

Rural Continuing Medical Education (RCME)

Community Program

An Initiative of the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues (JSC)

Annual Report 2021/22



Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues (JSC)



Rural Coordination
Centre of BC



Enhancing rural health through education and advocacy

Prepared by

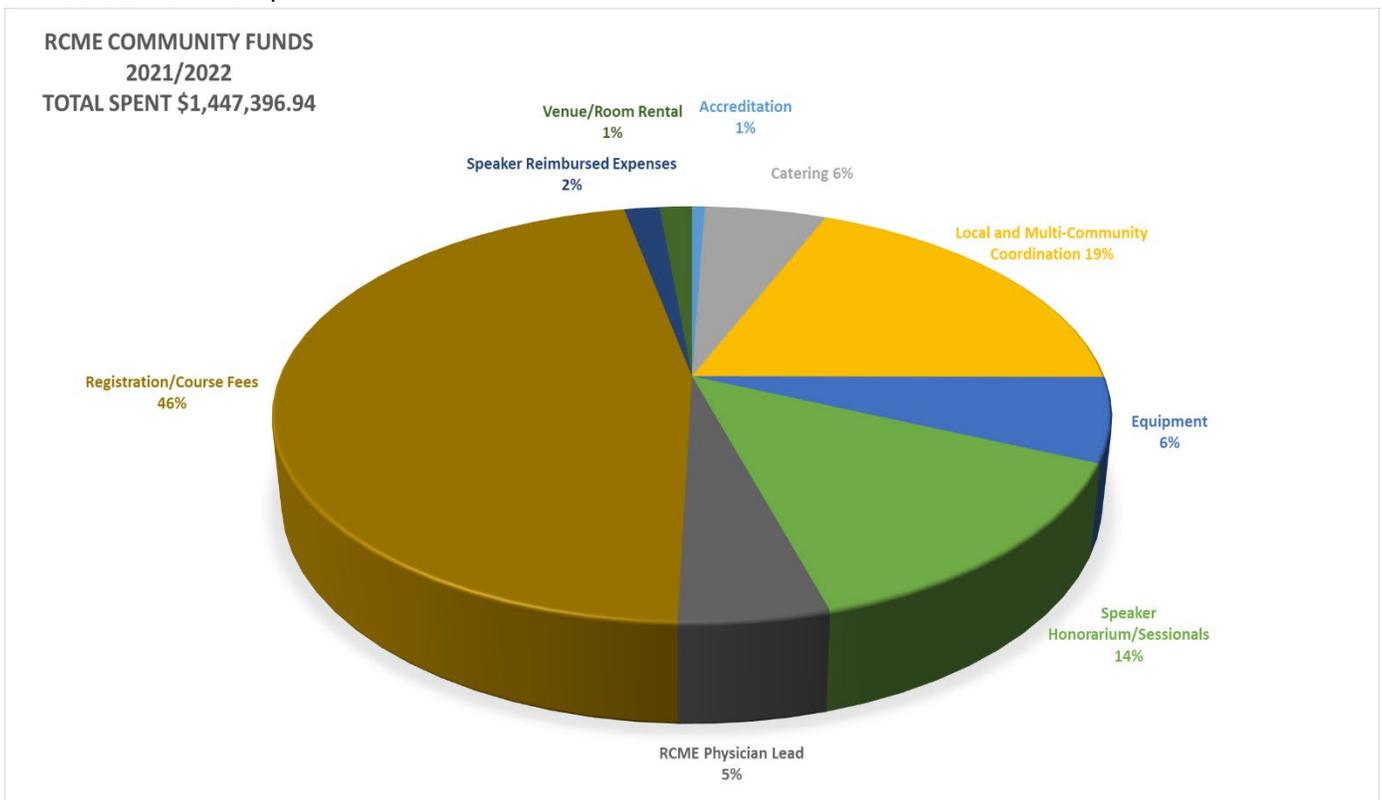
Heather Gummow, Provincial Manager & Dr. Ian Schokking, Physician Lead

May 2022

The RCME Community Program team has continued to make great strides in bringing more RSA communities on board for collective learning. During 2021/22, nine communities were integrated into the program, raising the total number to 94 RSA communities (out of a total of 104) since launching in August 2019. This achievement is the result of the customer service approach and relationship-building efforts by program staff, as well as the efforts that RSA communities have made to develop structures and systems to execute local CME. The program team continues to focus on:

- Expanding communication methods through newsletters, websites, and outreach.
- Increasing connections with health authority medical leadership to build on the partnership model with the RCCbc.
- Strengthening relationships with rural physicians and communities.
- Evaluating accessibility to rural community money to ensure processes are streamlined and efficient.
- Supporting providers and communities to proactively approach local education (CanMEDs and community learning plans).

