



(Image) Back Row: Drs. James Toft, Sharon (Mich) Choopa, Bill Abelson, Lara Malks-Jjumba, Emilie Jean-St-Michel, Tahir Chaudhry, Simon Earl, and Olu Oyedeji. Front Row: Drs. Anita Adlam and Kirsten Miller.

National Physicians' Day is celebrated annually on May 1st and honors the birthday of [Dr. Emily Stowe, the first female physician to practice in Canada](#). Today we pay special tribute to those who serve in the profession of medicine.

Big thanks to Dr. Kirsten Miller, Northern Health Medical Lead for Child & Youth Health for providing highlights for the work of Drs. Melissa Paquette, Olu Oyedeji, Monica McKay, Laura Swaney and Lara Malks-Jjumba who serve the children, youth, and families in Northern and Interior British Columbia.

We are also celebrating Drs. Vishal Avinashi and Laura Sauvé from BC Children's Hospital for their contributions and impact.

We are so excited to share a bit about each of you. Meet some of our physicians that are working tirelessly to make a difference!

SPOTLIGHTS FROM NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Kamloops, BC | Dr. Melissa Paquette, MD, FRCPC, Clinical Assistant Professor, UBC

Dr. Paquette is an amazing mentor to medical students and residents. She is a [CHARLiE virtual provider \(offering virtual pediatric service to rural providers across BC\)](#); she sits on the UBC Pediatric Residency Training Committee and she is the Academic Lead/DSSL for Kamloops.

Fort St. John, BC | Dr. Olu Oyedeji MD, FRCPC, Clinical Instructor, UBC

Dr. Olu Oyedeji is the only pediatrician who lives in the northeast of BC, a vast geographic area composed of many rural communities. He has a dedicated full-service practice based out of Fort St. John.

Dr. Oyedeji runs a consulting pediatric practice, providing on-call coverage to the Fort St. John Hospital, plus, instructing medical students and residents. In 2021, he was recognized by UNBC for his [teaching](#) by students in the Northern Medical Program.

Williams Lake, BC | Dr. Monica McKay MD, FRCPC, Clinical Instructor, UBC

Dr. Monica McKay was the only pediatrician in Williams Lake, until recently. She provides full-service pediatrics to her community both in her office consulting practice and on-call at Cariboo Memorial Hospital.

Cranbrook, BC | Dr. Laura Swaney MD, FRCPC, Clinical Instructor, UBC

Dr. Laura Swaney, a full-service pediatrician based out of Cranbrook. She runs a busy pediatric practice; has on-call responsibilities at the East Kootenay Regional Hospital; she is a [CHARLiE \(Child Health Advice in Real-time Electronically\)](#) virtual provider; and, she locums in smaller, more rural communities, such as Port Alberni.

Dr. Swaney loves supervising medical students and pediatric residents who are interested in rural pediatrics. She regularly volunteers her time to offer virtual sessions for medical students and residents through [SPRUCE](#), not to mention parenting twins!

Prince George, BC | Dr. Lara Malks-Jjumba MD, FRCPC, Clinical Instructor, UBC

Dr. Lara Malks-Jjumba is based in Prince George. She is the academic site lead for Pediatrics and she is known for the work she puts into supporting students and trainees. Dr. Malks-Jjumba invests in trainees at all levels, from the most junior medical students to the most senior pediatric residents, with comprehensive, constructive, and sensitive feedback.

In addition to mentoring trainees, she works at [SCAN - Northern Health Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Clinic](#); Indigenous community health clinics; as well as, running her own private consulting pediatric practice and providing on-call service for the University Hospital of Northern BC.

Vancouver, BC | Dr. Vishal Avinashi MD, MPH, FRCPC, Clinical Assistant Professor, UBC



Vishal Avinashi MD, MPH, FRCPC
Clinical Assistant Professor, UBC
Head, Division of Gastroenterology,
Hepatology, and Nutrition, Department
of Pediatrics, UBC & BCCH

WHAT I LOVE ABOUT MY JOB THE MOST

One of the aspects I enjoy the most is collaborating with trainees, particularly residents and fellows. The early encounters focus on sharing knowledge, but in a short amount of time, you can take witness to their personal and professional development, and before you know it, they are amongst your peers!

