

Coastal Family Resource Coalition

# **Coming Together Forum Report 2025**

Ucluelet, BC May 7, 2025

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## Introduction

On May 7, 2025, the Coastal Family Resource Coalition held the 11th Coming Together Forum in Ucluelet, BC on Yuułu?if?ath territory. This event brought together a diverse group of community members from across the west coast region, including service providers, local leaders and youth for a day of meaningful connection and collaboration. Held with the shared goal of supporting the health and well-being of our coastal communities, the forum created space for open dialogue, learning, and relationship-building.

Participants engaged in thoughtful conversations around current challenges and emerging priorities, with a strong focus on equity, cultural safety, and community-driven solutions. Presentations by Anna Allen from Empower ED and The West Coast Primary Care Initiative highlighted the incredible work being done across the region and inspired new ideas for partnership and action.

The event once again affirmed the power of coming together—to listen, to learn, and to strengthen the networks that support our collective resilience. Thank you to all who attended and contributed to this important gathering.

## Community Engagement

Team lisaak, a group from Leadership Vancouver Island, conducted community outreach outside the Ucluelet and Tofino Grocery Stores to gather input on the region's top health priorities. As community members exited the store, team members engaged them in brief conversations, asking for their thoughts on the most important health issues facing the community.

Over 90 people attended the Ucluelet Community Centre on May 7<sup>th</sup>- we hosted round tables which attendees were able to provide input on community health priorities.

The feedback collected will help inform future projects and initiatives aimed at supporting local health and well-being. The following section outlines the top community health priorities as identified at the community health forum, as well as the community engagement conducted by Team lisaak.

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## **Community Priorities**

### **Affordable and Inclusive Housing**

- Stable, affordable housing for families, people with disabilities, essential workers, and unhoused individuals
- Lack of shelters, care homes, and supportive housing
- Tourism increasing housing pressures

### **Access to Health Care & Primary Care Providers**

- Shortage of doctors and NP's, long wait times, and reliable clinic hours
- Gaps in urgent/non-emergency care, prenatal/postnatal services, and in-town specialist appointments
- Call for hospice beds, and long-term care beds
- Local birthing options and support for more remote communities

### **Mental Health Supports for All**

- Increased access needed across all communities and scopes of practice
- Youth, men's, and caregiver-specific mental health services
- Emphasis on culturally safe, respectful mental health care
- Crisis, grief, and trauma supports are lacking

### **Food Security & Self-Reliance**

- Healthy, affordable food locally

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- Need for education on nutrition (especially for parents and in schools)
  - Support for local producers and Indigenous food systems
  - Community interest in food sovereignty and gardening

### **Youth Empowerment**

- Safe spaces, youth-friendly recreation, and after-school programs
- Mental health and substance use supports (vaping, alcohol, nicotine)
- Training, education, and pathways to local employment (e.g., hospitality apprenticeships)
- Support for biannual youth forums and youth advisory groups

### **Cultural Safety, Indigenous Sovereignty & Healing**

- Language revitalization and reconnection to land
- Addressing intergenerational trauma and cultural loss
- Support Indigenous-led governance and program development
- Indigenous Cultural Supports and Traditional integration into Hospital and Primary Care

### **Health Equity and System Navigation**

- Call for respectful, inclusive health environments for staff and patients
- Support for caregivers and frontline staff
- Easier access to referrals, appointments, and coordinated care
- Expand access to essential services in Indigenous and offshore communities
- Increased collaboration amongst Service Providers

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## **Community Recreation & Wellness Infrastructure**

- Prevention-focused health through recreation: multiplex, pool, covered spaces, sports fields
- Sober fun, family-friendly and intergenerational programming
- More public, accessible, and inclusive spaces for connection

## **Transportation Access and Equity**

- Covered bus stops, improved sidewalks, seating for elders and mobility needs
- Transportation is a barrier to accessing health, education, and recreation
- Transportation to Medical Appointments out of town

## **Education, Literacy & Life Skills**

- Early literacy programs (Moe the Mouse, Mother Goose and Roots of Empathy)
- Support for children with disabilities in early learning
- Life skills education: nutrition, digital and financial literacy
- Strengthen literacy partnerships and increase staffing capacity

## **Top 10 Community Priorities- List**

1. Affordable and Inclusive Housing
2. Access to Health Care & Primary Providers
3. Mental Health Supports for All

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4. Food Security & Self-Reliance
  5. Youth Empowerment and Retention
  6. Cultural Safety, Indigenous Sovereignty & Healing
  7. Health Equity and System Navigation
  8. Community Recreation & Wellness Infrastructure
  9. Transportation Access and Equity
  10. Education, Literacy & Life Skills

## **Moving Forward – what can we do?**

Participants identified the need to advocate to politicians and health leadership for the changes we want to see in our health care and public health systems. The importance of core funding, based on need not population size, cannot be stressed enough. We need to continue to advocate for the release of local health data that more accurately demonstrates the needs of the West Coast. Advocacy efforts will require partnerships and collaboration between service agencies, municipal and First Nation governments, and community members.

Participants expressed the need for more community engagements and forums to inform local decision-making, promote collaboration, and support social equity and justice in the region. The Coming Together Forum occurs every two years. In the meantime, please use this report to start conversations, support advocacy efforts, and to inform grant applications and program planning.

Please contact the Coalition Coordinator, Brooke Wood, [coordinator@coastalcoalition.ca](mailto:coordinator@coastalcoalition.ca) with any questions, ideas, or requests for support.

## **Other West Coast Data Sources**

[Overview | Clayoquot Biosphere Trust](#) – Vital Signs and Living Wage Reports

[alberni-clayoquot-lha-profile.pdf](#) – LHA 70 Local Health Area Profile – has a fair amount of west coast specific data.