

# Health Care

If you are struggling to find or afford the health care you need, you are not alone. Many people have a hard time in our health care system because:

It is big and very confusing, and you often have to jump through many hoops to get the right treatment.

Many treatments are not covered by your basic medical coverage. Dental is not covered and can be very expensive.

We have a shortage of family doctors. This hurts those without one because they can't develop an ongoing relationship with the same doctor.

People with low-incomes often face other struggles that create barriers to focusing on their health.

Our health care system is underfunded. This affects marginalized people more than the wealthy.

Because the system is so big and complex, you may want to find an advocate who can help you. Advocates are people who are familiar with the system and whose job is to help you get the help you need.

One place you can find free health care advocacy in Kamloops is ASK Wellness Centre. Phone 250.376.7558, tell them what you need, and ask for an appointment with an advocate.



## Where to start

For programs and services in the Kamloops region, a great place to start your search is **[www.accesskamloops.org](http://www.accesskamloops.org)** using their search directory.

The BC government also provides a lot of useful information and programs:

One of the best things you can do to solve your problems is educate yourself about your health and the health care system in BC. At **[www.healthlink.bc.ca](http://www.healthlink.bc.ca)**, you can learn about your health issue and how it is usually treated.

The system offers subsidies to people with financial need. You can find out if you qualify for medical premium assistance or prescription drug subsidies by phoning **Health Insurance BC** at **1-800-663-7100**.

If you are on income assistance from the provincial government, you are eligible to apply for numerous programs that can save you a lot of money on health care. Visit **<http://www.hsd.gov.bc.ca>**, click on 'Ministry Quicklinks', and look for various benefits listed in the left-hand column. Or, ask an advocate to help you with this! You can learn about advocates on the other side of this page.

Some helpful numbers to call for urgent problems:



- BC Mental Health Info Line: 1-800-661-2121**
- Interior Health Crisis Line: 1-888-353-2273**
- Seniors' Health Info Line: 1-800-465-4911**