



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

February 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

New pediatric clinic brings vital services to Fort St. John

The establishment of a new pediatric clinic in Fort St. John marks a significant milestone in the community's health care landscape. Operating alongside the Fort St. John Primary Care Clinic, the pediatric clinic came together quickly to fill a critical gap in pediatric care following the departure of the community's only private pediatrician. [Read full story on our website.](#)

Northern Health welcomes volunteer greeters to new Ksyen Regional Hospital

As Northern Health proudly opens the doors to the new hospital in Terrace, we are thrilled to welcome volunteers who will help guide and support the public. Volunteer greeters are stationed at the entrance doors of the new state-of-the-art Ksyen Regional Hospital, ready to welcome people and help them find their way. Where's the lab? Where do you go for your ultrasound appointment? What floor is the Birthing Unit on? Our volunteers help by answering questions like these, and more! [Read the full story on our website.](#)

Get prepared for winter weather and storms

It may be feeling like spring is not far off, but severe weather like snow, hail, blizzards, high winds or heavy rain can still happen at this time of year, without warning and affecting your safety in different ways. Extreme cold can be hazardous, and the risk increases the more time you spend outdoors.

Weather alerts and forecasts are issued by Environment Canada. For keeping up with extreme weather alerts:

- Follow [Canada public weather alerts](#)
- Download the [WeatherCAN](#) app to receive weather alert notifications in your area.
- Check out [DriveBC](#) for road conditions and alerts in your area

Visit the Government of BC website for resources on the following:

- [Know the risks](#)
- [As winter weather arrives](#)
- [Winter Driving](#)

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](#) 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](#).
- 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](#).

Virtual hiring event for Nurses – new grads welcome!

Do you know a nurse who would be a great fit at NH? We're hosting a **virtual hiring event specifically for nurses** on Wednesday, March 5th! This is an opportunity for applicants to connect face-to-face with our recruitment team and learn what Northern BC has to offer.

If you know someone who might be interested, they can RSVP for an interview slot [here](#).

We also hosted an Indeed virtual hiring event last week for dietitians. Our team of recruiters worked from 7am-7pm interviewing the 49 applicants, with some promising candidates emerging.

These events are part of the final push to encourage health care workers take advantage of the \$30,000 [Rural and Remote Recruitment Incentive](#). Candidates must sign an offer letter by March 31 to be eligible and start working by June.

GoHealth BC is now hiring Medical Laboratory Technologists!

Northern Health and the Health Sciences Association (HSA) have established a memorandum of agreement that will enable professions within the Health Sciences Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA) to be employed within the GoHealth BC model!

Following a thorough review of vacancy rates, it was decided that Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs) would be the first HSPBA profession to be integrated into the GoHealth BC program. An MLT Program Lead has been hired, and specific guidelines have been developed to support this expansion. We are pleased to announce that the MLT positions have been posted, with the first deployments expected in early spring 2025. [Read more on our website.](#)

Staff testimonials: The importance of volunteers at NH facilities

Volunteers are an incredible support to Northern Health facilities, providing invaluable assistance and comfort to patients, residents, and staff alike. Their dedication and compassion create a welcoming and secure environment, fostering a sense of community and normalcy.

Through heartfelt testimonials, staff members share their gratitude and highlight the profound impact volunteers have on daily operations and the well-being of everyone they touch. From wayfinding to specialized programs like the Volunteer Cuddling program, these selfless individuals truly embody the Northern way of caring. [Read the staff testimonials on our website.](#)

Recruiters on the road

NH's staff and physician recruitment teams have been out in full swing this fall, sharing what kinds of opportunities set Northern BC apart. During January, the recruiters have attended or presented at:

