



Social Determinants of Health Fact Sheet:
**Sayward, Sayward Valley
and Kelsey Bay**

The Strathcona Community Health Network is pleased to share these community health profiles. We have developed a community health profile for each of the eight communities within our region.

Community health profiles were developed for two purposes: 1) to support the ongoing work of the Strathcona Community Health Network, and 2) to build capacity within the Strathcona region.

1. The Strathcona Community Health Network (SCHN) has articulated our approach to work, which includes a commitment to being evidence-informed by balancing the best available data with local knowledge in collaborative decisions. These community health profiles, then, have created an opportunity to define and collect or generate local data to support decision making and future action by the SCHN.
2. Perhaps more importantly, the SCHN's approach also involves community capacity building. Per our Strategic Plan, we "encourage a capacity building approach so the community is strengthened and partners grow and improve their knowledge, skills and infrastructure through engaging with the network."

Community health profiles can be used to build community capacity in many ways, including the following:

- Use the information within to support planning and decision-making processes.
- Utilize this report as evidence when applying for grant funding and/or providing evaluation information to funders.
- Employ the information within when advocating for policy changes at all levels of government.
- Connect with the individuals, organizations, and coalitions within your community that are working towards greater outcomes. If you'd like more information about these groups, please contact us.
- Initiate conversations with your neighbours, family, friends, and colleagues about the information that stood out to you. Can you take any small or grassroots actions in support of increased community health?
- Let us know if the SCHN should be aware of any initiatives happening in your community related to the social determinants of health. Our contact information is on the final page.



Community Context

A number of communities make up the greater Sayward area, including the Village of Sayward, the Sayward Valley and Kelsey Bay. With the Village being its own municipality and other areas forming a portion of the Strathcona Regional District Area A (along with Kyuquot and a small area north of Campbell River) data is collected through different local government jurisdictions. Data in this fact sheet that is described as representing Sayward is only reporting on the Village of Sayward. Information that relates to the Village, Valley and Kelsey Bay is referred to as the greater Sayward area.

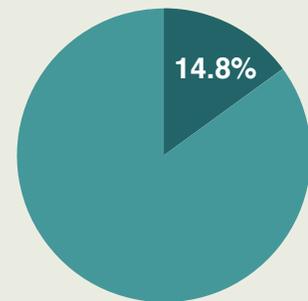
Like many other communities on Vancouver Island this area was inhabited by Indigenous peoples prior to colonization. The K'omoks people's traditional territory included what is now known as Kelsey Bay. There is a K'omoks First Nation reserve near Sayward that is not occupied.¹ **14.8%** of the population in Sayward is Indigenous.

Sayward is a small village with a population of **311**, a decrease of only **6** people since 2011.² Anecdotal evidence from local residents suggests that the population is growing, though newcomers may settle in the Sayward Valley or Kelsey Bay. The largest age cohort in Sayward is the population aged 15-64 years old. They comprise **58.1%** of the population. The remainder of the population is comprised of seniors (**29%**) and children 14 years old and younger (**12.9%**). The median age of the population is **57.9** years, considerably higher than the provincial median of **43.0**.²

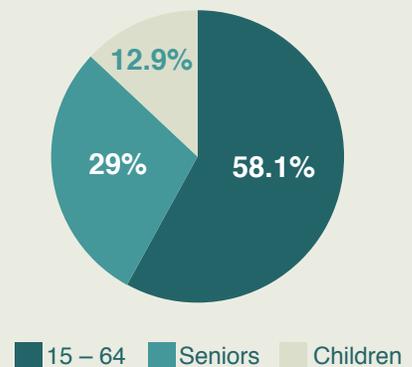
Sayward's population has been relatively stable for the last decade. As some residents leave the community, others join. Between 2011 and 2016, **125** people moved to Sayward – all from within British Columbia. Anecdotally, the affordability of Sayward attracts families. A local resident noted that the commute from Sayward to Campbell River takes the same amount of time as the commute from Abbotsford to Vancouver, but the cost of housing and quality of life in Sayward makes it a better choice than the Lower Mainland for some families.³

Like neighbouring communities, greater Sayward fits into multiple service delivery areas. The area includes one municipality, the Village of Sayward; all other areas, including Sayward Valley and Kelsey Bay, are part of the Strathcona Regional District's Area A. It is included in School District 72 boundaries, Local Health Area 72 (Campbell River), and is part of the North Vancouver Island Health Services Delivery Area.