MY ROLE WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

I am a pediatric gastroenterologist at BC Children's Hospital since 2011 – this has allowed me to be involved with patients in a variety of settings including in outpatient clinic, inpatient service, and performing endoscopic procedures.

MY PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT TO DATE

I am proud of my collaborative work with a variety of multidisciplinary teams including the Complex Feeding and Nutrition Service (CFNS); the Eosinophilic Esophagitis clinic; and more recently the Aerodigestive Teams.

WHY I BECAME A DOCTOR AND RESEARCHER

A significant influence in my interest in becoming a doctor was my dad who practiced family medicine for 40+ years. While, he was busy, I could see the good he was doing for his patients and ultimately his community.

My research is related to patients with Eosinophilic Esophagitis, or 'EoE' for short, which is a chronic condition which involves inflammation of the esophagus. This condition is fascinating because we have only known about it for the last couple of decades, leaving much to be described and there are more patients with it year over year.

HOW MY ROLE AS CLINICIAN/RESEARCHER COMPLEMENT/BALANCE EACH OTHER OUT

While I consider myself a clinician and don't primarily identify myself as a 'researcher', when one thinks about it, the push to be curious, keep exploring for better tests, treatments, and improve quality of life is ultimately the driver for research which I hope to ultimately bring back to my patient(s) in clinic.

MORE:

<https://bcchr.ca/vavinashi>

<https://twitter.com/viavinashi>

<https://pediatrics.med.ubc.ca/divisions-centres/gastroenterology-hepatology-nutrition/>

Vancouver, BC | Dr. Laura Sauvé MD, MPH, FRCPC, DTM&H, Clinical Assistant Professor, UBC



Laura Sauvé MD, MPH, FRCPC, DTM&H
Clinical Assistant Professor, UBC
Assistant Head, Clinical Partnerships,
Department of Pediatrics, UBC & BCCH
Pediatric Infectious Diseases Specialist,
BCCH
Vice-President, Canadian Pediatric Society

WHAT I LOVE ABOUT MY JOB THE MOST

My work at the Oak Tree Clinic, and in working towards health equity for children in my various roles. I also really love seeing all the residents that trained while I was program director doing amazing things all around the province.

MY ROLE WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

It has changed over time – overall, I am an infectious diseases specialist with a passion for health equity.

I was the pediatrics residency program director for 7 years, have worked with infection control (PHSA) for 7 years and been an ID specialist throughout. I have had the privilege of working at Oak Tree Clinic, a women- and family-centered HIV and congenital infection clinic since 2012.

MY PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT TO DATE

My leadership through the COVID-19 pandemic at local, provincial, and national levels. Using my focus on health equity, and my skills in seeing problems from multiple lenses (direct patient care, public health, and infection control) I was able to support C&W and PHSA.

WHY I BECAME A DOCTOR AND RESEARCHER

I had the cliché reasons of wanting to help people... Traveling as an 18-year-old I was faced for the first time with clear evidence of inequities in access to health care and education. That sparked in a life-long passion for pushing towards improved health equity and wanting to primarily care for equity deserving patients. I have always been most interested in health systems research – thinking about how we can understand and ameliorate gaps in care experienced by equity deserving people.

WHY I BECAME A DOCTOR AND RESEARCHER

I am an investigator for both WHRI and BCCHRI, and an investigator for the Canadian HIV Clinical Trials Network, and a member of the executive leadership of the Canadian Pediatric AIDS Research Group. My research focus is on children and HIV – particularly preventing vertical transmission of HIV.

HOW MY ROLE AS CLINICIAN/RESEARCHER COMPLEMENT/BALANCE EACH OTHER OUT

I think my clinical, research, education and leadership roles all complement each other – from my clinical work I learn what important questions are emerging in pediatric HIV, which then influences my research directions. They also influence the education and leadership work that I do.

MORE:

<https://twitter.com/LauraJSauve>

<https://bcchr.ca/lsauve>