



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

May 2023

Organization and community news

Celebrating Nursing Week 2023

May 8-14 is National Nursing Week! Nurses work with courage and commitment every day, making up almost 30% of Northern Health staff in all types of roles.

To celebrate Nursing Week, we will be sharing stories and content on our [Northern Health Facebook page](#), and our [stories website](#). Follow along and celebrate Nursing Week with us!

Emergency Preparedness Week: Be prepared for extreme heat

With summer around the corner, it's time to learn about the different types of heat alerts and prepare your space for heat.

Find information about current weather conditions [here](#) or [here](#), and find out about more heat warnings [here](#).

Learn about the steps you can take to stay safe and comfortable now:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/prevention-public-health/preparing-for-heat-events>

Moose Hide Campaign: What is it and how can you get involved?

May 11, 2023, marks the 12th annual Moose Hide Campaign Day. The Campaign is a BC-led, grassroots movement to end violence toward women and children. The campaign began in Northern BC when Raven and Paul Lacerte decided to take action against the violence occurring toward women and children in the North while hunting in their territory.

Raven and Paul cut up small pieces of moose hide and distributed them to friends and family to raise awareness of their cause. The recognizable moose hide pin has since become a cornerstone of the campaign. Wearing the pin shows a commitment to honour, respect, and protect the women and children in your life and speak out against violence. To register for the campaign or learn more, visit moosehidecampaign.ca.

New emergency department, ICU open at GR Baker Memorial Hospital

People in the North Cariboo will have better access to health care at GR Baker Memorial Hospital as construction completes on a new emergency department and intensive care unit (ICU).

The new addition was built on the territory of the Lhtako Dene Nation and will open on April 14, 2023. The provincial government invested \$27 million in the project through Northern Health and the Cariboo Chilcotin Regional Hospital District. [Read more](#)

Mills Memorial Hospital Replacement drone video: monthly progress from June 2021 to March 2023

Check out month-to-month [drone video](#) of the new hospital construction in Terrace, from when the project began in June 2021 until March 2023. Thanks to PCL, the project's Design-Builder, for sharing the drone footage and creating this video.

Northern Health Stories 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.

- [Celebrating National Nursing Week 2023: Ashley Wasnik](#)
- [National Nursing Week: A letter to nurses from Cathy Ulrich, CEO](#)
- [Qualitycast North: Maintaining quality education in the Northern Medical Program with Dr. Paul Winwood](#)
- [Making a difference by volunteering](#)
- [Northern Health's COVID-19 Data and Analytics teams make top three in nominations for the Partnership Premier's Award](#)

Overdose prevention and response

Reminder! Text alerts for toxic drugs now available in the North

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

Overdose Prevention Sites and community impacts

BC Center for Disease Control and Toward the Heart have collaborated to produce compelling evidence on the benefits of Overdose Prevention Sites (OPS) on communities in British Columbia. Health Canada and the Provincial Health Officer endorse OPS as a medically necessary health service.

With proper staffing, operational protocols, and data collection standards in place, OPS function safely and effectively to prevent overdose deaths, reduce harm, promote social connectedness, and enable people who use drugs to access health services and treatment. Furthermore, OPS do not increase crime, nuisance complaints, or drug use. It is crucial to

work closely with residents, government, peer-led organizations, and the regional health authority to maximize benefits and minimize negative impacts. Based on evidence-based reviews, OPS are safe, necessary, and effective health services. If you're interested in learning more about harm reduction and overdose prevention sites, see [this document](#) on towardtheheart.com.

Opioid and stimulant-related harms in Canada

Recent data from the Canadian government reveals that opioid and stimulant use in Canada remains a significant public health concern. The website, [Health Infobase](#) by the Public Health Agency of Canada, provides useful insights into the impact of drug use on different regions and populations in the country. Over the past four years, there have been more than 20,000 opioid-related deaths in Canada, with a significant increase in emergency department visits and hospitalizations for opioid and stimulant-related harms. The website also offers resources for policymakers and healthcare providers to better understand and tackle the issue.

COVID-19

COVID is still with us, in our communities, impacting our friends and loved ones. Vaccinations remain the best defence against both influenza and COVID-19.

On April 6, many of the remaining COVID-19 Provincial Health Orders were lifted, including mandatory universal masking at health care facilities and visitor restrictions to enter long-term care, assisted living and other health care facilities. [Learn more about the provincial announcement](#).

Beyond vaccinations, we can all take key preventive measures, including:

- Stay at home if you feel unwell and try to avoid spending time with people at higher risk of serious illness.
- Practice respiratory etiquette: Wear a mask in crowded, public spaces, and cough and sneeze into your elbow.
- Clean your hands regularly.
- Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, mouth and nose.

For more information, visit [BCCDC](#) or the [Provincial Infection Control Network of British Columbia](#).

Resources and information

The [Northern Health COVID-19](#) and [COVID-19 information](#) pages have information about immunization clinics, testing and self-isolation, the community toolkit, and trusted contacts.

For information outside of Northern Health, see [these trusted resources](#).