Indigenous Population



Sayward Age Cohorts





General Well-being

As members of the North Vancouver Island Health Service Delivery Area, residents of greater Sayward report a high rate of community belonging: **77.6%** of residents report a somewhat strong or strong sense of community belonging, compared to **71.6%** of BC residents. Likewise, greater Sayward residents report lower perceptions of life stress than provincial residents (**16.4%** report that most days in their lives are quite a bit or extremely stressful, compared to **19.7%** provincially).⁴

In Local Health Area 72, which includes greater Sayward, **13.5** litres of absolute alcohol are sold per person. This is considerably higher than the Island Health average of **10.9** and the provincial average of **9.0**. Given that one litre of absolute alcohol is equivalent to 58 standard drinks, residents of LHA 72 are consuming **783** alcoholic beverages annually, on average.⁵ There is no population-level data available about adult drug use.

Community Belonging

Sayward	77.6%
BC Residents	71.6%

Life Stress

16.4%	Sayward
19.7%	BC Residents



Transportation

Being able to get from one place to another is essential for everyone, but particularly for members of rural and remote communities. In greater Sayward, having access to a vehicle is necessary to purchase food and household goods, access health and social services, and access employment, among other things.

There is no public transportation in greater Sayward, though the Age Friendly Van is available to subsets of the population. No bus routes exist. There are no taxis. Aside from owning a vehicle, or utilizing active transportation, transport options are limited: there is a private water taxi company available for hire.⁶

There are few official active transportation routes in greater Sayward, save an officially designated bike lane. There are no designated, protected pedestrian paths near roads. Given that Sayward Village, Sayward Valley, and Kelsey Bay are distinct areas, travel between each can be difficult. For leisure, there are walking paths throughout the community, and mountain biking and hiking paths through the woods. The Mt. H'Kusam Trail network is a popular recreation site.⁷

When asked about how employed Sayward residents get to work, **85%** reported that they drive. The remainder walk. A full one-third of employed commuters spend at least **45** minutes or more commuting each way, or **90+** minutes total. These commuters are likely working in Campbell River.²

Public Transport



Commute to Work



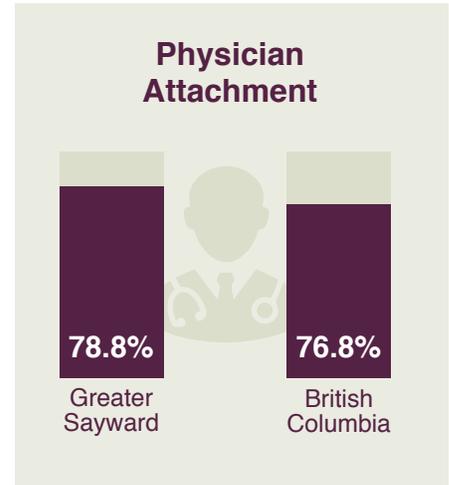
Drive: **85%** Walk: **15%**



Health Care

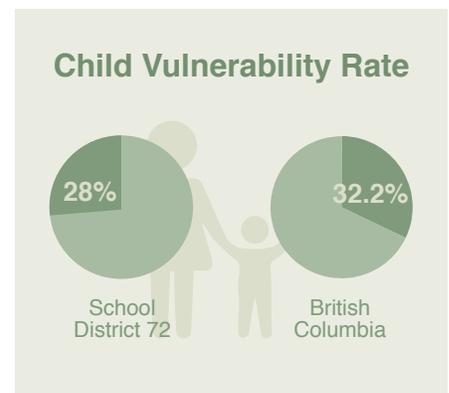
Another measure in which residents of Island Health Region 72 (Campbell River) compare positively to their provincial counterparts is in physician attachment. In LHA 72, which includes greater Sayward, **78.8%** of residents are patients of a physical or other primary health care provider (nurse practitioner, community health nurse, etc.). In BC, **76.8%** of residents are attached to a primary care provider.⁵

Residents receive many of their health services at the Sayward Primary Health Clinic (SPHC), which offers primary health care and some emergency medical care services as well as laboratory services. The SPHC is a non-profit society that relies on grants and fundraising to maintain the building. It is administered by a volunteer board. A nurse practitioner works four days per week, and a doctor visits the community every two weeks. The SPHC also offers health promotion programs on topics like exercise and weight loss.⁸ There is no hospital in Sayward – the closest is in Campbell River.