The 2021/22 fiscal year has shown a shift in the pandemic landscape and more in-person education and activities have taken place. In April of 2021, the JSC approved and provided RCME community funding in the amount of \$1,704,484.05 to eligible RSA communities across BC. The total community funds spent in 2021/22 was \$1,447,396.94. The team is excited to share that in comparison to 2020/21, overall spending trends have increased by 61%. 46% was used for course fees and registration, 19% for local/multi-community coordination, and 14% for honorariums and sessionals (stipends to speakers and facilitators of educational activities). Below is the total community funding spent by expense category across BC in 2021/22.



In the Fall of 2020, the JSC approved an expansion to the staff support for the RCME Community Program and in the Spring of 2021, Rural Programs' Liaisons were hired in Northern Health, Interior Health, Island Health, and Vancouver Coastal Health. The initial focus of the new Liaisons was to support the administration of the RCME community funds. Over the last year, the RCME Liaisons have worked closely with the Rural Programs' Liaisons in each health region to transition the administration of funding and streamline processes. With a 61% increase in community spending last year, the Rural Programs' Liaisons were brought onboard at an ideal time to support the increase in financial administrative needs.

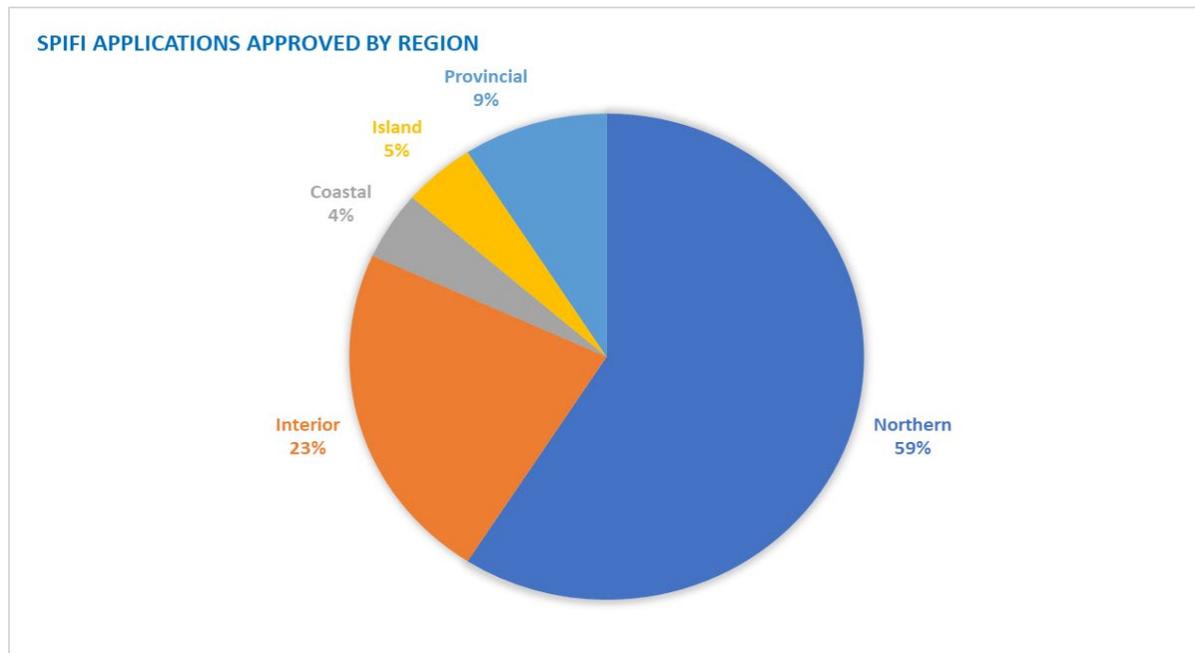
Specialist, Sub-Specialty, Indigenous, and Funding for Innovation (SPIFI)

The SPIFI initiatives overarching purpose is to support rural physicians and communities with additional funding and resources to create networks of relevant learners, increase capacity to deliver health care services to Indigenous communities, and support innovative delivery of, and approaches to community RCME. Announced in April 2020, the initiative continues to see great success with eight new projects being supported in 2021, bringing the total number of applications supported to 22. Over the last 12 months, projects have included Emergency Simulation Training Sessions in Clearwater and SafeOR Leadership Education in Prince George. Click [here](#) to see a map of BC that provides further details on the SPIFI initiatives and the connections being made across the province.

Over the past year, SPIFI applications that offer virtual education opportunities have been gaining momentum and seeing additional RSA communities join in on the activities. The [Physician Learning Project \(PLP\) on Psychedelics and Complementary Techniques](#), an initiative developed and facilitated by the rural physicians and team on Cortes Island, hosted seven education sessions and saw over 100 rural providers attend from across Canada. Included [here](#) is a map demonstrating the reach of communities that had attendees at the sessions. The Rural Virtual Simulation education series, an initiative developed by Dr. Caroline Shooner, Haida Gwaii and Dr. Mary Koziol, Carrier Sekani Family Service, is an education series funded through the SPIFI initiative that brings together rural practitioners' and exposes them to virtual case simulations using the Virtual Resus open access online resource. To join the next session and be added to the mailing list, email rcme@rccbc.ca.

