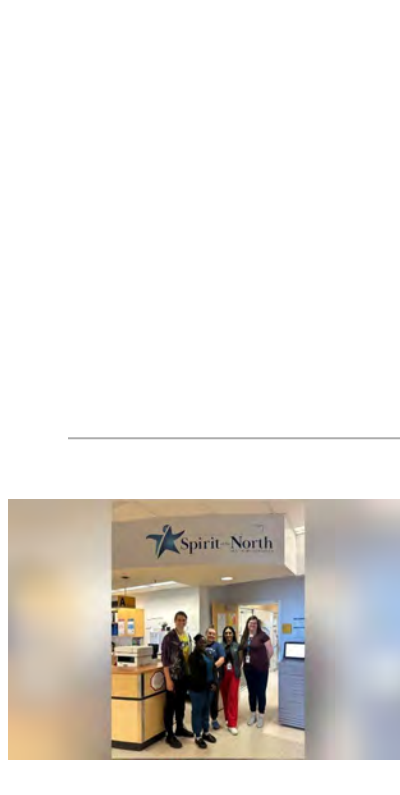


September 2025

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

Want more frequent updates? [Follow Northern Health on Facebook](#) where we share news, stories, tips and ideas on healthy living.

Organization and Community News



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30 marks both the **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation** and **Orange Shirt Day**, a grassroots movement that began in Williams Lake, BC. It's a time to reflect on the truths of residential schools, honour Survivors, and recognize the lasting impacts on Indigenous families and communities.

Northern Health is committed to walking alongside First Nations, Métis, and Inuit families on the path of reconciliation. We continue to listen, learn, and work together to build a health system that reflects Indigenous values and supports culturally safe care. Across the North, the legacy of residential schools and 'Indian' hospitals continues to affect trust in health care —reconciliation means acknowledging this history and taking action to rebuild relationships.

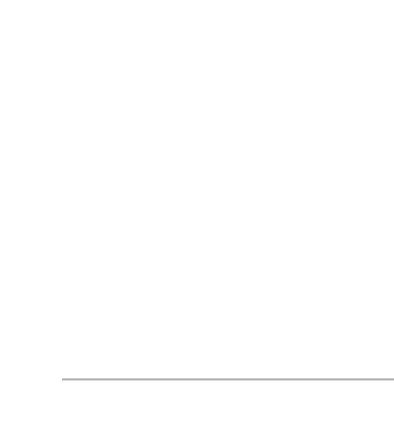
We encourage everyone to wear orange, attend local events, and learn more through the [Orange Shirt Society](#) and the [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#). Every child matters.



An ode to the North: A poem by a travelling dietetics student

"There is something special about BC the further North you go. I'm originally from Williams Lake and I've had the privilege of living across BC, from the interior to the Kootenays, the Okanagan, the North, and Vancouver, where I am now attending school.

Like my hometown, Terrace serves as a hub for many rural communities. In both places, it's a quick hop, skip, and a jump to complete privacy in the forest, with a border of hills, a lake at your fingertips, and someone new always passing through. During a five-week dietetic practice education placement in Terrace, I learned that in smaller communities there is the chance to... [read more](#)."



Ongoing support, services benefit adults with mental health issues

Adults living with mental-health challenges will continue to have access to low- or no-cost counselling services to help them get well.

"When someone takes the courageous step of reaching out for mental health support, services must be there for them," said Josie Osborne, Minister of Health. "Over the past six years, thousands of people across B.C. have received low- and no-cost counselling, many for the very first time. With this investment, we're ensuring that people can continue to find affordable, life-changing mental health care when they need it most." [Read more](#).

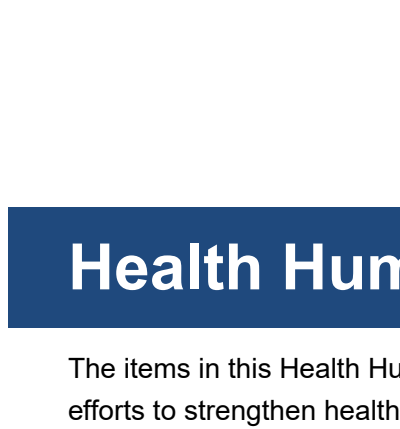


World suicide prevention day was September 10

Start the conversation. If you are worried someone is thinking about suicide, check in with them. We all struggle with mental health at some point in our lives.

If you are thinking about suicide, talk to someone who can help. You're not alone.

[To find supports and resources, visit HealthLinkBC.](#)



Deputy provincial health officer's statement on back-to-school vaccinations

Dr. Martin Lavoie, British Columbia's deputy provincial health officer, has issued the following statement to make sure children in B.C. are up to date on all their vaccines as part of back-to-school preparations:

"As families start their preparations for back-to-school, I encourage parents and guardians to ensure their children are up to date on routine immunizations and are protected against illnesses, including measles, mumps and rubella, polio, pertussis (whooping cough) and chickenpox." [Read the full statement](#).