Children and Youth

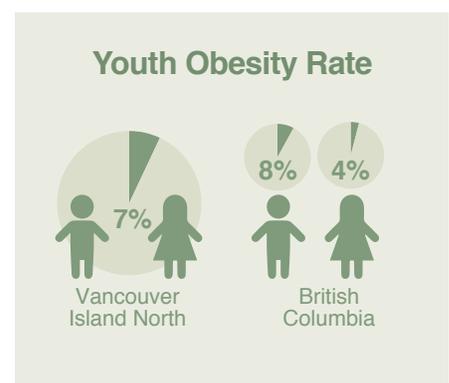
Time and time again, research emphasizes that investing in the health and wellbeing of children and youth has positive health, economic, and community impacts for decades to come. One of the most important measures of young children’s health is the Early Development Instrument, which examines a child’s experiences in the first five years of life via 5 scales (Physical Health & Well-Being, Social Competence, Emotional Maturity, Language & Cognitive Development, and Communication Skills & General Knowledge). In School District 72 (Campbell River), which includes greater Sayward, **28%** of Kindergarten children are deemed vulnerable, meaning that without additional support, these children may experience future challenges in school and society. Provincially, the vulnerability rate is **32.2%**.⁹



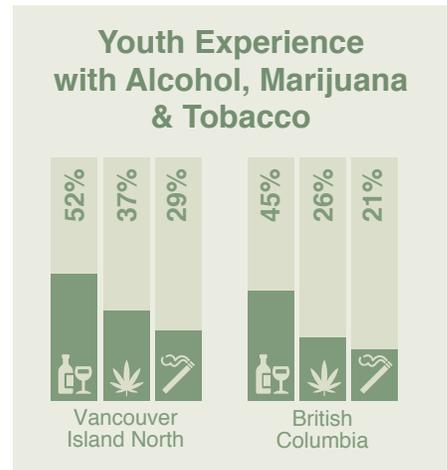
Another measure of support for early childhood development is the number of childcare spaces available. In greater Sayward, there are **0** licensed childcare spaces. One registered license-not-required provider is able to care for **2** children.¹⁰

As children get older, there are a number of institutions to support healthy development, including the Health Centre, a swimming pool, a recreation centre that includes a weight room and gym, parks and playgrounds, library, and organized sport and recreation opportunities.

The youth obesity rate for Vancouver Island North, which includes greater Sayward, is **7%** for both males and females. Provincially, it is **8%** for males and **4%** for females.¹¹



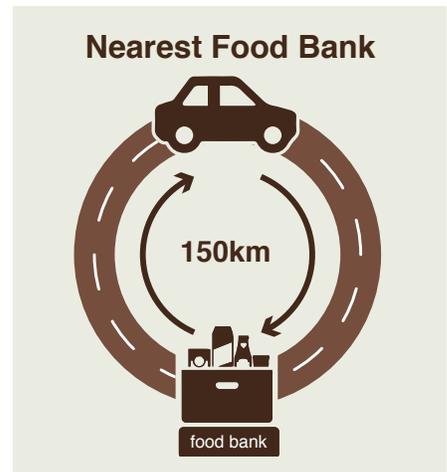
The McCreary Adolescent Health Survey reports on youth experience with alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco. In Vancouver Island North, which includes greater Sayward, **52%** of youth have tried alcohol, compared to **45%** provincially. Similarly, **37%** of Vancouver Island North youth have tried marijuana, compared to **26%** provincially. Tobacco sees a similar trend, with **29%** of Vancouver Island North youth trying tobacco, compared to **21%** of youth provincially.¹¹



