organizations act on shared ideas.
- Have Langley LIP take a leadership role in coordinating orientations with multiple organizations and health authorities to ensure consistent messaging.
- Increase awareness of resources such as: <https://mybookletbc.com/>
- Have doctors come to newcomer groups to share information.
- Create listing of doctors accepting patients including languages spoken by doctors.
- Create a repository of health resources in Langley.

5. Food Security & Nutrition Support

- Expand food vouchers and culturally appropriate food bank programs.
- Provide cooking workshops to help newcomers learn how to use local ingredients.

6. Advocacy & Policy Recommendations

- Advocate for the Ministry of Health to conduct research on newcomer health challenges.
- Push for policy changes that support better access to healthcare for immigrants.
- Encourage more active partnerships between Langley LIP and healthcare organizations.