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

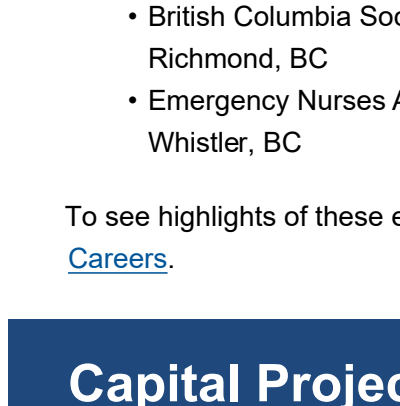
Emergency rooms in the North may be facing increasing strain. Help take the pressure off the doctors and nurses that serve our communities by seeking care through these options, when you can:

- 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, and [book an appointment with a pharmacist](#).
- If you do not have a family doctor or nurse practitioner, 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](#).

Health Human Resources (HHR)

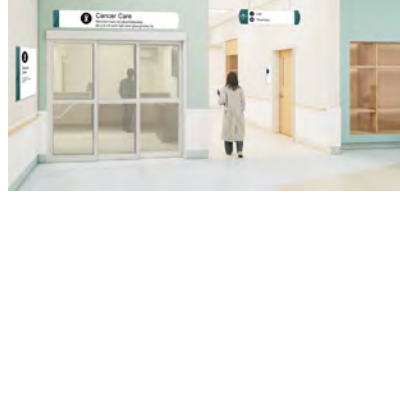
The items in this Health Human Resources (HHR) section highlight some of NH's efforts to strengthen health care in the North by improving staff recruitment and retention as part of [BC's Health Human Resources Strategy](#).



Stacy Wheeler: Supporting Indigenous families through connection and care

Northern Health (NH) honours both the [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#) and [Orange Shirt Day](#) by recognizing the contributions of Indigenous staff across the region. Their voices, experiences, and leadership help shape a health care system that is more inclusive, respectful, and culturally safe.

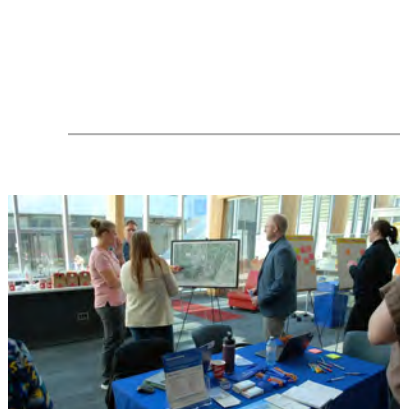
Stacy Wheeler is a proud member of the Tahltan Nation and was born and raised in Northern BC. She recently joined the Indigenous Care Team (ICT), bringing with her over two decades of experience at NH. Stacy is passionate about supporting Indigenous families, building trust, and learning about the unique cultures and beliefs of the people she serves. [Learn more about Stacy by reading the full story](#).



Regional Emergency Department Education Program earns Canadian Nurses Association accreditation!

We are proud to announce that the Northern Health (NH) Regional Emergency Department Education Program (REDEP) has officially been accredited by the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA).

Developed in collaboration with Interior Health, REDEP is an 18-week specialty education program designed to prepare registered nurses for safe, novice-level emergency nursing practice. The program blends evidence-informed online learning (Elsevier's Emergency Nursing Orientation), hands-on simulation, and clinical practicums offering a comprehensive foundation in emergency nursing. [Read the full story](#).



From the UK to Terrace: Hardeep Kaur's journey

Hardeep Kaur was working as a registered nurse in the UK when she heard about the GoHealth BC (GHBC) travel nursing program while attending the [BC Health Careers](#) UK roadshow in 2024. The program interested her because it provided an opportunity to work in another country and to explore the province of BC.

"Coming to Canada was a completely new thing. My reasoning for choosing GoHealth BC was that I could explore more places and be able to choose where I wanted to settle down in the future," Hardeep explained. "Now that I have explored a few hospitals in a few different communities, I want to do something permanent." [Read more](#).



Vanessa Tanski: Guided by heritage in maternity care

Northern Health (NH) honours the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day by supporting Indigenous health care professionals and creating culturally safe spaces. We are committed to reconciliation through action, education, and by amplifying Indigenous voices—like that of Vanessa Tanski. [Read more](#).



Finding new purpose through volunteering: Hazel's story

We had the privilege of sitting down with Hazel as she told us how volunteering has changed her life. At 72 years old, Hazel wasn't sure she wanted to volunteer. After decades of working in health care, she hesitated at the idea of "working for free." She had spent a lifetime caring for others, and now, in retirement, she questioned whether stepping back into the new Kysen Regional Hospital (this time without a paycheck) was the right choice. That uncertainty lingered until one day... [Read the full story](#).

