

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
April 18, 2019

NH Board meeting highlights: April 2019

Northern Health's Board of Directors heard details of progress on implementation of the Northern First Nations Wellness Plan, and about an integrated approach to Adult Day Program services for seniors in the Bulkley Valley, at its most recent meeting in Smithers.

NH Indigenous Health provided an update on a wide range of ongoing and new initiatives in partnership with the First Nations Health Authority, and northern First Nations communities across the region. Among the highlights are two programs offering undergraduate medical students the opportunity to visit and learn from northern First Nations communities through cultural exchange and sharing of local knowledge.

"A key priority in the First Nations Health and Wellness Plan is to improve the cultural safety of NH services provided to Indigenous people," said Board Chair Colleen Nyce. "We thank all of our partners including the First Nations Health Authority and northern First Nations communities who are guiding this work across the spectrum of health services in the region."

While in the Bulkley Valley, Board members recognized improvements to local services including the implementation of a CT scanner in Smithers that will enhance the access to diagnostic testing in the Hazelton to Burns Lake corridor. The project would not have been possible without a major donation and support from the Bulkley Valley Hospital Foundation. Northern Health is targeting a late June 2019 start for the delivery of patient services.

The Smithers Integrated Adult Day Program at Bulkley Lodge was the focus of a presentation highlighting efforts to improve access to a wider and more flexible range of services for seniors with care needs in the community while also providing respite for family caregivers. Over the years, the program has added staff and programming to operate seven days per week, with improved program flexibility and stability.

"Increasing access to Adult Day Program services for seniors is an important component of meeting the needs of an aging population," said Cathy Ulrich, Northern Health CEO. "Health supports are only one piece of the puzzle, and we

continue to work in partnership with community partners to expand and enhance community services and supports to help seniors stay at home and in their communities.”

Other highlights from the April 2019 meeting include:

- An overview of 2018 research projects reviewed and approved by the NH Research Review Committee; in all, 47 projects were approved in partnership and/or collaboration with University of Northern BC, UBC and the Northern Medical Program, and other organizations such as BC Cancer, other health authorities and the BC Academic Health Science Network
- Enhancements to the North West Specialized Community Services Program for Mental Health and Substance Use, including the recently announced mobile Mental Health and Substance Use unit serving Terrace, Kitimat and the Hazelton area.

The next regular meeting of the Northern Health Board of Directors will be held June 10, 2019 in Fort St. John.

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