- Jan 21 - UNBC Careers in Health, Education, and Social Work - Prince George, BC
- Feb 3 - UBC Nursing Careers Panel & Career Fair - Vancouver, BC
- Feb 5 - Health Match BC New Grad Webinar - Online
- Feb 6 - Get Connect Career Fair - Hazelton, BC
- Feb 11-12 - Western University Job Fair - London, ON
- Feb 26 - Virtual Hiring Event: Dietitians - Online
- Feb 27-Mar 2 - Anesthesiology Summit - Whistler, BC
- Feb 28 - Doc Talk, Fraser Lake - Prince George, BC
- Feb 28-Mar 2 - Canadian Digestive Disease Week - Quebec City, QC
- Mar 4 - UNBC NorthWorks Career Fair - Prince George, BC
- Mar 5 - Virtual Hiring Event: Nurses - Online

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

Capital Projects

New beginnings: Celebrating a successful move to the new Fort St. James Hospital and Health Centre

Thank you to all who were involved in the move from Stuart Lake General Hospital! Your care, dedication, and commitment made it a success. Stuart Lake General Hospital is now permanently closed, and the new Fort St. James Hospital and Health Centre is open.

The Fort St. James Health Centre will be open at the new facility on January 20.

Stay tuned for more updates. [See photos of the move on our website!](#)

Dawson Creek & District Hospital replacement project

In the coming months, the building's exterior will transform as work progresses on the building envelope. Inside, the focus is on mechanical and electrical wall rough-ins and interior drywall installation, followed by finishes and architectural details. With window installation on Levels 1 and 2 nearly complete, more natural light will soon fill the building. Elevators are being installed and are expected to be operational by April.

We're hiring in Dawson Creek! Discover your health care career at the newest hospital in the Northeast! The new Dawson Creek & District Hospital will be open for patients in Spring 2027. There are a number of health care and support positions that need to be filled at the current and future hospital. Download a copy of the [DCDH Employment Flyer](#) to learn more.

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:

- ["It's not hard work, it's heart work:" Cuddling babies in neonatal intensive care](#)
- [An unforgettable night of teamwork and support](#)

Ministry highlights

Including highlights from the [Ministry of Health](#) that are of interest to all BC residents:

- [Government provides update on pharmacy investigations, prescribed alternatives](#)
- [More substance-use treatment coming to B.C.](#)

Public Health

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

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

BC residents advised to check their immunization records ahead of spring travel

With two measles cases reported in the province in people returning from travel, public health officials are reminding people in BC to check that their immunizations are up to date, particularly if you plan to travel this spring. [Read more on the BC Centre for Disease Control website.](#)

Northern Health offers the measles vaccine by appointment. Many primary care, walk-in clinics and pharmacies carry the measles vaccine. Please call ahead to make sure the vaccine is available before you visit. Find an [immunization clinic](#) near you.

Respiratory and other illnesses are still circulating

Northern Health posts information about outbreaks of illnesses and infectious diseases in hospitals, long-term care, and other health facilities in the Northern Health region, when an outbreak is declared by a Medical Health Officer.

[Visit this page for more information](#), and if you intend to visit a facility where outbreak measures are in place, consider postponing your visit until the outbreak is over in order to help keep you and your loved ones healthy.

Overdose prevention and response

Minister's statement on lives lost to toxic drugs in 2024

Josie Osborne, Minister of Health, has released the following statement about the BC Coroners Service report on illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2024:

"Today, we acknowledge the 2,253 people in British Columbia who lost their lives to poisoned drugs in 2024. Behind every number is a child, parent, sibling, friend or neighbour, and their loss is felt deeply by those who knew and loved them. The toxic-drug crisis also continues to take a heavy toll on the people working on the front lines who care for and support many of the people we've lost. We must continue to work together to prevent further heartbreak and save lives." [Read the full statement on the Government of BC website.](#)

Toxic drug alert: Prince George – February 21

Northern Health has issued a Toxic Drug Alert for **Prince George**. A colorless liquid being sold as GHB, tested positive for fentanyl and has been linked to increased sedation, confusion and

opioid poisoning like symptoms. Use caution when using this substance through any route.

For more information and local supports, [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](#).

[Further information and local supports are available on our website](#).