



# Northern Directions

A monthly update from Northern Health to stakeholders across the North  
Volume 2 • Number 1 • October/November 2004

## Get your flu shot! NH offers free vaccine to at-risk groups across the north...

Every year, about 1,400 people in BC die from influenza and pneumonia (a serious complication of the flu). So Northern Health is urging residents who fall into at-risk groups to get their free flu vaccine soon.

"A safe, effective vaccine is readily available... and getting it could save your life," says Dr. David Bowering, Chief Medical Health Officer. "A lot of attention is paid to a virus such as West Nile, but the influenza virus is a much more important health threat... especially for individuals in high-risk groups."

The flu can kill elderly people or those people who are already ill with chronic diseases that affect their respiratory systems.

The flu vaccine is free for people 65 years of age and older, residents of long-term care facilities, people with chronic diseases, health care workers, and first responders (police, fire, and ambulance crews).

This year, the eligible at-risk groups have been expanded to include children aged from six to 23 months of

age; household and regular child care contacts of children from newborns to 23 months; and individuals handling poultry infected or potentially infected with avian flu during culling operations.

Public health nurses in the North will be administering free influenza vaccination for those in at-risk groups through drop-in and by-appointment flu clinics. For people who are not in the at-risk categories, various local pharmacies will be offering flu vaccination on a charge basis.

A pneumococcal vaccine will also be offered for at-risk groups. This vaccine can prevent many strains of pneumonia, which is the most serious complication of the flu. Most people only need to receive this vaccine once, while a flu vaccine is needed every year due to different emerging strains. People at



**Public Health Nurse Tennile Selver (right) gets her influenza vaccination from fellow PHN Brenda Edwards at the Northern Interior Health Unit in Prince George.**

risk who require the pneumococcal vaccine can get this along with their flu vaccination in the same visit to a local clinic.

Vaccination clinics for individuals in at-risk groups are being held in communities across the North. For local clinic times, visit [www.northernhealth.ca](http://www.northernhealth.ca)



**northern health**

## Work underway on replacement to Vanderhoof's Omineca Lodge

Community leaders, health staff, and advocates for enhanced long-term care services in the Vanderhoof area gathered on a chilly day in September to celebrate construction activity on the replacement to Omineca Lodge.

Structural work on the \$7.3 million multi-level care facility is well underway. The Government of British Columbia, Stuart Nechako Regional Hospital District, and Northern Health are funding the construction costs for the new 50-bed facility, which will replace the existing Omineca Lodge.

"It is exciting to have this long awaited project underway and I am grateful to the entire community who have worked so hard to make it a reality," said Colin Hansen, Minister of Health Services. "This new facility is a fantastic development and will enhance the care of the people of Vanderhoof who can no longer live independently."

"Many people worked long and hard to advocate for this facility," said Ralph Roy, Chair of the Stuart Nechako Regional Hospital District. "Seeing the construction work underway is clear evidence of how their efforts have paid off."

The BC Ministry of Health Services has provided \$5.8 million to build the Omineca Lodge replacement. The Stuart-Nechako Regional Hospital District has put forward \$1.25 million for the project. Northern Health will provide on-going operational dollars for the facility, along with \$250,000 for capital costs.

"The Omineca Lodge replacement is an important part of Northern



---

***Dignitaries smiled as they toured part of the replacement to Omineca Lodge, now under construction in Vanderhoof. The new facility should be open by next summer.***

---

Health's plan to upgrade and replace health facilities," said Harry Gairns, Chair of Northern Health's Board. "It is also a good example of how partnerships between different funding agencies provide important health improvements. We look forward to on-going work with government and regional hospital districts as we move forward with facility and equipment upgrades to benefit northern communities and citizens."

The new building will be located

at the St. John Hospital site in Vanderhoof. The facility is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2005.

"The people in our community should be proud of their work to see this important upgrade in our health services become a reality," said Len Fox, Mayor of Vanderhoof. "I know we are all looking forward to seeing seniors in our area moving into the new facility next year."

## “Update to our Communities” local report, 03/04 annual report, and service guide available in health facilities and on-line

Northern Health is pleased to make available community editions of its new “Update to our Communities” across the NH region. These reports feature updates on local health services, NH’s 2003-2004 Regional Annual Report and Financial Summary, and a guide to services in Northern communities... along with listings of local contact numbers.

“These updates are very different than a typical annual report,” said Harry Gairns, Board Chair. “Our goals were to not only update northerners on our activities, but to also help inform them of the health resources they can use in their communities.”