Based on evaluation feedback from project leads and applicants of the SPIFI initiative, the provincial SPIFI Committee and RCME team will be focusing efforts on increasing awareness of the initiative at a local level, exploring opportunities to streamline the application processes for education funds available across BC, and supporting rural physicians to build networks at a multi-community, regional and provincial level.

Below is a chart demonstrating the regions that the approved SPIFI applications have been received since the announcement of the initiative in April 2020:



Future

Over the next year, the team will continue to focus efforts on building relationships with partners and stakeholders, and streamlining processes to ensure rural physicians and communities are accessing the benefits and incentives available to them. The staff will continue to receive education and training from the rural team at the Ministry of Health providing them with up to date and accurate information to share throughout their regions. Working closely with the Rural Programs' Liaisons, the RCME Liaisons will be seeking opportunities to engage with physicians, health authority staff, and communities concerning NITAOP and the ability to organize CME activities during clinical visits.

As we reflect on the successes over the last year, we would like to thank everyone who has been part of this journey so far. Our achievements have been made possible thanks to the partners we work with. The team would like to thank the JSC for their continued support and commitment to sustainable funding. The team would also like to thank our partners for their time, support, and commitment to ensuring the success of the program, including but not limited to Health Authorities, UBC Rural CPD, Rural Education Action Plan (REAP), Divisions of Family Practice, and Medical Staff Associations.

Attached as **Appendix A** is a detailed program report for each region provided by the program staff.

APPENDIX A

Fraser Health Authority

Heather Gummow, Provincial Manager & Dr. Jeff Schulz, RCME Physician Lead

The Provincial Manager of the RCME Community Program supports the community of Hope in Fraser Health to access CME funding. The community was fortunate enough to host the CARE course in early 2021 and utilized more than half of their remaining reverted community funds to deliver the training. The CARE course was exceptionally well received. It was attended by nearly our entire medical staff, as well as a significant number of paramedics and nurses, including several new nurses and physicians who benefited from the teaching, discussions and the many scenarios that allowed us to practice an integrated, team-based approach to rural emergencies. Given that we work in a small, rural hospital, without all the resources of a larger center — we are very dependent on all our colleagues. The CARE course did an amazing job of helping us understand the roles and skills of each team member —from prehospital care to the critical interventions we perform in the emergency room—ultimately helping us to continue to provide the best emergency care possible for our community.

The providers in the community are excited to be eligible to access new community funding and have plans to organize an Ultrasound Course in 2022 so that they may maximize the use of the new, upgraded ultrasound machine they received this year. Additionally, we have used the funds to support several palliative care education sessions, as well as a review of ophthalmologic emergencies given by our local optometrist.

We are very grateful for the funds we receive from the RCME Community Program and hope to continue to utilize them to support our education and ultimately the quality of care we provide to our rural community.

Nisga'a Valley Health Authority – Heather Gummow, Provincial Manager

The Provincial Manager of the RCME Community Program supports the physicians in the community of New Aiyansh in Nisga'a Valley Health to access CME funding. 2021/22 was the first year that the community of physicians was eligible for RCME community funding, and they are excited about bringing together providers to learn. The group virtually attended the 57th Annual Family Practice Review course that offered an update of knowledge central to the practice of family medicine in both rural and urban settings.

The physicians will spend time together in 2022/23 to plan for the upcoming year of education opportunities and will be including the communities nursing staff to take part in the activities and training.

Interior Health Region – Nicole Hochleitner – Wain, RCME Liaison

Regional Update

Networks/Alliance: The Interior has two robust multi-community CME/CPD programs in the East Kootenay and Kootenay Boundary regions. Both programs are led by the Divisions of Family Practice and supported by CME Coordinators that work closely with the RCME Liaison. Weekly and quarterly meetings take place to discuss updates on education, and upcoming projects, and to provide a forum to ask questions, discuss challenges and build relationships.

In addition to these high-functioning CME/CPD programs, the Interior has a closely connected network: The Shuswap Collaborative Alliance. The membership for this Alliance consists of:

- Doctors of BC Facility Engagement for the Salmon Arm Hospital,
- Practice Support Program (PSP),
- Shuswap North Okanagan Division of Family Practice,
- Shuswap Hospital Foundation,
- Interior Health Quality Improvement, Physician Quality Improvement (PQI),
- Shared Care; and
- RCME Community Program.

Across the Interior region, additional alliances have formed to support shared education goal setting and connections including:

- East Kootenay Medical Network Group
- Thompson Regional Alliance in Kamloops (urban-based)
- Vernon Regional Alliance (urban-based)

The virtual *Interior Regional Alliance Summit* was held on January 19, 2022, bringing together all of the Interior Alliance groups. The summit featured an introduction of the Alliances and their mission statements and presentations highlighting success stories. Overall, the event provided a valuable networking opportunity for all members to come together to discuss group structure, and mandates/goals, share learnings, and build relationships across the region.

