

Celebrating Canadian Women Physicians Day, March 11, 2025



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Dr. Mumtaz Virji, Associate Clinical Professor, Head, Division of Pediatric Hospital Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, UBC & BCCH and Medical Director, Outpatient Clinics, BC Children's Hospital

Dr. Mumtaz Virji received her medical degree from Nawabshah Medical College, Sind University in Pakistan. She subsequently relocated to North America, where she completed her residency at Maimonides Medical Centre in Brooklyn, New York. She continued as Chief Resident for an additional year before accepting a fellowship in pediatric nephrology at BC Children's Hospital (BCCH) in 2001.

After working as a pediatric nephrologist at Alberta Children's Hospital, Dr. Virji returned to Vancouver, where she worked as a community pediatrician. In 2002, she was appointed as a Clinical Associate in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre. While at BCCH, Dr. Virji advanced her academic qualifications by earning a master's degree in health administration from UBC in 2007.

Dr. Virji's distinguished career encompasses a series of pivotal leadership positions within our undergraduate and postgraduate medical education programs. Her roles have included Year 3 Pediatrics Clerkship Director, Pediatrics Undergraduate Program Director, and Chair of the Pediatrics Undergraduate Education Committee. Building on these accomplishments, in 2019 she was appointed Head of the Division of Pediatric Hospital Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, UBC & BCCH, as well as the Outpatient Medical Director at BCCH.

Beyond BCCH, Dr. Virji was the Year 3 Chair for UBC's Medical Undergraduate Program, where she was responsible for running clerkships across all BC sites and all disciplines. During this period, she worked in collaboration with colleagues across the nation to develop and revise the national curriculum. A notable achievement was her leadership in spearheading the renewal of the Year 3 Clinical Clerkship curriculum and she came up with the concept of the "Transitional Years" and the Department of Pediatrics was the first

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clerkship adopt this model. On a national level, Dr. Virji was an active member of Pediatrics Undergraduate Program Directors of Canada (PUPDOC).

Recently, Dr. Virji travelled to the French Medical Institute for Mothers and Children (FMIC) in Kabul, Afghanistan. During her 20-day visit there, she collaborated with the pediatric faculty and residents to assess their training program. She was also able to visit the wards and see the challenges that local pediatricians faced. She left FMIC with a broader perspective on global healthcare disparities and it reinvigorated her commitment to collaboration and knowledge exchange between healthcare providers around the world.

Awards and Recognition (shortlist)

- Teacher of the Year award from UBC (2012)
- Hospital Pediatrician of the Year award, Department of Pediatrics (2014)
- Teacher of the Year award, Department of Pediatrics (2017)

MORE:

Dr. Mumtaz Virji | Kabul, Afghanistan

<https://the.ismaili.ca/news/building-bridges-care-dr-mumtaz-virjis-visit-fmic>

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Dr. Melissa Paquette, Pediatrician and Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, UBC & BCCH | Southern Medical Program (Kamloops)

In 2013, Dr. Melissa Paquette was appointed to the Department of Pediatrics as a Clinical Instructor. She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Alberta and earned her Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Calgary, graduating with the Class of 2009. Dr. Paquette subsequently undertook her residency training at Alberta Children's Hospital, where she refined her clinical expertise.

While at UBC, Dr. Paquette has shown an amazing aptitude for teaching and mentoring. In her 10 years as Discipline Specific Site Leader in the Southern Medical Program (SMP) at Royal Inland Hospital (Kamloops), she has helped support the pediatrics service to become a top-notch training site for the Interior region. Her passion for serving as a role model and developing her teaching skills led her to complete the UBC Southern Medical Program's Master Teaching Certificate Program in 2015-16. She values the time that she spends mentoring and supervising Year 3 Clerks and residents from the UBC departments of Pediatrics, Family Practice and Psychiatry. In 2024, Dr. Paquette was awarded the UBC Year 3 Southern Medical Program Excellence Award (Kamloops) and in 2025 she was the Co-recipient of the UBC 2025 Southern Medical Program Graduating Class Award.