Food Security

The World Health Organization (WHO) includes food security in its list of social determinants of health and defines household food security as “appropriate food being available, with adequate access and being affordable (location of markets, supermarkets, and closure of small suppliers creating food deserts in cities).” WHO stresses the importance of food security particularly in small and remote communities.¹²

In greater Sayward, there is no dedicated grocery store, but there is **1** convenience store, the Sayward Valley Resort, that carries food items. There are no community gardens or food recovery programs. There are a number of farms and a weekly farmer’s market. The Women’s Auxiliary occasionally prepares low-cost community lunches.¹³ Residents that need assistance to acquire food can access the Campbell River Food Bank, which is a **150km** roundtrip. Between April 2017 and May 2018, the Campbell River Food Bank served **83** households – or **202** people – from greater Sayward. Most of these were families of 3 or more people.¹⁴



The Provincial Health Services Authority’s “Food Costing in BC” report for 2017 reports on the cost of sufficient, safe, and nutritious foods across the province. For the North Island Health Services Delivery Area, the monthly cost of healthy food is **\$1,036** (compare this to the provincial average of **\$1,019**).¹⁵ However, the cost is even greater for communities like greater Sayward, that must spend more time and money to ensure adequate transportation to get to a grocery store. Using the government rate of \$0.58/km traveled, which is inclusive of fuel and vehicle maintenance, a roundtrip from greater Sayward to Campbell River costs **\$87.00**.





Housing

Access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing is essential in ensuring the health of a community’s residents. Inadequate housing affects physical health – housing that is mouldy, dirty, or in need of major repairs may put a resident at risk of developing one-time or chronic illnesses. Housing that is unaffordable, overcrowded, or otherwise unsuitable contributes to increased stress and/or decreased quality of life.

Housing costs in Sayward are less expensive than in many other island communities. The median value of a home in Sayward is **\$167,888**.² The median monthly cost of home ownership is **\$717**. Median monthly cost is the total cost for a mortgage, property taxes, and the cost of electricity, heat, water, and other municipal services.² To provide additional context, only **14.8%** of households in Sayward spend 30% or more of their income on housing. (There are so few renter households in Sayward that median monthly cost data for renters does not exist.)² Of all homes in Sayward (rented or owned), **0** have been reported as requiring major repairs.²

As no formal homelessness count has been conducted in greater Sayward, local residents were relied on for their input. Residents reported no absolute homeless people, but there may be hidden homeless people. The hidden homeless may be couch surfing or living in overcrowded residences with family or friends.³

Monthly Home Ownership

Home Ownership: **\$717**

Median Home Value



Connectivity

Access to phone and internet services is necessary for reasons related explicitly to health – including access to health and emergency services and opportunities for telehealth – but also to meet other needs. Access to phone and internet services also allows access to education and professional development, employment, connection to friends and family, and entertainment, among others.

There is cell phone coverage in the Village of Sayward, and limited coverage in the Sayward Valley. Most residents continue to rely on landlines. A landline from Telus, the most popular provider of home phone services in the area, costs **\$40** per month and includes unlimited local calling.¹⁶

There are two main providers of internet in greater Sayward. An individual household can expect to pay between **\$50** and **\$120** per month, depending on desired speed and usage.¹⁷ The Sayward branch of the Vancouver Island Regional Library offers free access to the internet during open hours.

Though not all residents who work from home would utilize home phone and internet, some would. In Sayward, there are only a handful of home-based workers.²

Phone Costs

Phone (Landline)
\$40 per month

Internet & Cable Costs

Cable/DSL
\$50 - \$120 per month



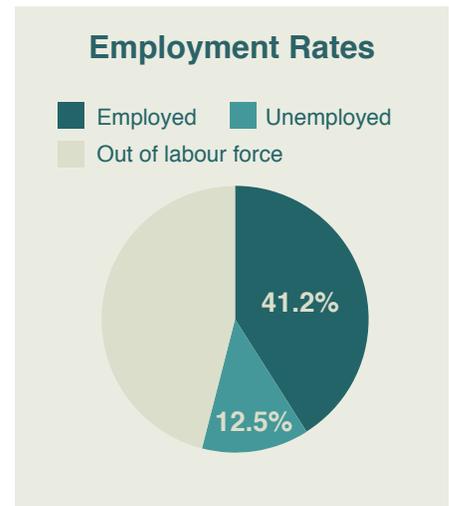
Employment and income

Living Wage Canada notes that “Income plays an important role in health outcomes. In general, the less someone is paid the poorer their health is across a number of physical and psychological measures. In addition, employment and working conditions have a significant impact on our health.”¹⁸ Small and somewhat remote communities like Sayward have limited education and employment opportunities and may have fewer appropriate work opportunities than larger communities.