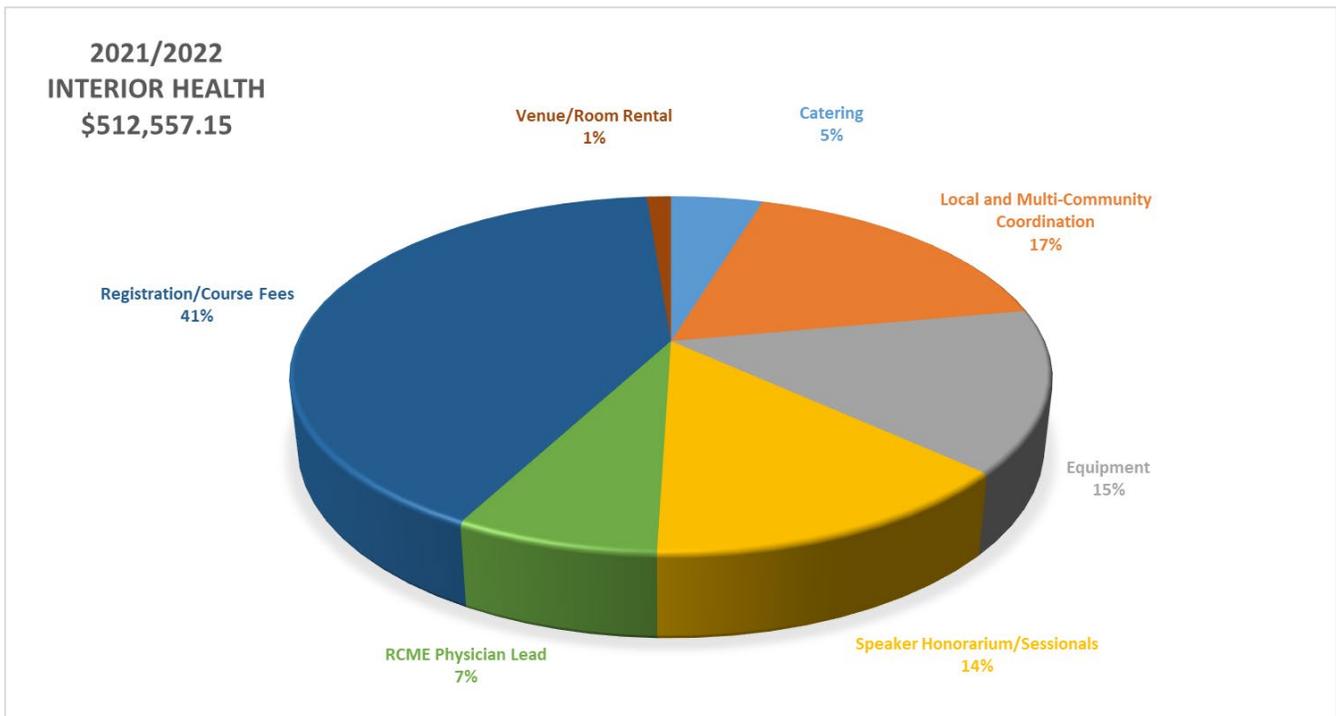
Community of Practice: The Interior RCME Community of Practice continues to meet monthly to nurture the connection between the local and multi-community coordinators. Two new Coordinators in Clearwater and Cranbrook joined the Community of Practice group and are appreciative of the support and mentorship being offered by the RCME Liaison. This connection is a valuable resource for the liaison, and it provides the local coordinators the opportunity to discuss education happening in the interior, as well provincially.

Success Story

The Interior Region has had a challenging year. In addition to the COVID surge, wildfires and flooding swept through the communities. In some of the hardest hit communities, the physicians and medical staff worked tirelessly for many days with no breaks. However, even with all these challenges, there was an increase in the utilization of RCME Community Programs funds by 97% compared to the 2020/21 fiscal year.

