

Indigenous Health

NORTHERN HEALTH UPDATES

WINTER 2018

© UnSplash.com, Rodion Kutsaev

First Nations Celebrate Winter Wellness at 168 Events Across BC

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) recently announced funding for 168 Winter Wellness events across British Columbia to take place in January and February 2018. FNHA has invested \$320,000 in community wellness events, with these events primarily organized by First Nations communities, for First Nations communities. The theme of this year's winter wellness events is "togetherness", as winter is a time of coming together and strengthening ties between families, friends and supporting each other. A variety of winter wellness events have been planned, include canning lessons, winter feasts, traditional hunting and harvesting, youth wellness camp gatherings, winter relay races and many more! [View the interactive map!](#)

New with FNHA - Jordan's Principle Implementation

The First Nations Health Authority is now administering Jordan's Principle cases in British Columbia. The change comes from an administrative arrangement with the Government of Canada. Jordan's Principle

was put into place to prevent First Nations children from being denied or experiencing delays in receiving health services. Examples of health and social services that may be covered under Jordan's Principle include: home support and personal care, in-home nursing care, in-home respite, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, meal programs, attendant care services, and minor home maintenance related to accessibility (among others). First Nations children ages 0-19 are eligible for [Jordan's Principle services](#). For more information, call 1.866.913.0033 or e-mail Jordans.Principle@fnha.ca.

First Nations communities explore and celebrate cultural models of mental wellness

On June 8th, 2017, Kitselas First Nation hosted a "Celebration of Successes" event showcasing three First Nations community projects that explore mental wellness from a community and cultural perspective. Over 60 people from Kitselas, the Terrace/Kitimat and Area Indigenous Health Improvement Committee (IHIC) and the IHIC member communities, attended the celebration of successes in Kulspai. Communities shared

Highlights

First Nations Celebrate Winter Wellness at 168 Events Across BC

New with FNHA - Jordan's Principle Implementation

First Nations communities explore and celebrate cultural models of mental wellness

Northern Health review provides recommendations for Downtown Prince George health services

The Silent Genomes project: Filling in the blanks of Indigenous medical history through DNA research

'Imagine a Canada' through the lens of reconciliation

Elementary school students rewriting the TRC's calls to action...as poetry

their projects and attendees were entertained by the Kitselas drummers, who performed some songs. The projects came from the Kitselas First Nation, [Nisga'a Valley Health Authority](#), and the Gitksan West communities. Kitselas showcased their youth wellness video which highlighted current youth activities in Kitselas and their future vision. The Nisga'a Valley Health Authority showcased their family conference which focuses on integrating culture into health and wellness services by

incorporating traditional teachings and events. Gitxsan West communities showcased their project of reigniting Gitxsan culture within mental health. In this project, knowledge holders from the communities came together to identify and document Gitxsan traditional mental wellness and will begin to strategize how best to reignite these practices. Many at the celebration spoke up to praise the projects, to share their own stories, to show support of the initiatives, and to offer words of encouragement for these innovative approaches to wellness. The celebration was a wonderful opportunity to learn about how the [Terrace/Kitimat and Area IHIC](#), health leads from Indigenous communities and organizations like Northern Health and the First Nations Health Authority are collaborating to address community needs and suggestions in innovative ways. [Read the full blog.](#)

Northern Health review provides recommendations for Downtown Prince George health services

In December (2017), Northern Health (NH) released a final report that reviewed NH services in the downtown area of Prince George. The purpose of the report was to review all existing services provided or contracted by Northern Health in the downtown core area, and to provide recommendations to support development of accessible, integrated health services in downtown Prince George. The review revealed that while Northern Health delivers some services in the downtown core, non-profit organizations funded by Northern Health are better organized and adept to provide the services required for the population living in the downtown core, which includes many with mental health and/or substance use issues, or living on or near the streets. Judy Darcy, BC Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, noted

how the review by Northern Health supports work being done across BC to address mental health and addictions and provide appropriate and timely care for BC's most vulnerable population. Key findings of the review broadly encompass improving coordination and delivery of health services in downtown PG, supporting health services with mental health and substance use services, and addressing housing shortages. Information for the review was gathered from Northern Health staff and physicians, service provider organizations, the City of Prince George, downtown business owner, and other key stakeholders. An external advisory group including the City, RCMP, BC Housing, Downtown PG, and the First Nations Health Authority, provided guidance throughout the review process. Erin Foley, president of Downtown Prince George, commented in a Northern Health news release that the review is a first step stating "We are optimistic we have turned a corner, and while the solution won't happen tomorrow, we are on a path that I hope will meet everyone's needs." [Read more...](#)