Rather than producing a single report, NH produced the eight separate community editions to better highlight local successes and improvements. The eight reports cover the following areas:

- Prince Rupert, Queen Charlotte Islands;
- Terrace, Kitimat, Stewart, and Dease Lake;
- Hazelton, Houston, Smithers;
- Lakes District and Omineca;
- Quesnel;



***Rather than producing a single annual report, Northern Health has produced several localized editions of its new “Update to our Communities” guide. These reports also include health suggestions from NH Chief Medical Officer Dr. David Bowering, and contact information for health services in Northern communities.***

- Mackenzie and Prince George;
- The Robson Valley; and
- The Northeast Health Services Area.

Hard copies of the report are available in all NH facilities, as well as in many municipal and regional hospital district offices. The reports are also available on-line at [www.northernhealth.ca](http://www.northernhealth.ca) as they are published.

## Community Consultation Report now available...

Northern Health is pleased to make available the report of its first community consultation process, held through this past spring and summer.

A copy of the full report, including an addendum of workbook and working session responses received by each community, will be available at [www.northernhealth.ca](http://www.northernhealth.ca) and as a reference copy at local libraries.

Northern Health has also provided an overview summary of the report. It is available in hard-copy at any hospital, health centre or health unit across the region.

The consultation process provided opportunities for residents to fill in workbooks in response to health improvement questions. It also involved facilitated discussion sessions across the NH region, and made available health information on specific health issues in communities across the region.

“This first Northern Health consultation process moved ahead very well, and involved constructive working sessions with stakeholders across the North,” said Harry Gairns, Chair of NH’s Board.

“Our commitments as we move forward are to use the feedback that we received in long-term planning, and to continue talking to the people and stakeholders we serve.”



**northern health**

# Northern Health financial update

Northern Health currently has a surplus of \$1.19 million in its financial statements to approximately the mid-point of the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

This surplus is about a quarter of one per cent of NH's 2004-2005 Budget of \$450 million. A break-even position was expected.

While much of this surplus is due to the labour dispute in the spring, higher acute care costs have also been recorded through roughly the first half of the fiscal year. It's expected these costs will continue to be higher through the remainder of the year.

A financial statement is available

below. For our operating plan, quarterly reports, and other information, please visit the Financial Accountability section of [www.northernhealth.ca](http://www.northernhealth.ca).

We will provide our next financial update during our November Board Meeting.

## Northern Health Operating Expenses and Year-End Forecast Period 5, Year to date ended August 12 2004 In Thousands of dollars

	Current Period			Year to Date			Projected Year end			Original approved budget
	Budget	Actual	Variance	Budget	Actual	Variance	Revised Annual Budget	Actual	Variance	
<b>Revenue</b>										
Ministry of Health Services	24,815	24,812	(3)	119,436	119,430	(6)	324,473	324,473	0	322,968
Other	9,495	9,851	391	46,449	45,571	(698)	125,755	125,071	(684)	125,710
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>34,274</b>	<b>34,663</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>165,885</b>	<b>165,181</b>	<b>(703)</b>	<b>450,228</b>	<b>449,544</b>	<b>(684)</b>	448,678
<b>Expenses</b>										
Acute Services	12,754	13,049	(295)	62,417	62,826	(409)	168,087	170,065	(1,998)	168,087
Home and Community	5,241	4,865	375	24,352	23,632	720	65,129	65,129	0	66,652
Community Programs	4,822	4,270	552	23,413	21,239	2,175	63,281	62,831	450	62,599
Support Services	3,332	3,443	(111)	16,420	16,162	258	44,479	44,479	0	46,850
Physicians	3,157	3,183	(26)	15,366	14,863	503	40,208	29,608	600	39,131
Regional Services	2,835	2,540	295	13,849	12,592	1,257	37,414	36,514	900	38,437
Undistributed	2,134	37-4	(1,570)	10,066	12,677	(2,611)	28,319	30,919	(2,600)	21,590
Contingent Expense	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,332	0	3,332	5,332
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>34,274</b>	<b>35,052</b>	<b>(778)</b>	<b>165,885</b>	<b>163,991</b>	<b>1,893</b>	<b>450,228</b>	<b>449,544</b>	<b>684</b>	448,678
<b>TOTAL SURPLUS/ DEFICIT</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(389)</b>	<b>(389)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



**northern health**

## Next NH Board Meeting in Prince George in mid-November...

Northern Health's Board will hold its next regular meeting in Prince George on Thursday November 18 2004. The meeting is scheduled to take place in the boardroom at NH's 687 Dornbierer Crescent site.

