

From: Digests <Digests@northernhealth.ca>
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To: Alice Johnston <AJohnston@cariboord.ca>
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What's going on in Northern Health?

Northern Health Community News

March 2026

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



New CT scanner preparing to see first patients at Kitimat General Hospital

Residents of Kitimat and area will benefit from better access to diagnostic imaging services as staff at Kitimat General Hospital get ready to welcome the first patients who will use the brand-new CT scanner on April 9, 2026.

“For people living in Kitimat and the surrounding area, accessing diagnostic services often means long drives or ambulance transfers in urgent cases,” said Josie Osborne, Minister of Health. “The new CT scanner in Kitimat provides much more timely access to advanced medical imaging, so people can get the care they need closer to home and health-

care providers can diagnose and treat patients faster.” [Read the full news release on our website.](#)



Burns Lake welcoming new physicians: Recruitment momentum brings hope

Good news for Burns Lake - the local health care team is expanding! Northern Health has hired five new full-time physicians who will be supporting the emergency department, along with two associate physicians who will be joining soon.

These recruits will begin arriving as early as summer 2026, bringing much-needed relief for the dedicated local team. A hopeful step forward for health care in the Lakes District. [Read the full story on our website.](#)



Moving forward with Indigenous-led treatment and recovery, substance-use services in Terrace

People in Terrace and across northwestern BC will soon have better access to culturally safe, community-based withdrawal-management services, as Northern Health has purchased a site to house new withdrawal-management beds in Terrace.

“We’ve heard clearly from people in the northwest that having access to treatment and recovery services close to home — including withdrawal management — is a top priority,” said Josie Osborne, Minister of Health. “By partnering with Indigenous leaders, Northern Health and community organizations, we’re building a system of care that reflects the region’s needs and values. These new services will help people access support

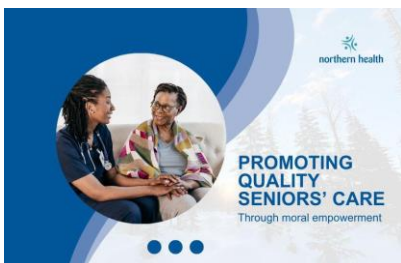
in ways that are culturally safe, respectful and rooted in community.” [Read the full news release on the BC Government news site.](#)



Bringing clinical trials closer to home

Northern Health (NH) has officially launched its first Phase III clinical trial in Northern BC. The focus of the study is chronic kidney disease, and is being led by Principal Investigator Dr. Anurag Singh, through the [Northern Centre for Clinical Research \(NCCR\)](#) at the University Hospital of Northern British Columbia (UHNBC) in Prince George.

By introducing clinical trials to the region, patients can access treatments previously only offered in the lower mainland. Until now, many patients in the North were unable to participate in such studies due to high travel costs and the many hours needed to reach their destination. By breaking these barriers down, health care can better reflect and address the needs of our rural and Indigenous patients. [Read more.](#)



Promoting quality seniors' care through moral empowerment

As Canada's population ages, more seniors are choosing to remain at home for as long as possible. For many, home is where independence, dignity, and a sense of control are best preserved. But behind the scenes, the growing demand for home-based health care is placing increasing pressure on care providers who support seniors and their families every day. [Read the full story on our website.](#)



New Connections bus!

We're proud to introduce our newest Northern Health Connections bus, now stationed at our updated Vancouver pick-up spot. Supporting patient travel across Northern BC has never looked better. Visit <https://www.nhconnections.ca/> to learn more.



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](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](#). [NH's Emergency Dept Status webpage](#) provides information on the open/temporarily closed status of Emergency Departments across the region.

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](#).



Small steps, big dreams: A Filipino dietitian's Canadian journey

As we celebrate National Dietitians Day, we're shining a spotlight on Winnei, a diet technician living in Prince George. [Here's what](#) Winnei had to say about and her journey from the Philippines to Canada and her quest to pursue a professional career as a registered dietitian.