The Silent Genomes project: Filling in the blanks of Indigenous medical history through DNA research

Genome Canada recently announced 10.4 million in funding to a program out of UBC working to close gaps in health care for Indigenous communities. Specifically, this funding will go to the research genome sequencing project. The project, co-lead by Dr. Nadine Caron, an associate professor with UBC's Northern Medical Program, aims to create a database of background genetic variations, to be useful for Indigenous populations living in Canada, and internationally. Caron explains how Indigenous peoples seeking specialized genomic

treatment are at a disadvantage to non-Indigenous peoples due to the lack of, what Caron calls a library of Indigenous DNA. This level of research has not been done before, and Caron hopes this research will lead towards a more equitable health care system. Read more: [CBC](#), [Globe and Mail](#), or [UNBC](#).

'Imagine a Canada' through the lens of reconciliation

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation has put a call out to young people across Canada, from kindergarten to post-secondary, to share visions of what Reconciliation looks like, or young peoples' visions of what Reconciliation can be. Entries can range from poems and songs, to an essay or drawing. Imagine a Canada is organized through the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. For more information on how to submit your vision, and guidelines for *Imagine a Canada* submissions, visit the [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#) online.

Elementary school students rewriting the TRC's calls to action...as poetry

Elementary school students at a school in Winnipeg are rewriting the Truth and Reconciliation 94 Calls to Action, through poetry. After a visit to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights where the students learned about the history of the residential school system and the TRC, students were asked by their teachers to build on what they learned and rewrite the Calls to Action through poetry. The teachers noted that many students became emotional learning about the history. The project got students to choose a Call to Action, do some research to understand the words in the Call to Action, and then write a poem based on the words that spoke to them in the Call. [Learn more...](#)

Updates from Indigenous Health

Jessie King returned to the Indigenous Health department on January 2nd, 2018 after a one-year maternity leave. She can be contacted at Jessie.king@northernhealth.ca or by phone: 250-649-4815. Welcome, back Jessie!

PG and Area AHIC unveiled new art piece and welcome to Lheidli T'enneh Traditional Territory at UHNBC



On February 23rd the Prince George and Area Aboriginal Health Improvement Committee (AHIC) unveiled a new art piece at the University Hospital of Northern BC (UHNBC). The art piece, created by local Metis artist Carla Joseph, acknowledges Lheidli T'enneh traditional territory and welcomes Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to the site.

Aboriginal Health Improvement Committees are action-oriented groups that support improved health and well-being with Indigenous peoples and communities through innovative and collaborative local initiatives. Many of these initiatives are focused on cultural safety.

Featured Indigenous language: Sim'algaxm - Gitksen

"Gitwangak (Land of the Rabbits) is nestled in the Skeena valley approximately 300 kilometers from Prince Rupert. The population of Gitwangak is 490, which over 50% is comprised of youth under the age of 30. Gitwangak is home to the world famous Totem Poles, Seven Sisters Mountain Range, Battle Hill, St. Paul's Anglican Church, and world class Recreational Fishing. Well endowed with culture and history, Gitwangak is a true Northwest Treasure." To learn more about the Sim'algaxm - Gitksen language and to hear recordings of words, phrases, stories and songs, visit the [First Voices portal](#).

In 2015, the PG and Area AHIC identified the need for a territory acknowledgement at UHNBC. The AHIC committee worked with Lheidli T'enneh Chief and Council to pursue an art installation with a welcome in Carrier. The intent of the welcome sign is to recognize and acknowledge the traditional unceded territory of Lheidli T'enneh. This art piece and welcome sign is a concrete recognition for all Indigenous peoples that they are welcome at UHNBC. [Read more...](#)

Spotlight on your health

January was Alzheimer's Awareness Month

In Canada, more than 400,000 people over the age of 65 have been diagnosed with dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. The Alzheimer's Society of British Columbia celebrated Alzheimer's Awareness month by asking people to show support for people affected by the disease in their community through sharing the "In it for Alzheimer's" hashtag. [Read stories of people's experiences living with the disease](#). Learn more about dementia in the [i-caare fact sheets](#).



