

NEWS RELEASE

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Wildfires, heart health and hospital projects: NH board meeting highlights

The Northern Health Board of Directors examined significant differences between the 2017 and 2018 wildfire season impacts on Northern Health services at its latest meeting in Prince George.

A preliminary review of the 2018 wildfire season found that lessons learned in 2017, as Northern Health supported Interior Health by accepting evacuated patients, helped our health authority navigate the direct impacts of this summer's wildfire activity services within the region.

"The Board sincerely thanks staff and physicians who provided health services over a challenging summer, particularly to those displaced from communities impacted by wildfire activity," said Northern Health Board Chair Colleen Nyce. "A focus on advanced planning and the response process were very helpful in this year's response."

The Board also heard an update on NH Community Consultations taking place across the region through mid-November. Public meetings, focus groups and stakeholder and provider discussions on heart health have already been held in 11 communities; this week's sessions are taking place on Haida Gwaii. Northern B.C. residents who are unable to attend a physical meeting are encouraged to provide their input On Heart Health [online](#).

Other highlights from the February 2018 regular meeting of the Northern Health board included a review of significant capital projects that are underway or moving through planning stages across the region:

- Northern Haida Gwaii Hospital in Masset is entering a unique partnership with Northwest Clean Heat and BC Hydro to develop a biomass heating system that could significantly reduce the hospital's heating costs, and carbon footprint
- A project to add medical inpatient beds on the second floor of the University Hospital of Northern BC is underway and on track for completion in March 2019

- UHNBC is also undergoing \$1 Million in hot water system upgrades, to be complete in early 2019
- Replacement of Stuart Lake Hospital is proceeding to business planning, following the announcement of concept plan approval earlier this month
- Business planning for the redevelopment and expansion of Dawson Creek & District Hospital is also underway, after July's provincial government approval of the concept plan

The next Northern Health board meeting will be held December 3, 2018, in Prince George.

Media Contact: NH media line – 1-877-961-7724