Recruiters on the road

NH's staff and physician recruitment teams have been out in full swing, sharing what kinds of opportunities set Northern BC apart. The recruiters have attended or presented at:

- Langara College - Health Authorities Open House - Vancouver, BC
- American College of Emergency Physicians Annual Conference - Salt Lake City, UT
- World Congress of Critical and Intensive Care - Vancouver, BC
- St. Paul's Emergency Medicine 2025 Conference - Whistler, BC
- Emergency Nursing Association Annual Conference - New Orleans, LA
- HealthDaq Nursing Job Fair - Toronto, ON
- Okanagan College - Pharmacy Technician program presentation - Kelowna, BC
- British Columbia Society of Laboratory Sciences (BCSL) Annual Congress - Richmond, BC
- Emergency Nurses Association of British Columbia (ENABC) Conference - Whistler, BC

To see highlights of these events and conferences, check out [Northern Health Careers](#).

Capital Projects



Dawson Creek & District Hospital Project – Community connections: September engagement highlights

The Dawson Creek & District Hospital Replacement Project team was proud to participate in two meaningful community events this September – Northern Lights College's Community Fair and the Saulteau First Nations/West Moberly First Nations Health Fair.

These events are important for us to participate in as we continue our commitment to engaging with residents, students, and Indigenous partners as we build a hospital that reflects and serves the region. [Read more](#).

Integrating the Cree and Dane-zaa languages into wayfinding signage in the new Dawson Creek & District Hospital

We are excited to share that the Dawson Creek & District Hospital Replacement Project has achieved a meaningful milestone on its journey toward cultural safety and inclusivity. In collaboration with the Treaty 8 First Nations, we explored how the new hospital could reflect and honour the cultural heritage of the Indigenous peoples whose traditional territories it resides on and completed a thoughtful engagement process to integrate local Indigenous languages into the new facility. [Read more](#).

Shaping our future tower: Insights from Nats'ojeh Hospital and Health Centre

Last week, the UHNBC Acute Care Tower project team had the privilege of visiting the newly opened Nats'ojeh Hospital and Health Centre in Fort St. James, a facility that marks a significant milestone in rural health care for Northern BC.

This visit provided an opportunity to engage with staff, explore the facility's design, and gather insights into how the built environment supports care delivery. The goal was to better understand how design choices influence workflow, patient experience, and operational efficiency - knowledge that will inform the development of the new tower. [Read more](#).

Let's Talk Tower: Nearly 400 staff joined us to learn, share, and connect

Over two engaging sessions at the University Hospital of Northern BC (UHNBC), nearly 400 staff members dropped in to grab a coffee, enjoy a pastry, and connect with the project team behind the new acute care tower.

Our casual drop-in format created a welcoming space for staff to ask questions and learn more about how this major investment will shape the future of health care in Northern BC. Whether folks had five minutes or stayed for longer conversations, the curiosity in the room was inspiring. [Read more](#).

Northern Health Story 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:

- [Growing more than zucchinis: Competition cultivating connection in the North](#)
- [From a friend who cares](#)
- [Navigating FASD in the North: It's complicated](#)

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:

- [B.C. strengthens clinical research bringing more jobs, better care to people](#)
- [More youth will be supported with tools to prevent addiction, substance use](#)

Public Health

Northern Health Communities E-Brief – September 2025

The E-Brief is a monthly newsletter sharing resources, learning opportunities, and grant funding that supports community health in Northern BC. [Check out what's new for September 2025](#).

To subscribe to this monthly newsletter, please email healthycommunities@northernhealth.ca with the subject line "subscribe."

Overdose Prevention and Response

Drug advisory: Northern Health Region – Sept 23, 2025

Northern Health and FNHA are issuing a Drug Alert for the Northern Region. A purple paste/sample sold as 'down' has tested positive for fentanyl, benzos and medetomidine. This sample has been linked to overdose events.

[Medetomidine](#) is a non-opioid sedative that can cause an increase in overdose and fatal overdose, complex drug poisoning which involves deep and prolonged sedation and very low or no pulse. Overdose symptoms may require multiple doses of naloxone or may not respond to naloxone. [Read more](#).



Drug advisory: Prince George – September 17, 2025

There has been an increase in overdose events in the community of Prince George with people reporting heavy and prolonged sedation and requiring more naloxone to reverse. Overdoses are happening when the substance is smoked and/or injected. [Read more](#).



Text alerts for toxic drugs available in the North

In response to the toxic drug emergency, a text message alert system has been implemented 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](#).