The open session will run from 4:00 to 5:30 pm, with a public presentation session scheduled from 5:30 to 6:00 pm.

Northern Health welcomes presentations from interested individuals or parties. Presentations can be made in person, via telephone, or through a videoconference link as available.

Interested speakers are asked to submit a request for a presentation time-slot as soon as possible by calling (250) 565-2922 or e-mailing [tammy.hoefer@northernhealth.ca](mailto:tammy.hoefer@northernhealth.ca).

Another release will be issued as soon as the meeting agenda is finalized. Information on board meetings is posted to [www.northernhealth.ca](http://www.northernhealth.ca)

The deadline for submitting requests for presentations is Monday November 8 at 4:00 pm.

## Robson Valley to benefit from TeleHealth services

New video-conferencing and remote medical equipment will improve patient care in the Robson Valley and benefit health providers. Northern Health has spent \$50,000 to install

TeleHealth equipment in McBride Hospital and the Valemount Health Centre, which will be operational shortly.

This equipment will:

- Link patients in real time to physicians/specialists in other Northern Health facilities or centres across the province for consultations, potentially providing faster diagnoses for certain medical conditions without the need for travel; and
- Allow health professionals to take part in remote learning and management functions, saving time and money that would have previously been spent on travel.

"Technology is linking communities and health providers together to deliver results that better support patient care," said Shirley Bond, Deputy Premier and MLA for Prince George Mount Robson. "I'm pleased to see TeleHealth becoming a reality for the Robson Valley so patients and health providers can access these important benefits."

"TeleHealth technology is making a real difference across the North," said



Harry Gairns, NH Board Chair. "In some cases, physicians can use the technology to consult with specialists in other communities. This saves on time and travel for a patient and their family. TeleHealth has also helped Northern Health in conducting organizational meetings, providing significant savings that we can put back into direct care services."

The TeleHealth equipment installed in McBride Hospital and Valemount Health Centre includes the following instruments and capabilities:

- A clinical videoconferencing unit on an IV pole that can be moved around relatively easily;
- A general exam camera for dermatology consults and wound assessment;
- An electronic stethoscope; and
- An ear, nose and throat scope.

Several rooms are wired to allow the equipment to link directly into the videoconferencing network. Large monitors have also been purchased to support education and administrative applications. Similar TeleHealth equipment is available at other Northern Health sites.



**northern health**

# NH and partners spend \$1.6 million to renovate Bulkley Lodge

A \$1.6 million project to renovate Bulkley Lodge to add mental health capacity for seniors is now underway. Northern Health has named RJ Cooper Construction to renovate the facility to add geriatric mental health services and beds. The project will provide local mental health services for seniors who would have previously received care at Riverview Hospital in the Lower Mainland.

Northern Health, the Government of British Columbia, and the Provincial Health Services Authority/Riverview Hospital are working together to implement the new program. The renovation costs are funded through the Government of British Columbia's \$138 million capital commitment for new mental health residences across the province.

The renovations will provide 14 geriatric mental health beds at Bulkley Lodge. The changes will also provide:

- Larger rooms for residents and bigger private bathrooms;
- A new workspace designed by the nursing and health care staff at the Bulkley Lodge;
- New overhead lifts in each resident room;
- An additional activity room and expanded outside patio;
- A new call system; and

- An upgraded dining room.

There will also be a higher level of staffing for direct care including a new mental health clinician, occupational therapist, recreational therapist and physiotherapy services.

The project is scheduled for completion in early 2005. Six Bulkley Lodge residents have been temporarily re-located to Bulkley Valley District Hospital to allow the renovation project to take place. They will return to the Lodge once the renovations are finished.

"Staff at the hospital will do our best to help make these six residents from Bulkley Lodge comfortable in their temporary home," said Paul Vieira, Health Services Administrator. "I would also like Smithers and area residents to know that we will continue to have enough acute care beds available to meet community needs."

Northern Health's region has seen a significant expansion in mental health services over the past three years. Prince George is now home to the 20-bed Iris House residence for people with a serious and persistent mental illness. Terrace will be the location of a similar 20-bed residence when the Seven Sisters residence opens early next year. Along with Bulkley Lodge, the North Peace Care Centre in Fort St. John is scheduled for renovations to add geriatric mental health services.

## Staffing changes around the NH region...

I would like to advise you that Lorna Ferrari, Health Services Administrator - Terrace/Kitimat/Stewart has resigned from her position. Her last working day is December 3rd.

Lorna has enjoyed working with us very much; however, family commitments require her to be closer to home at this time. I appreciate the energy and enthusiasm she has brought to the North West in the time she was with us and wish her well upon her return to Ontario.