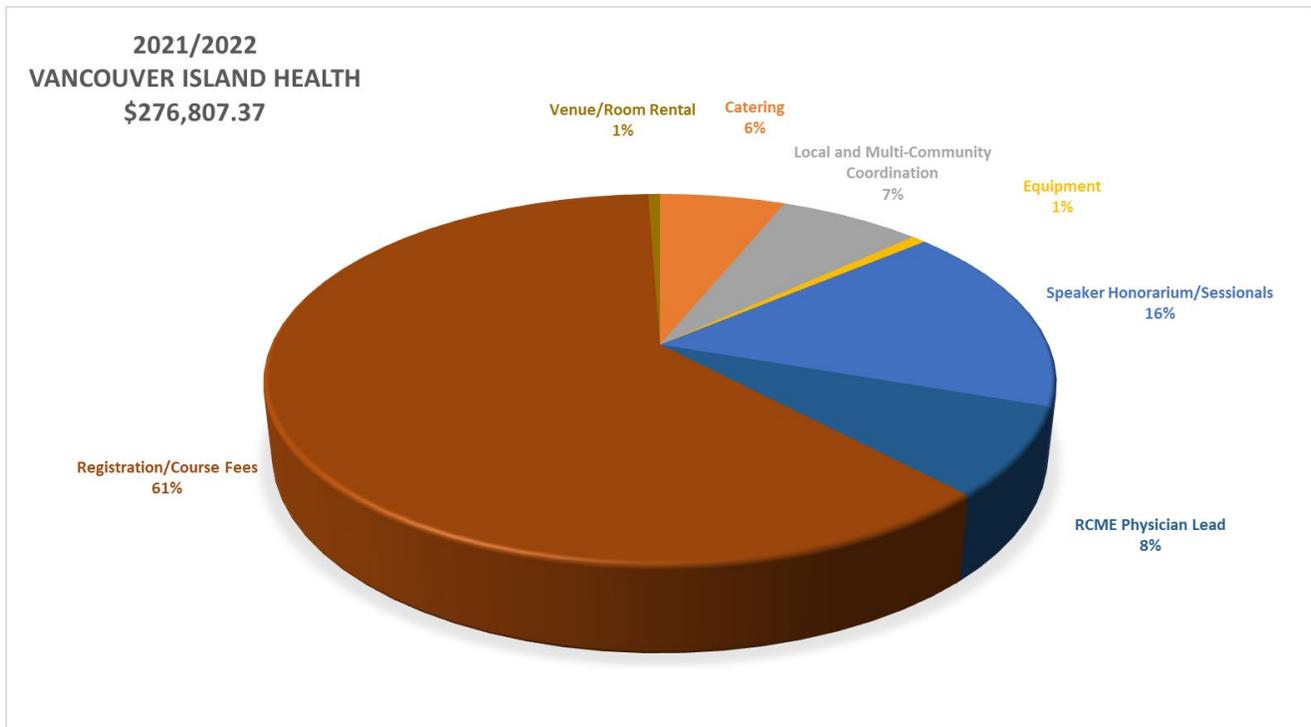
The education that took place was on a smaller scale with a focus primarily on the recertification courses (aka 4-letter courses), support CME talks, and equipment purchases. The community of Golden organized a wellness event that brought the physicians together in person via a competitive golf game. This event included a CME presentation on “Optimization of EMR” and “Clinic Flow”. These education events demonstrate that the Interior Region is still focused on the RCME Community Program even when faced with a year of uncertainty.

Below is the total community funding spent by expense category for the Interior Health Region in 2021/22.



Vancouver Island Health Region – Antoinette Picone, RCME Liaison Regional Update

RCME Community Funding: In the 2021/22 fiscal year, the Island communities saw a significant increase in the amount of CME activity occurring. Overall, communities planned and executed education events and the region has seen a 63% increase in RCME fund utilization compared to 2020/21. Below is the total community funding spent by expenses category in the Vancouver Island Health Region in 2021/22.



Education activities contributing to the increase in spending included the successful delivery of:

- Medical expert-based courses such as HOUSE, CARE, ATLS, NRP, and BLS/ACLS in multiple communities.
- The CASTED Course was hosted in Tofino in February 2022 and was attended by multiple North Island communities. Without the participation of multiple communities being in attendance to meet the minimum participant requirement, this course could not have occurred. It also provided an opportunity for physicians from different communities to connect and learn together after almost two years of pandemic restrictions.
- The Psychedelics and Complementary Techniques – Physician Learning Project hosted seven virtual sessions including topics such as My Experiences Using Psilocybin in Palliative Care and MDMA-assisted Psychotherapy with Trauma Survivors. This series gained provincial spread and was attended by over 100 health care professionals including physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, midwives, residents, and other interested allied health care practitioners.
- Indigenous Cultural Safety Education such as In-Plain Sight debriefing sessions, Cultural Commitment Workshops; Cultural Safety Project with resource library.

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- Monthly simulation sessions covering a variety of topics such as, but not limited to, Toxicology, Cardiac Rhythms, Pediatric Seizures, and Transforming Trauma in the Emergency Department.
 - Orthopedics Quality Improvement project was hosted in two Cowichan Valley communities.
 - Cowichan Inpatient Mentorship Program; and
 - Mindfulness during times of COVID.

Networks: The RCME Liaison continues to enhance involvement within rural community networks and Island Health structures. The RCME Liaison now sits on the newly established Island Health’s Medical Education Resource Committee (a subcommittee of the Health Authority Medical Advisory Committee) in an advisory capacity and provides the committee with ongoing advice on RCME program opportunities. Additionally, the Liaison facilitates potential opportunities to deliver provincially recommended education (e.g., Mental Health Act) to rural communities as collective learning experiences.

The RCME Liaison, Rural Programs’ Liaison, and the RCCbc Island Node Research staff participated in a successful virtual “roadshow” presenting to Local Medical Advisory Committees, the Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice, and the Presidents of the Island Medical Staff Association. This provided an opportunity to promote the RCME Community Program and demonstrated how the program supports education opportunities for members of the medical staff. The presentations were well received, and the groups were enthusiastic about the opportunity to increase networking amongst communities through collective, community-based educational activities.

