



Immigrant Healthcare Quick Guide

Health and Medical Services in Surrey

Surrey has one of the largest populations of immigrants in Canada, each with unique backgrounds and needs. Canada's healthcare system is complicated and can be confusing. That's true even for longtime residents, but recent immigrants face additional barriers including language, cultural differences and / or a lack of understanding of how healthcare is provided in B.C. With funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership has put together this fact sheet to assist newcomers and those supporting them.

Enrolling in the British Columbia Medical Services Plan (MSP)

The Medical Services Plan (MSP) is the provincial health insurance program. It covers medically required services, including doctor visits, diagnostic tests, and hospital stays. Key details:

Eligibility

Permanent residents, refugees, and certain work permit holders are generally eligible for MSP coverage. Temporary residents and visitors may have limited coverage.

Enrollment

You must apply for MSP coverage as soon as you arrive as a Permanent Resident in British Columbia. Your healthcare coverage will start three months after your arrival date.

To enrol, you need to obtain a B.C. Services Card at an ICBC driver licensing office. In Surrey there are two locations: 13426 - 78 Ave. and 15285 - 101 Ave. You will need to provide primary and secondary identification documents. For more information, visit [How to Apply](#).

There are many reasons why accessing healthcare in BC may be challenging to some immigrants and refugees.

Healthcare Challenges Faced by Newcomers

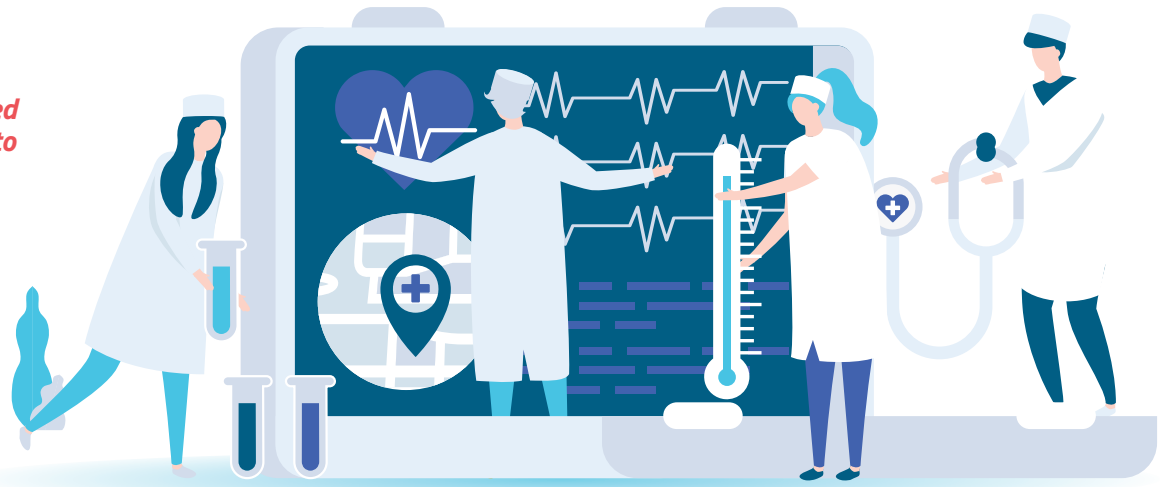
Communication Difficulties: Many immigrants and refugees have a hard time communicating with healthcare providers due to limited English. This may lead to misunderstandings, misdiagnoses, or inadequate treatment.

No Health Insurance: Newcomers should apply for the [B.C. Medical Services Plan \(MSP\)](#) as soon as they arrive. It takes three months for applications to be processed. Those who do not purchase private health insurance during this time are without access to healthcare services.

Different Beliefs and Practices: Different cultural beliefs and practices may cause some people to not want to see a doctor or to wait too long or to not follow the instructions provided to them by their healthcare provider.

Not Knowing About the Help Available: Immigrants and refugees may not know about the healthcare programs and resources available, and how to access them. This, of course, makes it hard for them to get the medical help they need.

Many medical, dental and other health related services are available to newcomers in Surrey.



