

# News Release



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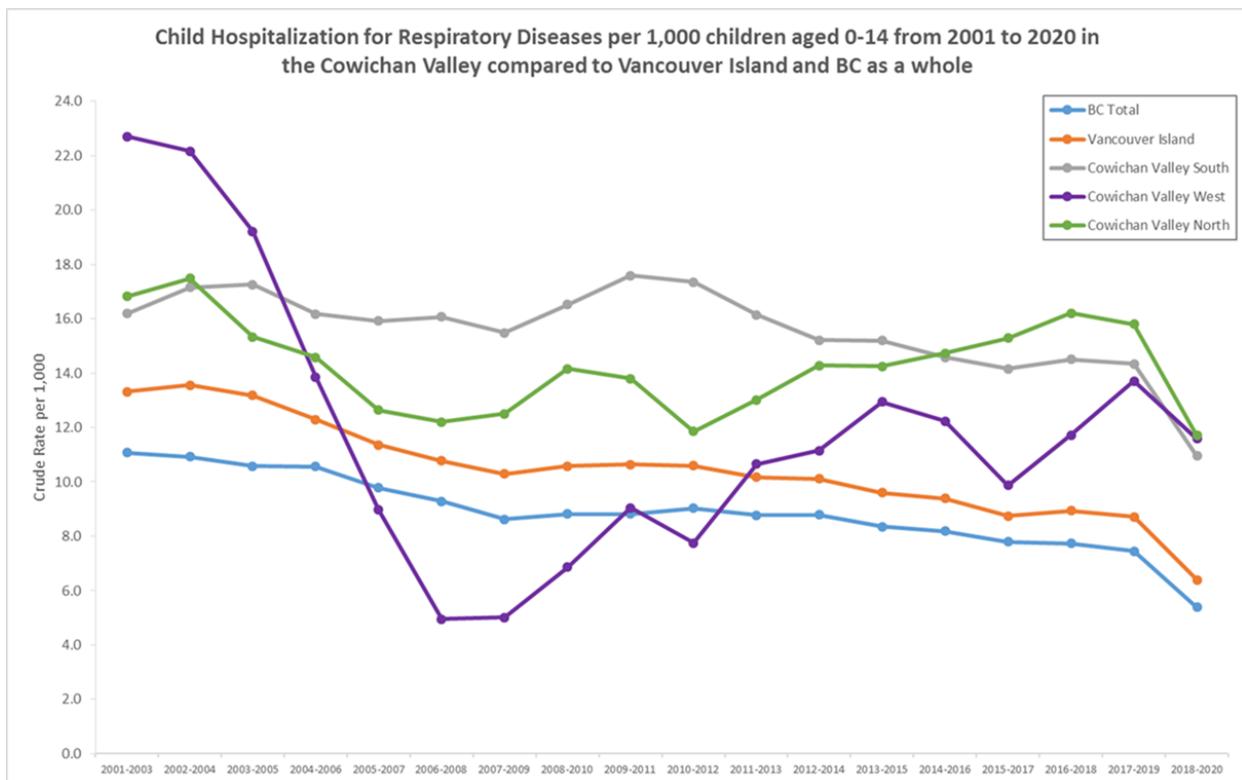
April 6, 2021

## Woodstove replacement program continues to positively impact Cowichan air quality

**DUNCAN, BC** – The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has once again been provided provincial funding to help residents retire old wood-burning appliances for cleaner and more efficient home heating options.

The CVRD’s Woodstove Replacement Program offers rebates of up to \$2,000 per household. To date, more than 1,100 residents have upgraded their old woodstoves for more efficient wood-burning stoves or heat pumps.

The main concern with wood burning is the release of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) which travel deep into the lungs, making it harder to breathe, triggering asthma and heart attacks and causing chronic illnesses. In the Cowichan Valley, health data has shown that hospital admission rates for children with respiratory illnesses are higher than in BC as a whole.



However, recent air quality monitoring data have shown improvements compared to previous years. In the past, levels of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) in the Cowichan’s Valley air quality exceeded the acceptable limits in BC (known as Air Quality Objectives). In recent years, Cowichan’s PM2.5 levels have declined enough to meet the BC Air Quality Objectives.

Nevertheless, levels are still only marginally below the Objectives, meaning that continual actions are needed to further improve air quality in the Cowichan Valley.

“We are glad to see this positive trend towards better air quality in the Cowichan Valley,” said Tarek Ayache, Air Quality Meteorologist for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. “Our hope is that through the Woodstove Replacement Program and other initiatives we can continue this positive trend.”

The highest concentrations of PM2.5 are typically observed in the fall and the winter when wood-burning and poor venting index is common. The venting index is a measure of how well ground and atmospheric air layers mix, which is key for dispersing air pollution like wood smoke.

“Efforts to improve air quality, such as replacing smoky woodstoves for cleaner home heating, can benefit health overall in the Cowichan Valley,” said Dr. Shannon Waters, Medical Health Officer for the Cowichan Valley Region. “A bonus with adding a heat pump to your home is that it can also cool in summer.”

Learn more about the woodstove exchange program, including how to apply for a rebate at [www.cvrld.bc.ca/woodstove](http://www.cvrld.bc.ca/woodstove).

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*For more information, please contact:*

Kris Schumacher  
Manger, Communications & Engagement  
250.701.2631  
[kris.schumacher@cvrd.bc.ca](mailto:kris.schumacher@cvrd.bc.ca)