Sayward’s median household after-tax income is **\$41,899** - a full **\$20,000** less than the provincial average. It is also lower than neighbouring Campbell River, and less the Strathcona Regional District median of **\$55,487**.²

Most income in Sayward is generated by employment (**60.0%**), while **26.0%** comes from government transfers including the Old Age Pension, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Canada Pension Plan, child benefits, or social assistance benefits.² Sayward has an employment rate of **41.2%** and an unemployment rate of **12.5%**.²

Given that there aren’t many major industries or employers within greater Sayward, and that community knowledge suggests that many residents work outside of the community in natural resources, it isn’t surprising that **57.6%** of the community’s labour force works part year and/or part time.^{2,3} Likewise, given the absence of a major industry or employer, the proportion of minimum wage workers is an interesting consideration. Up to half of Sayward’s workforce may be minimum wage earners.^{2,19}



Education and Training

Education and training are increasingly integral to employment success. In greater Sayward, those wishing to access post-secondary training while still living in the community would be required to learn via distance. North Island Employment Foundations Society (NIEFS) visits the community one to two times per month to deliver job search skills and training.²⁰



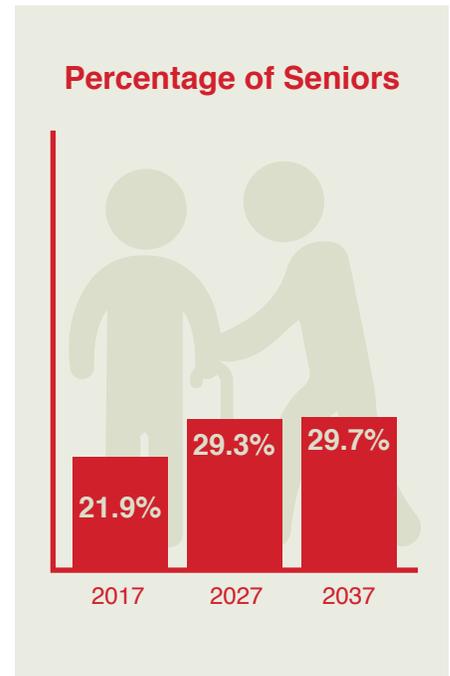


Ageing

Growing old requires related social, financial, and health supports. Currently, the proportion of the population in LHA 72 (which includes greater Sayward) that is comprised of seniors is **21.9%**. That proportion is expected to grow to **29.3%** by 2027, and to **29.7%** by 2037.⁵

Residents report that many older adults and seniors in greater Sayward have deep roots in the community.³ However, there is currently very little care for seniors in greater Sayward. Though residents have access to a homecare worker, there are no independent or assisted living facilities, no memory care facility for people with Alzheimer's or dementia, and no retirement homes. Thus, it is hard to paint a clear picture of the cost of ageing in greater Sayward. As in many other rural and remote communities, senior residents may need to leave the community when their health care needs exceed available services.

Likewise, one measure of senior health is the proportion of seniors who live at home (often called "ageing in place"). Seniors who age in place can feel isolated if they live alone; seniors who live with a partner, roommate, or family members often have a higher quality of life than those living alone. Given that there is no other option in greater Sayward, all seniors live at home until their health care needs necessitate a move to a larger centre.



The Social Determinants of Health

The Strathcona Community Health Network (SCHN) works collaboratively to increase the health of the residents of the Strathcona Regional District. Focusing on upstream prevention, the SCHN focuses on the social determinants of health to guide its work.

In Canada, the following social determinants of health are frequently referenced: Income and income distribution, education, unemployment and job security, employment and working conditions, early childhood development, food insecurity, housing, social inclusion/exclusion, social safety network, health services, aboriginal status, gender, race, disability.