Medical Services and Supports

In Surrey, there's a comprehensive range of medical services available:

Family doctors and general practitioners. To get assistance in finding a family doctor, add yourself to the Patient Attachment Waitlist, available by phoning 8-1-1. You can also register with the [Health Connect Registry](#) to be matched with a family doctor in the Surrey North Delta area. **Warning: There is a shortage of family practitioners, and delays are likely.**

The [New Canadian Clinic](#) is managed by the Fraser Health Authority and provides primary care for government-assisted refugees, privately sponsored refugees, and refugee claimants. The clinic is located at the: Jim Pattison Outpatient Care and Surgery Centre at 9750 – 140th Street, Surrey.

[Roots Community Health Centre](#) provides health care services to vulnerable newcomers who do not have adequate primary care and assists them to connect with the healthcare they need. The Centre is located at: Office #106, 8927 – 152nd Street, Surrey.

Walk-in clinics for non-emergency medical issues. If you have a health concern and you do not have a family doctor, cannot get an appointment, or need assistance after hours, you can go to a walk-in clinic. Services are free if you have a health card. If you do not have a health card, you can still see a doctor but you will have to pay a fee. This is a list of [clinics in Surrey](#).

Hospitals and emergency rooms for urgent medical care. If you have a health emergency, you should go to the emergency room at Surrey Memorial Hospital, located at 13750 96th Ave. To preview potential wait times at Surrey Memorial and other hospitals in the region, visit: [wait times](#)

Urgent and Primary Care Centres (UPCCs) provide access to same-day, urgent, non-emergency health care. In Surrey there are two locations: 6830 King George Boulevard and Unit G2, 9639 137A Street. You may wish to consider speaking to

a nurse directly instead of or in advance of a visit. Fraser Health Virtual Care is available 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. daily at 1-800-314-0999.

Surrey/North Delta Primary Care Networks (PCNs) provide services to individuals who do not have a family doctor or need help managing their healthcare. They offer a more comprehensive and collaborative approach and use nurse practitioners and other types of care providers. There are six PCNs in Surrey and North Delta. To learn more, link to [Surrey/North Delta Primary Care Providers](#).

Dental Care Services and Supports

Dental care in B.C. is not free. It is easy to find but expensive. However, some assistance programs do exist. The following are some of the supports available.

Dental coverage is provided to some residents by the Government of BC; if you are receiving income or disability assistance, you may be eligible to have basic dental costs covered. If you are on income assistance and have a dental emergency, you can get assistance to relieve pain.

Optical coverage is also provided by the government to those receiving income assistance.

The [Canada Dental Benefit \(CDB\)](#) helps lower dental costs for families earning less than \$90,000 per year. Families may be able to get financial support to cover dental care expenses for children under 12 years old.

[City Care Dental](#) is offered by the B.C. Dental Association. It is a mobile unit with dentists, hygienists, and dental assistants who provide services to schools and surrounding neighbourhoods. Currently, they have a clinic one Saturday per month in the White Rock / South Surrey area. The Government of British Columbia operates a dental assistance program. If you receive income or disability assistance, you may be able to have [basic dental costs covered](#).

Other Medical Resources and Services

Emergency Services – 9-1-1

In case of a *medical emergency*, call **9-1-1** or go to the nearest hospital's emergency department. DO NOT call 9-1-1 for non-emergencies. Emergency services are available 24/7 and are free for all residents, regardless of their MSP coverage status. There is often a long wait to get emergency services; [check wait times here](#).

Non-Emergency Services – 8-1-1

If you have a *non-emergency health need*, you can call **8-1-1** to speak to a health service navigator who can help you find health information and services or connect you to a registered nurse, a pharmacist and other healthcare professionals. This service is available in more than 130 languages and can be reached any time of the day or night, every day of the year. To learn more about 8-1-1, visit [HealthLinkBC](#).

Healthcare and Related Services – 2-1-1

[BC 211](#) is a free service available to assist you find a range of services including health-related services, home health support, mental health services and much more. Operators will assist you in identifying and finding the services you need. This service is available in more than 150 languages and can be called any time of the day or night, every day of the year.