Suzanne Johnston  
COO: Northwest

Northern Health is recruiting a new administrator for the Lakes District/Omineca area. In the meantime, responsibility for health facilities in the area will be split among two people.

Marie Hunter is responsible for Lakes District Hospital, the Granisle Health Centre, and the Southside Clinic. You can reach Marie at (250) 692-2425.

Bruna Schnepf now holds responsibility for Stuart Lake Hospital, St. John Hospital, and the Fraser Lake Diagnostic and Treatment Facility. Her telephone number is (250) 567-2211, extension 31.

You are also welcome to call me with questions at (250) 565-2113.

Michael McMillan  
COO: Northern Interior



**northern health**

# Key contacts across the Northern Health region...

**Northern Health Board members and staff are always available to answer your questions and provide you with the information you need.**

Our Health Services Administrators and Chief Operating Officers are our key liaisons to our communities on operational issues, and are always happy to speak with you.

## The Health Services

**Administrators in your area are:**

- Sue Beckermann, Prince Rupert/Queen Charlotte Islands: (250) 624-2171, [Susan.beckermann@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Susan.beckermann@northernhealth.ca)
- Lorna Ferrari, Terrace/Kitimat/Stewart/Atlin: (250) 638-4021, [lorna.ferrari@northernhealth.ca](mailto:lorna.ferrari@northernhealth.ca)
- Paul Vieira, Hazelton/Smithers/Houston: (250) 847-6202, [paul.vieira@northernhealth.ca](mailto:paul.vieira@northernhealth.ca)
- Lakes/Omineca: Vacant—recruitment underway
- Quesnel: Vacant—recruitment underway
- Charles Taylor, Robson Valley: (250) 569-2251, [charles.taylor@northernhealth.ca](mailto:charles.taylor@northernhealth.ca)
- Gayle Anton, Mackenzie: (250) 649-7101, [gayle.anton@northernhealth.ca](mailto:gayle.anton@northernhealth.ca)
- Marshall Moleschi, Prince George: (250) 565-2573, [Marshall.Moleschi@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Marshall.Moleschi@northernhealth.ca)

- Karen Davis, South Peace: (250) 782-8501, [Karen.davis@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Karen.davis@northernhealth.ca)
- Lee Hall, North Peace: (250) 262-5296, [lee.hall@northernhealth.ca](mailto:lee.hall@northernhealth.ca)

We also have three Chief Operating Officers, who are responsible for the co-ordination of health services delivery in each of our three Health Service Delivery Areas:

**Your Chief Operating Officers are:**

- Suzanne Johnston, Northwest: (250) 624-2171, [suzanne.johnston@northernhealth.ca](mailto:suzanne.johnston@northernhealth.ca)
- Michael McMillan, Northern Interior: (250) 565-2000, [Michael.mcmillan@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Michael.mcmillan@northernhealth.ca)
- Larry Tokarchuk, Northeast: (250) 262-5200, [Larry.Tokarchuk@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Larry.Tokarchuk@northernhealth.ca)

**If you have questions of a more regional nature**, you are always welcome to call Northern Health's main administration office at (250) 565-2649. Board Chair Harry Gairns and CEO Malcolm Maxwell can also be reached through this number.

**For representatives of Aboriginal communities across the region**, Director of Aboriginal Health Katharina Patterson is available to provide any information you may need. She can be reached by calling (250)

565-2949, or by sending an e-mail to [Katharina.patterson@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Katharina.patterson@northernhealth.ca)

**To reach a medical health officer**, please call Dr. David Bowering at (250) 565-7424 or e-mail [david.bowering@northernhealth.ca](mailto:david.bowering@northernhealth.ca), or Dr. Lorna Medd at (250) 565-7461 or [lorna.medd@northernhealth.ca](mailto:lorna.medd@northernhealth.ca)

**For any other needs**, Director of Communications Mark Karjaluto can provide information to you or refer your request to the most appropriate party. Mark's number is (250) 565-2694, or you can send an e-mail to [mark.karjaluto@northernhealth.ca](mailto:mark.karjaluto@northernhealth.ca).

## About Northern Directions...

Northern Directions is a monthly update from Northern Health.

If you have any questions or comments about the material you've seen in this edition of Northern Directions, please contact Mark Karjaluto, Director of Communications, at (250) 565-2694 or e-mail [mark.karjaluto@northernhealth.ca](mailto:mark.karjaluto@northernhealth.ca).

If there is a subject you would like us to focus on in a future edition of Northern Directions, feel free to call or e-mail us.



**northern health**