The RCME Liaison is additionally building connections with the Island Medical Program’s Physician Education Program (IMP PEP) which is affiliated with UBC CPD. The IMP PEP has coordinated an Island-wide conference which will occur on June 10-11, 2022, and RCME/RCCbc Island Node is currently exploring various opportunities at the conference site to provide information on rural programs and how these programs can benefit rural physicians residing and practicing on the Island.

Community of Practice: The RCME Liaison continues to be in frequent contact with the local community RCME Coordinators across the Island. These connections ensure local staff feel supported to execute closer to home CME activities and increase communication channels with communities and other partners supporting education.

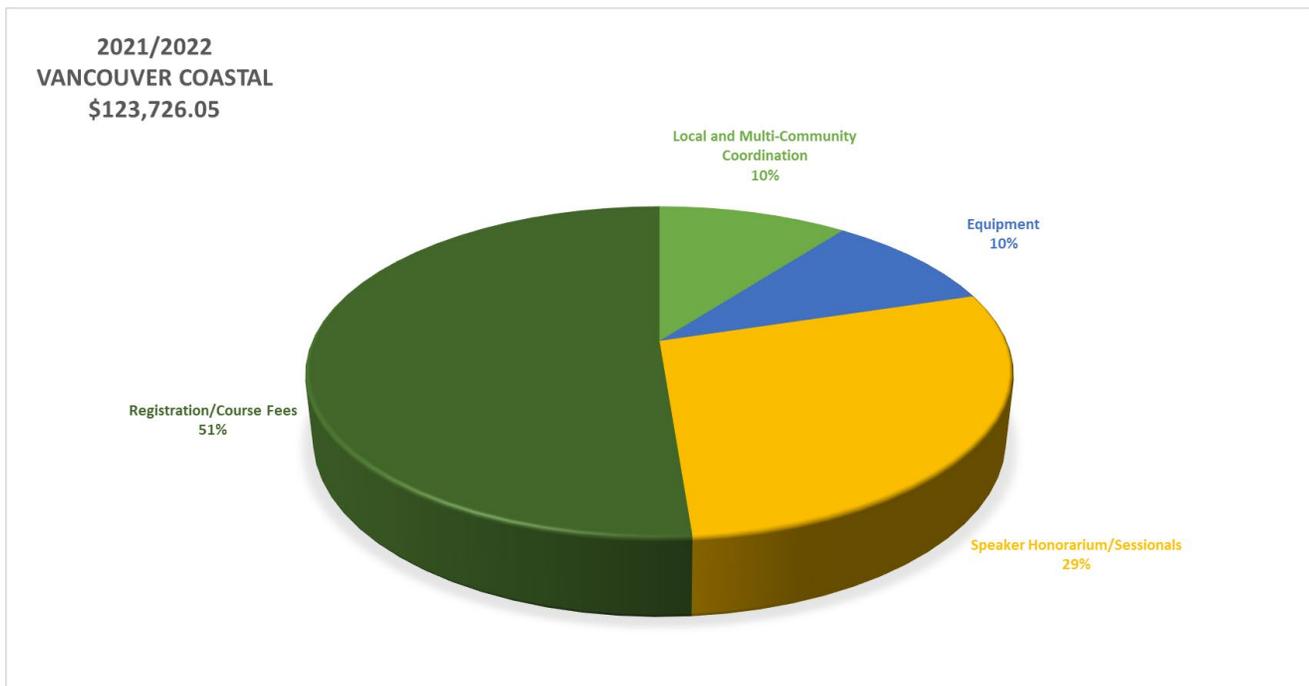
The RCME Liaison for the Island leads the Provincial RCME Community of Practice which brings together all local, multi-community and regional supports for CME/CPD across the province. This forum provides a space for coordinators to share in the education activities occurring in their community or region which, in turn, allows for the opportunity to create synergies around the CME activities taking place.

At the most recent meeting in February 2022, a presentation was given by UBC CPD on the Coaching and Mentoring Program (CAMP) and how this program could be utilized for specific CME topics in rural communities, if/when there are challenges finding the requested education. Additionally, the group decided on creating a provincial RCME *Slack* channel to share regional CME activity. This shared channel will act as a resource for the Community of Practice members, providing information on the various topics being presented in each region as well as those who have delivered the sessions.

Vancouver Coastal Region - Eva Jackson, Rural Programs' Liaison Regional Update

The Rural Programs' Liaison has successfully implemented 8 out of the 9 eligible RSA communities in the Vancouver Coastal Health Region. The remaining community to implement has a large number of reverted funds and is gradually working towards joining the RCME Community Program. Each community actively planned and engaged in education throughout the 2021/22 fiscal year and there was a 90% increase in utilization compared to 2020/21.

