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Northern Health Community News

June 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



Measles cases confirmed in Northeast BC

On June 13, Northern Health identified multiple lab-confirmed cases of measles in the Northeast Health Service Delivery Area. [Read more on our website.](#) The BC Centre for Disease Control reports on measles cases in B.C. online at: [Measles](#). Case numbers are updated every Monday and Thursday, and locations of potential exposures are listed on the BCCDC site as well.

Measles is highly contagious and can be very serious with almost 1 in 10 people being hospitalized. Getting immunized with at least two doses of measles-containing vaccine is the best way to prevent measles and potentially serious complications like pneumonia or encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). For information on how and where to get immunized, visit the [measles page](#) on our website.

If you have a fever and rash, and think you may have measles, especially if you have been in contact with someone with measles or traveled to an area with a measles outbreak, talk to a healthcare provider. As always, if you are feeling ill, please delay social visits to long term care settings or acute care patients in Northern Health facilities.



First-of-its-kind in Canada, First Nations healing centre breaks ground

People in Northeastern British Columbia are one step closer to a new centre that will offer a holistic, culturally safe approach to addictions treatment and recovery, supporting more people on their healing journey. [Read the full story on the Ministry of Health website.](#)



Strengthening care for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit patients

As part of Northern Health's (NH) ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, we are proud to announce the evolution of the Indigenous Patient Liaison program into the Indigenous Care Team (ICT). This change reflects a broader vision—one that supports First Nations, Métis, and Inuit patients and their families in accessing high-quality, culturally-safe health care services across the North. [Read more.](#)



A new sculpture added to Ksyen Regional Hospital

A [brand-new sculpture](#) is now installed in front of Ksyen Regional Hospital in Terrace. This sculpture was made with reclaimed materials from Mills Memorial Hospital and honors the legacy of service that Dr. Mills, his family, and the facility that bore his name gave to the region.

The sculpture was created by [Karl Mattson](#) from his studio in Rolla, BC. In Karl's words, this 14ft tall abstract depiction of a Western Red Cedar has been constructed from steel, stone, and salvaged objects from the former Mills Memorial Hospital. The tree symbolizes life, and the objects it is created from are a testimony of the human condition to care for one another.



National Indigenous History Month

June is National Indigenous History Month - a time to honour the cultures, traditions, and strength of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Today, we also mark the 10-year anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's release of its 94 Calls to Action.

There are over 200 First Nations in BC with distinct languages, cultures, values, traditions, world views and customs. And Métis people and culture are a vital part of the fabric of our province. This month, and every month, we recognize and celebrate the knowledge, leadership, and cultural richness of Indigenous Peoples. [Read more.](#)



New long-term care beds coming to Fort St. John

Residents in the Northeast will soon have access to additional long-term care beds as the business plan has been approved for an expansion to Peace Villa in Fort St. John.

“As Fort St. John continues to grow, so does the need for strong, modern long-term care infrastructure,” said Bowinn Ma, Minister of Infrastructure. “This newly approved long-term care home is a generational investment—expanding access to quality care for seniors, strengthening health services in the region, and creating meaningful jobs for the community.” [Read more.](#)



Helpful wildfire resources

Wildfire season has arrived and we have compiled a list of resources to help you stay informed and prepared:

- [Northern Health – Wildfires and your health](#)
- [Extreme heat and heat warnings](#)
- [Wildfire preparedness](#)
- [Latest air quality advisories](#)
- [BC Wildfire fire list](#)
- [Emergency Info BC Advisories](#)
- [Heat Warning in BC](#)
- [Disaster stress](#)
- [BCCDC – Wildfire smoke](#)
- [FireSmoke Canada – BC smoke forecasts](#)

[Recover after a wildfire – Re-entering your home or business](#)



Wildfire smoke information

Poor air quality can be harmful to health, especially for those with chronic conditions like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, diabetes, and for pregnant people, infants and children, and older adults.

Take steps to keep you and your loved ones safe and healthy:

- Reduce the amount of time spent outdoors
- Stay hydrated
- Avoid rigorous outdoor activities, like exercise
- Keep windows closed in vehicles and homes
- If you have one, use an indoor air cleaner or filtration system, or recirculate indoor air in a forced air system that is filtered (turn on your furnace fan)

For more information on how to stay safe in smoky conditions visit the [BCCDC Wildfire Smoke page](#).



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

Emergency rooms in the North can face increasing strain at this time of year. 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](https://www.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](#).



Northern Health welcomes associate physicians

In 2024, Northern Health (NH) welcomed the first associate physicians (APs) to the region, with the goal of hiring more to support primary care in Northern facilities.