Celebrating 2026 Preceptor Award recipient: Courtenay Hopson

The [Student Practice Education team](#) is proud to celebrate Courtenay Hopson, one of Northern Health's newest recipients of the Preceptor Award. The award, launched in 2025, recognizes exceptional clinicians across the organization who take on the dual responsibility of providing high-quality patient care while mentoring the next generation of health professionals.

This year, more than 55 students shared heartfelt nominations for 86 nominees, demonstrating the

deep impact Northern Health preceptors have across the province. Read about Courtenay and her impact as a preceptor on our [stories website](#).



Primary care pharmacists help improve patient medication management

March is Pharmacy Appreciation Month, a time to celebrate and thank pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, pharmacy assistants, and all pharmacy staff for the vital role they play in supporting safe, effective, and patient-centred care. Pharmacists work closely with community health care teams and patients to optimize medication use through evidence-based practice, shared decision making, education, and proactive care planning. Help us celebrate Northern Health pharmacy teams and thank them for their expertise and commitment! Read more about how pharmacists care for those in their community on our [Stories site](#).



More than nutrition facts: How dietitians nourish Northern communities

When you think of a dietitian, you might picture someone giving one-on-one advice about food choices. That's part of the story, but in Northern Health, dietitians fill a variety of roles. [Population health dietitians](#), for example, work at the intersection of food systems, public policy, and community wellness, using evidence-informed strategies to improve health outcomes across the region.

Flo Sheppard shares how population health dietitians work to promote healthier communities across the health authority. [Read the full story here](#).

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:

- Coast Mountain College Career Fair - Terrace, BC
- Lheidli T'enneh Career and Education Fair - Prince George, BC
- Post Secondary Institution Roadshow (Maritimes) - Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, PEI
- University of Manitoba Rehabilitation Job Fair - Winnipeg, MB
- NAIT Career Fair - Edmonton, AB
- Carrier Sekani Family Services Youth Conference - Prince George, BC
- American College of Cardiology (ACC.2026) - New Orleans, LA

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

Capital Projects



Dawson Creek & District Hospital: Construction ahead of schedule! A major milestone for the new hospital

Some exciting news about the new Dawson Creek & District Hospital project! Construction is progressing ahead of schedule and as a result, we've received notice from Graham Design-Builders that the substantial completion date has moved from November 30, 2026 to September 29, 2026—two months ahead of schedule!

Advancing the substantial completion date is a major achievement—and a testament to hard work

by many partners and contributors. It brings us significantly closer to opening a brand new, state-of-the-art hospital that reflects the needs, values, and cultures of Dawson Creek and the Peace Region.

[Read more info on our website.](#)



University Hospital of Northern British Columbia – Acute Care Tower: Shaping what comes next - a look inside this week’s planning work

Even though things may have seemed quiet from the outside, our project team has been working hard behind the scenes over the past few weeks. At this point in the process, we are taking things slow and steady to make sure the Alliance starts on a solid foundation that will support collaboration and long-term success.

Throughout the first week of March, we made strong progress as we continued working on the design process. We focused on two key activities: pull planning and project proposal planning. Both sessions helped us clarify our priorities, align our timelines, and prepare for the next phase of the work. [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:



- [Overnight oats: Apple pie in a jar](#)
- [The mason jar salad quest](#)
- [Snack time: No-bake energy bites](#)

- [Let's taco about dinner](#)

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:



Ministry of
Health

- [BC leading the way in improving women's health, expanding access to care](#). Women and gender-diverse people in BC are receiving improved access to care through expanded services and broader medication coverage.
- [One year update: Hundreds of US health care professionals are serving people in BC](#). One year after the BC government launched a targeted campaign to recruit US-trained health care workers, more than 400 professionals have signed on to work in BC communities. It is nearly triple the number since the previous update in September 2025.
- [Making more surgeries available closer to home](#)
- [Provincial health officer's statement on end of respiratory-illness season](#)

Public Health

Northern Health Communities E-Brief – March 2026

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 March 2026](#).

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

Overdose Prevention and Response



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.](#)



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