Below is the total community funding spent by expenses category in the Vancouver Coastal Health Region in 2021/22.



During the second half of the fiscal year, physicians across the coastal region organized and attended a variety of educational activities including NRP, ACLS, PALS, simulation rounds, ultrasound sessions, and morbidity and mortality rounds. Many communities are preparing and looking forward to expanding in-person education as the pandemic regulations begin to lift.

Success Story

Bella Coola had a successful year planning education and worked very hard to bring the CARE course to the community. As Bella Coola is a more isolated and remote community, there was some concern about whether the CARE course, equipment and staff, could make it there due to limited travel options. After much organization, the CARE course was able to fly to Bella Coola to deliver a valuable two-day, in-person course with the local physicians, nurses, and paramedics. Topics included airway management, trauma care, cardiac care, emergency obstetrics, paediatrics, and neonatal care. RCME funds supported the community with the cost of the course, as well as providing a learning space and catering for the participants and instructors. This would not have been possible without the support from the RCME Community Program, RCCbc, and VCH working together to support the rural community and physicians.

Northern Health Region – Shar McCrory, RCME Liaison Regional Update

Shar McCrory, RCME Liaison, Northern Health joined the team in February 2022 and is located within the Wet'suwet'en territory belonging to the Gidimt'en clan, otherwise known as Smithers. Before joining the community program team, Shar was with Northern Health as a Practice Support Coach for Smithers, Houston, and Dease Lake. Her years of experience are built around working in the internal health authority structures, a strong foundation of education knowledge, and building relationships with community leaders, staff and rural physicians. Shar has lived in the Northwest for over 30 years, mostly in the Hazelton area.

The North has a unique RCME Community Program that has two additional full-time staff (RCME Community Coordinator & RCME Program Assistant) that are funded by direct community contributions. These staff serve multiple communities and provide varying models of support as determined by the individual community needs. Similar to the Liaison, these positions joint report to Northern Health and RCCbc. The two Liaison positions in the North work collaboratively with the RCME Community Coordinator and RCME Program Assistant to ensure local education needs are planned, organized, executed and budgeted.

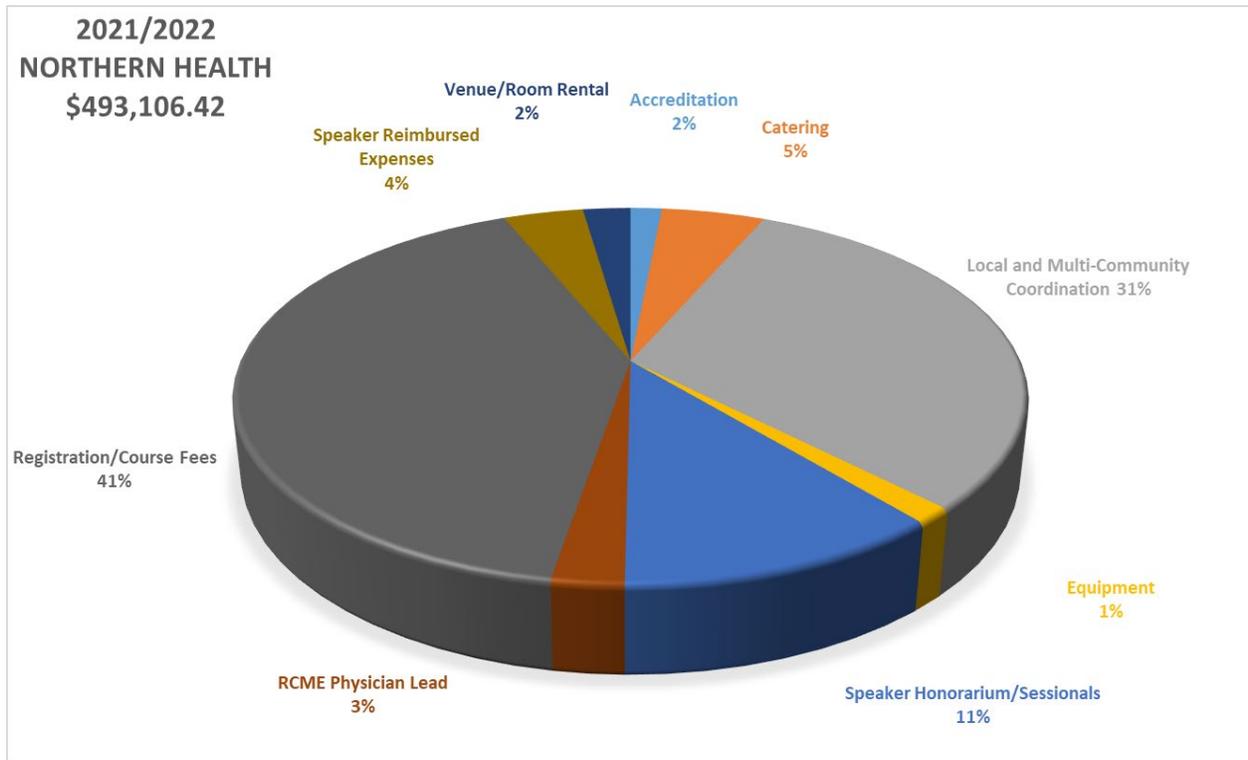
The two additional full-time staff support the execution of the CME plans, including tasks like; support with medical education events, large course organizations such as CARE, CASTED and assistance with CME accreditations and education rounds schedule. There are currently 11 communities utilizing the two full-time staff and 10 communities utilizing a combination of those supports, as well as local part-time supports. The additional full-time staff provides a sustainable resource for communities with organizational knowledge and skill development that have been demonstrated over time to be very beneficial for the communities. At a recent meeting with one of the Northern communities, a physician shared that they felt they would have nothing —meaning no CME offerings—if they did not have the support of the additional full-time staff and all the experience that they have been able to share. Similarly, the Northern Health sponsor for the RCME Community Program has agreed that the full-time positions have supported the collaborative relationship between the RCCbc, Northern Health and the medical staff across the region. The community program staff are very committed to supporting their communities using collaborative efforts of sourcing, sharing information, planning logistics and managing events.