As part of the pioneering Child Health Advice in Real-Time Electronically (CHARLiE) initiative led by the Rural Coordination Centre of BC, Dr. Paquette serves in key roles as co-lead, simulation lead, and virtual provider. Through this initiative, she provides specialized pediatric support to rural health care providers across the province. Dr. Paquette is deeply committed to inspiring learners to pursue careers in rural medicine. For those who do not, she emphasizes the importance of fostering empathy and encourages them to provide unwavering support for rural health care providers throughout their professional careers.

Dr. Paquette is a devoted partner and a mother of two. Outside of work, she is a passionate outdoor enthusiast, actively engaging in cross-country and downhill biking, cross-country skiing, and running.

MORE: <https://rccbc.ca/initiatives/rtps/charlie/>

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Dr. Claire Seaton, Clinical Associate Professor, Division of Respiratory Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, UBC & BCCH and Investigator, BC Children's Hospital Research Institute

In 2016, Dr. Claire Seaton began her tenure as a Clinical Associate in the Department of Pediatrics. She is a graduate of Oxford University Medical School (2000), and she completed her residency and fellowship in London and Oxford, focusing on general pediatrics with a particular interest in respiratory pediatrics and Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU).

Prior to joining the department, Dr. Seaton gained valuable experience working in New Zealand and Kenya.

Through her leadership of national research projects, such as the READAPT-Kids study, departmental committee work, and quality improvement initiatives at BC Children's Hospital (BCCH), Dr. Seaton has influenced pediatric respiratory care not only at BCCH but across BC and beyond.

"As a colleague, Dr. Seaton is a source of unwavering support – always the first to offer a helping hand, dissect a challenge, or to celebrate successes. She is the kind of colleague that when any of us see her name alongside ours on the Pediatric Hospital Medicine schedule, we know it's going to be a great week. I've lost count of the times Dr. Seaton has stepped in during tough moments, lifted my spirits, and made me feel worthy again of the great privilege we have in caring for children and their families."

– Dr. Mia Remington, UBC Pediatric Residency Program Co-Director

Moreover, Dr. Seaton was pivotal in leading an important hospital-wide initiative that allowed children who are tracheostomy and/or ventilator-dependent to receive high quality care on inpatient wards at BCCH, rather than being confined to the PICU.

Dr. Seaton also helped to develop UBC's Pediatric Hospital Medicine (PHM) Fellowship Program, which stands as one of the first of its kind in Canada. Through her relentless dedication on national committees, she has been instrumental in advancing fellowship training in pediatric hospital medicine and in establishing national standards for the specialty. To her fellows, she is regarded as an exceptional mentor, providing invaluable guidance and support.

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Widely recognized as an expert in pediatric asthma and acute respiratory infections, she has made important contributions to the way that asthma is diagnosed and treated in BC, recently focusing on improving diagnostic pathways and techniques for preschool-aged children.

Currently, Dr. Seaton and her team are establishing a province-wide asthma network to expand education opportunities for providers. And, to help families, she has advocated clearer discharge plans, so caregivers can understand how to take care of their child once they are at home. This initiative involved improving current clinical education resources for both healthcare providers and families.

An example of her impact is her video project created in collaboration with colleagues at BCCH and Child Health BC that educates families and caregivers about asthma management. To date, the video has been viewed over 71,000 times.

Earlier this year, Dr. Seaton received a well-deserved nomination for the Distinguished Hospital Pediatrician Award, presented by the Canadian Pediatric Society. We extend our best wishes and we hope that Dr. Seaton is awarded this important and well-deserved recognition!

Awards and Recognition (shortlist)

- Early Career Paediatrician Award from the Canadian Paediatric Society (2022)
- Resident Research Mentor of the Year from the Department of Pediatrics (2022-23)
- Nominated for the Canadian Pediatric Society's Distinguished Hospital Paediatrician Award (2025)

MORE:

Dr. Claire Seaton

<https://bcchr.ca/cseaton>

Childhood Asthma: A Guide for Families and Caregivers (video)

<https://bcchr.ca/research/stories/new-video-will-help-bc-families-learn-ropes-asthma-care>