



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

April 2024

Welcome to the Northern Health community update! Stay connected as we bring you monthly updates and valuable insight into health care in the North.

Organization and community news

Health Minister Adrian Dix visits Prince Rupert

Health Minister Adrian Dix engaged staff, physicians, paramedics, and members of the community in Prince Rupert at the end of March. He has been listening to concerns and working on solutions to stabilize staffing at that Prince Rupert emergency department to help ensure sustainable and high-quality health care in the community.

We are committed to supporting this important hospital and working with the Ministry of Health to make every effort to strengthen staffing, actively recruit to fill vacancies, and prevent emergency department closures wherever possible.

Premier David Eby visits new hospital and Seven Sisters in Terrace

BC Premier David Eby took time out of his busy schedule on March 15 to visit the new hospital and new Seven Sisters in Terrace. Northern Health representatives, including Board Chair Colleen Nyce, were pleased to have the chance to discuss the future of health care in Northwest BC with the Premier. Construction of the new hospital is almost finished, with the opening of the new facility set for the fall of this year. More photos can be found on our [Let's Talk website](#).

Improved dementia care coming to Kitimat

Residents and seniors in Kitimat and Kitimaat Village area will soon have access to high-quality dementia care at a new long-term care (LTC) home being developed at 100 Loganberry Ave.

“People want the best care for their loved ones in the community they live,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. “This is especially true when it comes to stressful diagnoses, such as Alzheimer’s or another form of dementia. The long-term care home in Kitimat will offer the best

quality of life for individuals living with dementia in a serene setting with dedicated staff.” [Read more on the Government website.](#)

Upgraded medical imaging services for the Dawson Creek & District Hospital

The Dawson Creek & District Hospital (DCDH) recently received an upgrade to its medical imaging services with the replacement of one of its two X-ray machines.

The old X-ray machine was a Canon Radrex-i model, installed in February 2013. It was outdated and was becoming difficult to operate due to maintenance issues and the need to replace parts. The new machine is a Carestream Evolution, which features improved image quality, increased reliability, and shorter downtimes, leading to shorter wait times for patients. [Read more.](#)

Dawson Creek & District Hospital (DCDH) Replacement Project Update

In early-March, Graham Design Builders submitted the 95% design to Northern Health and hosted the [third round of mock-ups inside the Quonset hut](#) on the current hospital’s property. Mock-up #3 consisted of two fully constructed inpatient rooms including sample materials and finishes, millwork locations, and some equipment and furniture. Leadership representatives were invited to experience key features of the design and provide feedback and input on design decisions.

Representatives from the DCDH project team and Northern Health Recruitment have been out in the community attending local events! Recently, they spent the day at [Saulteau First Nations annual education, jobs, and career fair](#) and at [Dawson Creek Secondary School's annual career fair](#). Getting involved with these local events gives us the opportunity to share information about the DCDH Project and engage with potential future health care professionals about job opportunities and career paths with Northern Health.

Want a bird's eye view of the exciting work that's underway on the new Dawson Creek & District Hospital? Check out this awesome [drone video of the construction site!](#)

IMAGINE Grant applications are now being accepted!

Do you have an idea that could improve the health and wellness of your community? Would up to \$10,000 help bring your project to life?

IMAGINE Community Grants is currently accepting applications for health and wellness projects that aim to:

- **Support partnerships and build relationships** - will encourage different groups to work together, connecting people to each other and their community
- **Identify a community need** - will address something that is missing that could benefit the community and its residents to support health and well-being
- **Reduce health inequities** – will support access for better health and wellness for all
- **Build capacity** - will develop and strengthen skills and resources within the community
- **Last** - will have a good chance of living on after the funding ends

Apply now: [IMAGINE grants | Northern Health](#). Applications will be accepted until May 10, 2024

Save the Date! Five Days in May (FDIM)

Northern Health is joining Five days in May (FDIM), a province-wide health research showcase. Every year, this event brings together researchers, patients and healthcare providers, decision-makers and members of the public to learn, share ideas and spark health care innovation in BC. Events are via Zoom every Thursday in May. More information and upcoming registration [here](#).

Moose Hide Campaign – learn the issue

Northern Health kicked off the 2024 Moose Hide campaign during the Decolonizing & Elimination of Anti-Indigenous Racism Community of Practice meeting on April 4, 2024. Moose Hide co-founder Raven Lacerte and Moose Hide Director Stephanie Papik gave an impactful presentation on how best to get involved and learn more. [Learn the Issue | Moose Hide Campaign](#).

March 31 - Celebrating National Indigenous Languages Day

Northern Health is leaning into the strengthened and updated [Strategic Plan – Looking to 2025](#) and its Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by providing a warm welcome. This poster incorporates the Indigenous languages of Northern BC and can be found in hospitals, facilities, and offices across the health authority.