The SCHN has engaged in extensive community consultation, including two forums. Community consultation surfaced the following social determinants of health most relevant to the region: First Nations and Cultural Safety, Healthy Children, Food Security, Housing, Ageing and Caregiver Support, Connectivity, Transportation.

Within these seven distinct determinants, there are many areas of overlap. In greater Sayward, for example, transportation has an obvious impact on physical health, community belonging, and food security. Because of the distance between the municipality of Sayward and the Sayward Valley, vehicular transportation is necessary to get from one to the other. For residents without a vehicle, isolation and limited community connectedness are an unfortunate outcome. Additionally, even if residents are interested in utilizing active transportation like walking or cycling to get from one community to the other, it is often difficult given the lack of active transportation infrastructure and safety and connectivity infrastructure. Finally, transportation and food security are inextricably linked in Sayward. Because there is no full-service grocery store in Sayward, residents must visit a neighbouring community (often Campbell River) to purchase food or pickup food from the food bank. For residents without a vehicle, or without the means to pay for gas and other costs to drive to Campbell River, obtaining fresh and affordable food can be a challenge.

Another evident link is between housing and income. With a median income of \$41,899 in Sayward, relatively low wages can be assumed. Housing prices in Sayward are relatively high, and anecdotal evidence reports that housing is expensive in the Sayward Valley. When households must put 30% or more of their income towards housing, they are considered at-risk of homelessness. One emergency event could put them behind on rent or mortgage, jeopardizing their housing. This is a stressful situation for many, but even more difficult for those with children or other dependents.

Which links are evident to you?

Sources

- ¹ K'omoks First Nation, About Us, <https://www.komoks.ca/about-us>.
- ² Statistics Canada, Census 2016 – Sayward (Village)
- ³ Interview with residents of Sayward
- ⁴ Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, 2015-2016
- ⁵ Island Health, Local Health Area Profile 72 (Campbell River), 2015
- ⁶ Village of Sayward, Getting Here, <https://www.sayward.ca/sayward-tourism/getting-here/>.
- ⁷ Village of Sayward, Outdoor Recreation, <https://www.sayward.ca/sayward-tourism/outdoor-recreation/>.
- ⁸ Sayward Primary Health Clinic, About Us and Calendar, <http://saywardclinic.com/aboutus/>.
- ⁹ Human Early Learning Partnership, Early Development Instrument, School District 72, 2014-2016, www.earlylearning.ubc.ca.
- ¹⁰ PacificCARE Child Care Information and Referral (Personal correspondence)
- ¹¹ Poon, C., Peled, M., Stewart, D., Kovaleva, K., Cullen, A., Smith, A., & McCreary Centre Society (2015). North Vancouver Island: Results of the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey. Vancouver, BC: McCreary Centre Society.
- ¹² World Health Organization, The determinants of health, <http://www.who.int/hia/evidence/doh/en/index3.html>.
- ¹³ Strathcona Food Security Project, Food Security Needs Assessment, 2014, <https://www.greenwaystrust.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/sf-sp-needs-assessment-final.pdf>.
- ¹⁴ Campbell River Food Bank (Personal correspondence)
- ¹⁵ Provincial Health Services Authority. (2018). Food Costing in BC 2017. Vancouver, B.C.: Provincial Health Services Authority, Population and Public Health Program.
- ¹⁶ Telus.com, Home phone plans
- ¹⁷ Village of Sayward, Business Directory: Internet Service Providers, https://www.sayward.ca/economic-development/business-directory/wpb-dp_category/internet-service-providers/.
- ¹⁸ Living Wage Canada, What is a living wage?, <http://www.livingwagecanada.ca/index.php/about-living-wage/>.
- ¹⁹ This calculation was completed by multiplying the current minimum wage (\$11.35) by 40 (given a 40-hour work week) and then multiplying that number by 52 (the number of weeks in a year). A full-time, minimum wage worker would earn a maximum of \$23,608 per year. The number reported here is a compilation of the income earners who reported earning \$0-\$10,000 (including loss), \$10,001-\$20,000, and one-third of those earning \$20,001-\$30,000 annually.
- ²⁰ North Island Employment Foundations Society, NIEFS Services, <https://www.niefs.net/niefs-services>.



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