B.C. Pharmacists

If you have a minor health issue, you can book an appointment to see a pharmacist. You can complete an assessment online or go into a pharmacy without an appointment. They can assess, give you healthcare advice and prescribe medication for minor ailments. To learn more about these services, visit [BC Pharmacists](#).

Prescription Medications

Prescription medications can be expensive, and MSP does not cover all prescription costs. However, you can access financial assistance through:

- [Fair PharmaCare](#): This program assesses your ability to pay for prescription medications and provides financial assistance accordingly. Services are available in several languages.
- Private Insurance: Some employers offer private insurance that includes prescription drug coverage.

Private Health Insurance

It is recommended that newcomers purchase short-term medical coverage while their application for MSP is being approved. Much dental care, vision care, and some medications are not covered by MSP. Consider getting private health insurance to cover these services. Some employers offer health coverage as part of their benefits package.

Promoting Health and Utilizing Community Resources

Preventative Care and Health Promotion

Taking care of your health through preventive measures is essential. Here are some tips:

- **Immunizations:** It is important that you and your family are up to date. To learn about what vaccines you and your children need, visit: [Getting Immunized](#). To find vaccination clinics near you, visit: [Upcoming and Ongoing Clinics](#).
- **Healthy Lifestyle:** Adopt a balanced diet, engage in regular physical activity, and avoid smoking and excessive alcohol consumption. The City of Surrey has programs to support healthy living such as [Healthy Active Aging](#), [Active PLAYces Kits](#) and the [Leisure Access Program](#).
- **Mental Health and Substance Abuse:** If you or someone in your family is struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues, there are many services in Surrey. Surrey Libraries has put together a list of services and supports: [Mental Health and Substance Use Services](#).

Community resources play an important part in preventative care for the health and welfare of Surrey's newcomers.



Community Health Resources

Surrey offers various community resources that can help improve your well-being:

Public Health Units

These provide immunizations, maternal and child health services, and health education. The [North Surrey Public Health Unit](#) is located at 220-10362 King George Boulevard. You can call 604.587.7900 for information.

Settlement Services

There are many immigrant and refugee serving agencies in Surrey that assist newcomers with health-related information and integration into the community. To find a list of settlement service providers, go to [NewToBC Immigrant Programs and Services](#).

Advanced Care Planning

This guides you to write down your wishes for present or future healthcare treatment if you cannot make decisions for yourself. To learn more, visit [Planning for Advanced Care](#).

Medical Equipment and Devices

The BC Ministry of Health can assist those in need. To learn more, visit [Medical Equipment and Devices](#).

Language Supports and Cultural Considerations

Language Supports

Limited English language can cause a problem when accessing healthcare services. Some support is available to help those with low levels of English.

- **Language-Specific Resources:** Community healthcare organizations often provide print and web resources in various languages. Many doctors and other healthcare providers offer services in languages other than English.
- **Interpretation:** The Provincial Health Services Authority offers interpretation and translation services in more than 200 languages. To learn more, go to [Provincial Language Services](#).

Cultural Differences and Considerations

Understanding the Canadian healthcare system and cultural norms will improve your healthcare experience:

Respect for Privacy

Any medical information and your medical files are confidential and will only be shared with your consent.

Informed Consent

Healthcare providers will explain treatment options, and it's essential to ask questions and give consent before any medical procedures.

Health Beliefs

Feel free to discuss your health beliefs and practices with your healthcare provider to receive culturally competent care.

Taking an active role in managing your health and seeking assistance when needed is important to leading a healthy life. For more information and guidance, connect with local healthcare providers, settlement services, or community organizations.



About the Surrey LIP

Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) is a collective of community partners, bringing diverse voices together to build a fair and inclusive city where all immigrants, refugees, and citizens thrive. Through dialogue and research, Surrey LIP's 40+ members collaborate on innovative and community-driven strategies to meet the changing needs of one of the fastest-growing cities in B.C. They work collaboratively to develop strategies to prepare the community welcome new immigrants and refugees through an equitable and inclusive approach.

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For more info on the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership, visit our website at www.surreylip.ca

Research and development of this fact sheet was possible with funding from the [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#).

Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada