

# NORTH

NORTHERN FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY NEWS | MAY 2023

**HAVE WE GOT A  
JOB FOR YOU!**  
DETAILS ON PAGE 4

**IN THE GALLERY**  
STRENGTHENING  
HELPERS

**BONFIRE CHAT**  
WITH OUR MANAGER OF  
MENTAL HEALTH &  
WELLNESS

**SHARING STRENGTHS**  
COMMUNITY HELPERS  
COMPLETE SIX MONTHS  
TRAINING

**STORIES FROM THE LAND**  
TRADITIONAL HEALING NOW AT  
SMITHERS PRIMARY CARE CLINIC



**NORTHERN REGION**  
First Nations Health Authority

## SMITHERS CLINIC EXPANDS TO INCLUDE CULTURALLY SAFE CARE FOR LOCAL FIRST NATIONS

**THE NEW EXPANSION TO THE SMITHERS PRIMARY CARE CLINIC MEANS LOCAL FIRST NATIONS AND OTHER RESIDENTS CAN NOW ACCESS TRADITIONAL HEALING** as well as Western medicine in a culturally safe environment.

The result of strong collaboration between the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Northern Health, the Pacific Northwest Division of Family Practice the Ministry of Health, and the local First Nations community in Witset, the clinic will serve as a model for the region.

The goal is to “create a shared space that ensures First Nations communities have a voice at the table and their members can receive culturally safe healthcare,” said Trish Howard, FNHA’s primary care manager.

This site offers wrap-around care inclusive of First Nations traditional knowledge that

will staff an Elder, general practitioner, nurse practitioners, primary care assistants, a clinical pharmacist, dietitian and a physiotherapist.

The clinic, part of the Bulkley Valley Witset Primary Care Network, provides a team-based model of care that is inclusive of traditional First Nations healing knowledge and wisdom and reflects the culture of the unceded lands it occupies.

A formal ceremony to celebrate the expansion is planned July at 3842 Third Avenue in Smithers.



The community of Witset, Northern Health, the FNHA, the Pacific Northwest Division of Family Practice and the Ministry of Health collaborated on this project to include traditional healing at the clinic in Smithers.

Download a digital copy of NORTH:  
<https://fnha.bmeurl.co/F7D2044>

## SHARING STRENGTHS

# EVERYDAY HEROES

### **THE STRENGTHENING HELPERS PROGRAM, FACILITATED BY EMBER OF HOPE COUNSELING AND TRAINING SERVICES, IS HALFWAY THROUGH TRAINING 39 COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

to aid and support those facing health and wellness challenges, especially in rural and remote areas.

The First Nations Health Authority sponsored the one-year Indigenous-only training. It empowers natural helpers with technical knowledge and confidence to make a real difference without having to study for years. And the helpers use skills and experience they already have.

“We wanted to focus on delivering culturally appropriate healing skills that incorporate awareness of unique cultural intricacies and historical trauma,” said FNHA’s Carlos Colindres, FNHA director of health emergency management.

The training includes: mental health awareness, trauma-informed care, suicide prevention and cultural safety, while emphasizing self-care.

“These natural helpers live in the community and respond to crisis and are filled with empathy and compassion. We are so grateful to have their support,” said Sandra McArthur, FNHA’s crisis response coordinator.

Participants finished the classroom sessions and will now enter into a six-month mentorship program to complete the full training.



Richard Sampson of Ember of Hope Counseling and Training facilitated sessions across the North over six months. See more photos on p. 7.

# HAVE WE GOT A JOB FOR YOU!



- ✓ **POSITION:** Clinical Counsellor  
Mental Health & Wellness
- ✓ **LOCATION:** Prince George, BC
- ✓ Provide advanced level  
expertise in community-based  
clinical services

You have a master's degree in counselling,  
social work, or relevant human services field.

**TAKE YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A CLINICAL COUNSELLOR INTO FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES.** Our perspective on wellness looks at each person holistically and provides an opportunity for you to incorporate traditional Indigenous healing into Western practices. You will be part of a committed and skilled team who can help guide you if you are new to working with First Nations. Ideally you'll have worked with people who've experienced trauma or critical incidents and will bring that knowledge to this role as you work closely with community health staff, traditional healers, families and first responders.

The FNHA offers employee benefits from day one, a good pension plan, ample vacation plus 14 stats and 5 personal days. Breathtaking scenery comes as a bonus with the job. Interested? If so, [check out the listing here](#).

## FNHA JOB OPENINGS IN THE NORTH (click for more info)

[Aboriginal Head Start Advisor](#)

[Clinical Counsellor, Mental Health & Wellness](#)

[Community Engagement Coordinators:](#)

- [Burns Lake](#)
- [Truth North/Tahltan](#)

[Crisis Response Community Coordinator\(2\)](#)

[Environmental Health Officer](#)

[Executive Director, North](#)

[Indigenous Educator, Harm Reduction](#)

[Project Manager Land Based Healing](#)

[Regional Addictions Specialist](#)

[Regional Planner \(2\)](#)

[Senior Administrative Coordinator](#)

### **NURSING**

[Regional Nurse Manager \(Nursing Stations\)](#)

[Community Health Nurse, Health Centres \(casual\)](#)

[Community Health Nurse:](#)

- [Gitga'at](#)
- [Lax Kwalaams](#)
- [Telegraph Creek](#)

[Nurse in Charge:](#)

- [Lax Kwalaams](#)
- [Telegraph Creek](#)
- [Tsay Keh Dene](#)

Check out all our jobs at  
[fnha.ca/careers](http://fnha.ca/careers)

# BONFIRE CHAT

WITH JIM CAMPBELL, REGIONAL MANAGER MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS



**THE TOXIC DRUG CRISIS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA CONTINUES TO AFFECT NORTHERN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES MORE THAN OTHER POPULATIONS;** which is why FNHA North Region has been making some innovations.

Taking direction from communities, we hosted a 3-day Addictions Engagement and Knowledge Exchange Forum in Prince George at the end of March. Over 200 Elders, health workers and leaders attended. They provided

spring. The team teaches community members how to support people who use substances to do so safely, while providing Naloxone training, kits, and other harm reduction supplies. One practical tool is a drug strip that can detect poisons before drugs are taken.

In addition to mental health counsellors, we partner with Indigenous organizations like IRSSS (Indian Residential School Survivors Society) to provide cultural support and traditional wellness workers to be there for community members. We also partner with Northern Health, and telehealth to support community members who experience dislocation, anxiety and other mental health challenges during traumatic times.

**“THE FNHA NORTH HARM REDUCTION TEAM VISITED 33 OF 55 COMMUNITIES LAST YEAR AND WILL VISIT 22 COMMUNITIES THIS SPRING. ”**

1,000 recommendations; listing services and programs that are doing well, and identifying gaps and areas where supports and changes are needed.

The challenges identified are the lack of detox and withdrawal services, delays in accessing treatment, limited staffing and resources, lack of core sustainable funding, trauma from colonialism and residential schools, and a lack of culturally safe services.

A number of effective responses were also identified at the forum; land-based healing, increased support for traditional healing, community prevention and awareness programs, and prevention training and education for community members and health teams.

The FNHA North harm reduction team visited 33 of 55 communities last year and will visit 22 communities this

FNHA North also provides funding to all communities to provide traditional wellness and land-based services in each community as part of their Regional Envelope Funding (REF). This will be the second year this has occurred as we understand traditional ways are often more effective than Western options.

We know the toxic drug crisis is having a huge impact on all communities, members and families and more is required. That's why we will continue looking for solutions and responding to community inputs.

*Jim*

Email [SubscribeNorth@fnha.ca](mailto:SubscribeNorth@fnha.ca)  
to sign up for our eZine

# FYI

## EVACUATION ALERT VS. EVACUATION ORDER

Some of our communities have already faced wildfires and floods this year. If you are in an emergency area do you know the difference between an alert and an order?

### EVACUATION ALERT

This is your “it’s time to get ready to go” warning. Gather up clothing, personal items, medications, emergency plan, etc., and listen for next steps. [Here’s a list of what to pack.](#)

### EVACUATION ORDER

It’s time to go! Local emergency officials will identify what routes are safe to take. Wait until the order has been rescinded to return home.



## RFP FUNDING DETAILS IN YOUR INBOX

Regional Envelope Funding for 2023-2024 is now available. If you are a Health Director or health lead in one of our 55 northern First Nations, check your email for details. Again this year the process has been streamlined to make it easy to apply. The deadline for responding is July 28, 2023, but you can get your paperwork in early and start! Our regional planners and community engagement coordinators are available for support, so please reach out if you need to.

## On the cover

On May 5 the staff at our Prince George office honoured Red Dress Day with a ceremony at the Nechako River. Sacred medicines—sage, sweetgrass, cedar and tobacco—were used to smudge. The sound of drums echoed across the water and food was offered to the spirits of the missing and murdered people.



*Photo by Maury Wale*

**Have a great picture for our cover or a story idea? Send to [SubscribeNorth@fnha.ca](mailto:SubscribeNorth@fnha.ca)**

## FIRST NATIONS ARTISTS CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

### PHOTOGRAPHERS & CARVERS

The FNHA seeks expressions of interest from First Nations artists in BC. Original photos will showcase culture and people from First Nation communities within BC. A review panel will select photos based on criteria and award \$100 for each photo chosen. Multiple submissions from individual photographers may be selected.

Regional carvings are for display in a new FNHA building being constructed on Tsleil-Waututh Nation Land near North Vancouver. Five carvings will be chosen—one from each of the FNHA health regions—and mounted on one of five mass timber posts in the building’s Great Hall. The FNHA has set a commissionable value for each carving at \$12,500. Submissions are due June 16 at 5:00 p.m. [More details here.](#)

# THROUGH NORTHERN EYES

## STRENGTHENING HELPERS TRAINING



HAVE A GREAT SNAPSHOT?  
Send your photo to [SubscribeNorth@fnha.ca](mailto:SubscribeNorth@fnha.ca)

# IMPORTANT CONTACT INFO

**FNHA Virtual Doctor of the Day**  
1-855-344-3800

**First Nations Health Benefits**  
1-855-550-5454

**National Indian Residential  
School Survivors Society**  
1-800-721-0066

**Kids Help Phone**  
1-800-668-6868  
**Text "connect" to: 686868**

**KUU-US Crisis Response**  
1-800-588-8717

**Mental Health  
(no area code needed)**  
310-6789

**Health Link BC**  
811

**BC Suicide Line**  
1-800-784-2433  
<https://crisiscentre.bc.ca/get-help/>

**Northern BC Crisis Line**  
1-888-562-1214

**Northern BC YOUTH  
Crisis Line**  
1-888-564-8336  
**Text: 250-564-8336**