Appropriate use of the emergency department and options for accessing health care

Emergency rooms in the North are under increasing strain. Help take the pressure off the doctors and nurses that serve our communities by seeking care through these options, when you can:

- Call your family care provider
- Visit an urgent primary care centre or primary care clinic if one is available in your community
- Check out [HealthLinkBC.ca](#) or speak to a nurse at 8-1-1
- Talk to your local pharmacist about their expanded services [Book an appointment with a pharmacist](#).
- Book an appointment with the [Northern Health Virtual Clinic](#) at 1-844-645-7811
- Call 1-855-344-3800 to book an appointment with the [First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day](#)

For life-threatening emergencies like chest pains, difficulty breathing, broken bones, or severe bleeding, the ER is the place to be. Call 9-1-1 for transport to your nearest available and appropriate facility. For more information, please visit our [service interruptions page](#).

Province takes early action to prepare for wildfire, drought season

The Province is taking several early steps to prepare for the wildfire and drought season, including working proactively with local governments and First Nations to help keep people and communities safe and informed.

For preparedness guides from PreparedBC, including floods, wildfires and extreme heat, visit: <http://www.preparedbc.ca>

Northern Health Stories highlights

The [Northern Health Stories site](#) is a great place to read about what's going on in Northern Health – people, places, projects, and more! Here are some recent highlights:

- [New and different experiences as an employed student nurse](#)
- [Spotlight on our people: Darla Umaming, GoHealth BC travel nurse](#)
- [Meet Jack Jenkinson and the UHNBC Social Work team!](#)
- [Innovation, collaboration, and career-growth opportunities in Pharmacy](#)
- [Spotlight on NH dietitians: How we support each other](#)
- [Northern careers: What matters to our dietitians](#)
- [Promoting the role of pharmacists in the interprofessional care team](#)
- [From practicum to practice: Celebrating Social Work Month with Sarah Gruen's story](#)
- [Linsa Lazar's dreams became a reality at Northern Health](#)
- [March is Nutrition Month: Bringing green-thumb initiatives to Northern Health facilities](#)
- [Come for the employment opportunities, stay for the peaceful work environment](#)
- [Orientation a navigational tool for new NH social workers: Meet Hank Lukyn](#)

Ministry of Health highlights

Including highlights from the [Ministry of Health](#) and [Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions](#) that are of interest to all BC residents:

- [Province supports seniors living independent, healthy lives at home](#)
- [Life-saving cancer therapy now being provided in British Columbia](#)
- [Budget 2024 supports improvements to treatment, recovery services](#)
- [Youth benefit from significant increase in mental-health, addiction care](#)

Health Human Resources (HHR)

The items in this Health Human Resources (HHR) section highlight some of NH's efforts to strengthen health care in the North by improving staff recruitment and retention as part of [BC's Health Human Resources Strategy](#).

What's in it for us? New Terrace hospital means good things for all of the Northwest!

When we build new facilities, it allows us to strengthen the network of services available across the whole region. More than twice the size of the current facility, the new hospital will bring expanded services to the NW and improve access to care, closer to home for all NW residents.

New facilities also attract health care professionals to the area and provide new opportunities for existing staff to gain new skills and training.

Our communities are growing and the demand for health care is great. This new facility will give us the additional capacity to meet service demands, and provide a healthier, safer work environment for staff. Want to learn more or have your say? Check out:

<https://letstalk.northernhealth.ca/mmh>

Recruiters on the road

NH recruiters travelled extensively this March! The team attended [UNBC Northworks](#), the [Fraser Lake Job Fair](#), Alberta's [Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacy Banff Seminar](#), the [2024 Saulteau First Nations Educational Jobs and Career Fair](#), the [Coast Mountain College Career Fair](#), the [School District #59 Career Fair](#), the [K5T Career Expo](#), and the [Urban System Foundation Grow Our Own Professional Mentoring Event!](#)

Province of BC recruitment: UK Ireland Roadshow 2024

To bring more internationally educated nurses and allied health professionals to BC, the Province is taking its recruitment efforts across the Atlantic this May! Do you know a nurse/allied health professional from the UK or Ireland? Help them discover opportunities in BC and the North, and get in-person support navigating the international recruitment process by sharing the [Roadshow details!](#)

Public Health

April 2024 Healthy Communities E-Brief

The Northern Health Healthy Communities E-Brief is a monthly newsletter produced by [Northern Health's Population and Preventive Public Health programs](#). In the spirit of healthy people who live, work, learn, and play in healthy communities across the North, the E-brief delivers information on resources, learning events, funding opportunities, and other information specific to promoting healthy living and the prevention of chronic disease and injury. [Read the April 2024 E-Brief here.](#)

Overdose prevention and response

Toxic Drug Alert: Terrace – March 20, 2024

There has been an increase in drug poisoning/overdose events in Terrace. Overdoses have been linked to smoking a purple substance sold as “down” causing prolonged sedation and requiring many doses of Naloxone to reverse.

Take care, drugs move throughout the North, please share this alert widely. We have included [safety recommendations on our website.](#)

Text alerts for toxic drugs available in the North

In response to the toxic drug emergency, a text message alert system was launched across Northern Health. The system sends text alerts with timely information and up-to-date resources

to people who use drugs, those who support them, and community members. It's a public health measure to prevent drug poisonings and deaths and provides. Opt-in by texting **JOIN** to **ALERTS (253787)**. [More information](#).