Associate physician is a licensure class created by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC (CPSBC) in 2023. APs can work in emergency departments, operating rooms, and support in-patient care. They are not independent practitioners and work with a level of

autonomy approved by a supervisory physician. [Read more.](#)



A StEP forward in caring for children in Northern BC

Doctors, nurses, and respiratory therapists from across Northern British Columbia recently came together to learn how to better care for seriously ill children. This special training, called the Stabilization Essentials in Pediatrics (StEP) course, took place at the new education centre at Ksyen Regional Hospital in Terrace this spring. [Read more.](#)



Return to the North: An international medical graduate's journey back

Showing a canvas-printed photo of the Stekyoden (also known as Roche de Boule) mountain range in its fall colour splendor, Dr. Savanna Naylor shared with me the story of how she is completing a full circle journey to return to Hazelton, BC to practice medicine. [Read more.](#)



Celebrating staff together – Hospital and community

The next time you walk into Bulkley Valley District Hospital (BVDH) in Smithers, BC, be on the lookout for the “BVDH Celebrates” board in the main hallway. The

board was created by BVDH staff including Dr. Kalah Blackstock, local family physician and Quality Improvement Physician Advisor for the Physician Quality Improvement program, Dr. Kate Niethammer, family physician and Co-Chief of Staff, Elena Raykov, OR Manager, and Ashley van der Meulen, Clinical Practice Lead nurse. [Read more.](#)



2025 Dr. Charles Jago Awards – Recognizing Northern Health staff and medical staff who live our values

Northern Health (NH) strives to make our values – empathy, respect, collaboration, and innovation – the core of what we do every day. The Dr. Charles Jago Awards, named after our former Board Chair, acknowledge and celebrate those who have made outstanding contributions to NH's organizational goals, reflecting our values in the process. [Read the full story on our website.](#)

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:

- May 27 – **Pathways to Indigenous Futures Career Fair**, Fort St. John, BC
- May 30 - Jun 1 – **National Emergency Nursing Association Conference**, Saskatoon, SK
- Jun 5-8 – **Professional Practice Conference (Pharmacy)**, Ottawa, ON
- Jun 5-8 – **Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada Conference**, Saskatoon, SK

- Jun 6 – **BCAS Academic Half Day**, Vancouver, BC
- Jun 6-8 – **BC Rural Health Conference**, Prince George, BC
- Jun 6-8 – **Canadian Association of Pharmacy Technicians National Professional Development Conference**, Prince George, BC
- Jun 13-14 – **Medical Laboratory Professionals Association of Ontario Conference**, Kingston, ON

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

Capital Projects



UHNBC Acute Care Tower: The next chapter begins - two construction and design teams advance

After interviews conducted last week, we're pleased to share that two teams have advanced to the Workshops and RFP submission stage for the UHNBC Acute Care Tower Project in Prince George.

- EllisDon Corporation (Construction), DIALOG BC Architecture Engineering and Interior Design Planning Inc. (Design)
- PCL Constructors Westcoast Inc. (Construction), Parkin Architects Western Ltd. (Design)

[Read more on our Let's talk page.](#)



UHNBC Acute Care Tower: Coming soon – your new go-to parking spot

We're excited to share the most up-to-date look at what the new parkade will look like! [This rendering](#) showcases the modern, multi-level design of our upcoming parking structure. With open sides for natural light and ventilation, and greenery thoughtfully planted around the perimeter, this parkade is designed with both functionality and aesthetics in mind. When you're visiting the hospital, this new facility will make parking easier and more convenient.



Dawson Creek and District Hospital Replacement Project: Highlight – interior design inspiration and color schemes

The concepts for the interior design of the new Dawson Creek and District Hospital draws inspiration from features of the surrounding environment; the FLOW of the Pouce Coupe River and Dawson Creek, the CONNECTIONS along the Alaska Highway, and the railroad as important gateways to the surrounding region and the northern lights of the BIG SKY which offers a full spectrum of colour palette. [Read more.](#)



Dawson Creek and District Hospital Replacement Project: Local Artists Shine - Over 650 submissions for new hospital art installation

We recently launched an artist call-out seeking local and regional images to be used on custom wall graphics in the new hospital. We are excited to share that we received over 50 packages from local artists, totaling over 650 images for consideration! The DCDH Art Committee will review the submissions and determine which 13 images are successful and will be installed in the new facility. Stay tuned to learn which artists will have an opportunity to feature their artwork in the new Dawson Creek & District Hospital!

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:



- [Fort St. John Cancer Support Circles Society](#)
- [World No Commercial Tobacco Day: Unmasking the appeal](#)
- [The sacred path of Two-Spirit people: Honouring identity, history, and resilience](#)
- [Cultural leave: From smokehouse summers to stonemoving feasts](#)
- [Resourcefulness at Jubilee Lodge: Launching an adaptive clothing loaner program](#)

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:

- [Health authority review expands to ensure support for front-line services](#)
- [Farmers' market program delivers another bountiful harvest](#)

Public Health

Northern Health Communities E-Brief – June 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 June 2025.](#)

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

Overdose Prevention and Response



Toxic Drug Alert: Dawson Creek – June 19

Northern Health has issued a Toxic Drug Alert for Dawson Creek. A green substance sold as “down” has been linked to sudden overdoses requiring naloxone and/or hospitalization. Overdoses occur when the substance is inhaled. Use caution when

using substances through any route. [For more information, please visit 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.](#)



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