The North currently has 24 communities implemented into the program and one community not yet accessing new funds. The next step is to onboard the outstanding community in 2022.

RCME Community Funding: Many communities are utilizing the RCME funding and have plans to host large course offerings in the 2022/23 fiscal year. There is an appetite to collaborate with “next door” communities and open the learning options more broadly across the North. Many physician groups are eager to have face-to-face interactions, but continue to enjoy the blended courses – some virtual and some in person.

The Northern communities had another successful year of building local CME models and hosting educational activities. The total RCME community funding spent for the region was \$493,106.42, a 26% increase over the 2020/21 fiscal year.

Below is a breakdown of the total community funding spent by category within the Northern Health Region.



Success Story (article submitted by Dr. Charles Helm)

The weekend of April 2-3, 2022, saw a full parking lot outside the Tumbler Ridge Health Centre, and a teaching faculty of six experts from across BC reviewing multiple emergency scenarios —for an intense 10 hours a day— with 24 enthusiastic participants from the Peace Region.

This was the CARE course, a team-based learning experience delivered to eight physicians, eight nurses, and eight pre-hospital providers – everything from trauma care to obstetric emergencies, from cardiac arrest to care of the newborn, hand-crafted specifically for rural health care providers. Its goal is simple: improve the experience of rural emergency care in Canada, by enhancing confidence and competence in a positive, supportive, practical learning environment. Over the two days, the 24 participants rotated through 32 hands-on learning stations.

Bringing the course to Tumbler Ridge was truly a team effort. Andrea Amadi and Lisa Johnson put in countless hours of organization, which resulted in a glitch-free event. The Tumbler Ridge Community Centre provided tables, chairs and a projector at no cost, and delivered these items, recognizing how important the course was for health care in the region. Northern Health provided the facility at no cost. Bryce Kirby and her team at 242-Brew provided outstanding catering throughout the weekend and kept participants well nourished.

The results were remarkable. Participant evaluations included:

- "Best course ever!! So much fun, loads of passion"

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- "Absolutely great for team-building"
 - "Loved the exuberance and compassion for rural and remote care"

Dustin Curry, Tumbler Ridge Fire Chief, provided a thoughtful and astute comment:

"The CARE course has been an eye-opening experience to be a part of, to say the least. The course was high energy and super involved from the very beginning and as an adult learner, I loved that! I consider myself very fortunate to have participated in such a relevant course alongside colleagues from around the Peace Region. Doctors, Nurses, Paramedics and First Responders all play such a vital role when taking into consideration the limited resources that we may have at any given time. I think the most valuable takeaway for me is the improved teamwork and communications skills that we will use in those high-stress, fast-paced situations where it counts the most."

The teaching faculty somehow found time on the Saturday evening for a whirlwind tour to a dinosaur tracksite just before it got dark, courtesy of the Tumbler Ridge Museum. Dr. Jel Coward, CARE course director, had nothing but good things to say about the participants and the community:

"Small places are so special! It feels such an honour to have brought The CARE Course to Tumbler Ridge. Our team loved working with the providers at the Health Centre in Tumbler Ridge... what a diverse, positive, dedicated group of people -- we learned a lot together, and enjoyed seeing the community strengthen its relationships, knowledge and skills, together."

Shar McCrory, the Liaison for Rural Continuing Medical Education (RCME) in the North was delighted that the CARE course came to Tumbler Ridge and noted that RCME funding for the course had made it possible to host this remarkable weekend for local providers, in their community, using their equipment. After two-plus years of a pandemic, with so many health-care providers complaining of exhaustion, the energy and vigour at the end of the CARE course were palpable and wonderful to see.

"Best course ever" – it doesn't get better than that. Thanks to the CARE course faculty, organizing team and all who contributed to making this transformative event possible for Tumbler Ridge and the South Peace!