In January the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCA) released the report *Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias in Indigenous populations in Canada: Prevalence and Risk Factors*. Alzheimer's disease and

related dementias are recognized as an emerging health issue in Indigenous communities. Indigenous older adults are considered to be among Canada's most vulnerable citizens because they often face complex health issues stemming from socio-economic marginalization and a legacy of colonialism, and they face a host of barriers in accessing healthcare.

National non-smoking week was January 21-27

FNHA continues Respecting Tobacco initiatives, including the Tobacco Timeout Challenge, a monthly contest challenging First Nation and Indigenous people that smoke to quit for 24 hours. Those who complete the challenge are entered for a chance to win a \$250 cash prize. For more information [visit the FNHA website](#).

February 4 was World Cancer Day



The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), BC Cancer, BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres and Métis Nation BC have released a number of resources to increase awareness and access to relevant cancer screening services for Indigenous peoples. To learn more [visit the FNHA website](#).

Ndehl ga'nekw dim wilin?	How long are you going to be?
Limxhl gat gaxxw.	The man sang last night.
Dim gawagaani 'nuu'm gan dip 'nidiit.	We're going to make peace with them.
Xwdeex ana?	Are you hungry?
Gala' xdeeye'm.	Come and eat with us.
Nee mi ga'a hl k'alii aksa?	Did you see the river?

Upcoming events

View our [online events calendar](#) for all upcoming events.

MFNERC's Early Learning Conference

February 27-28, Winnipeg, MB

Healthy Mothers and Healthy Babies 2018 Conference

March 1-2, Richmond, BC

Gathering our Voices 2018

March 20-23, Richmond, BC

Community Corner

Foodie Friday: Northwest Fish Tacos

by Victoria Carter. [Read the full blog.](#)

Jeannie Parnell is a community developer with a passion for food. She makes wholesome meals for her family by incorporating harvested traditional foods, and foods purchased from the store. Jeannie is from the Stellat'en First Nation, near Fraser Lake and currently resides in Prince Rupert with her husband and son.



"I wanted to make a healthier version of what is now being called the 'Indian tacos' Jeannie told me. 'Indian Tacos' are usually made with fried white bannock, topped off with chili, cheese and sour cream and having little or no vegetables. Also some Indigenous people are lactose intolerant so I

wanted to create a recipe with the option of no cheese or sour cream and the addition of vegetables. I call this recipe the "Northwest Fish Taco". The Northwest Fish taco provides a healthy alternative that is less time consuming to make and is more versatile—you can use baked salmon or vary the vegetables!" – Jeannie Parnell

Jeannie likes to make most of her meals from food her family has harvested. She says "[food harvested by hand] taste better." Jeannie also incorporates her family's traditions.

"Growing up as a family of nine, we relied heavily on our own Indigenous foods to supplement our food budget. My brothers are hunters. My mother did the fishing for our family for many years. My traditional teachings come from my mom who kept those going. She always had a smokehouse and did her own canning. We had a huge garden that we worked in as kids. I am so thankful for all of this; it enhanced my quality of life."



Resources



[Downtown Prince George Health Services Review](#). The Downtown PG Health Services Review contains a summary of recommendations based on a mixture of lengthy consultations and best practice research to see if the downtown population of PG is obtaining the best outcomes from the resources available to them.



[Challenges in health equity for Indigenous peoples in Canada - Comment by Margo Greenwood, Sarah de Leeuw, and Nicole Lindsay](#). In their commentary on two papers in the [Lancet's Series on Canada](#), authors Greenwood, de Leeuw and Lindsay draw attention to the persistent health inequities experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, despite Canada's commitment to addressing health equity both domestically, through its universal healthcare system, and internationally.



[Education as a social determinant of First Nations, Inuit and Métis health \(NCCA\)](#). Education is associated with several determinants of health for Aboriginal Peoples. This fact sheet highlights the connections between education and physical health, mental health, employment, income security, and personal control over life circumstances.



[Employment as a social determinant of First Nations, Inuit and Métis health \(NCCA\)](#). This report discusses the shifts in the workforce that are underway with changing socio-economic opportunities and widespread changes in those who are employed (eg. Retiring). Aboriginal youth are the largest and fastest growing population in Canada and at the same time, they experience barriers to the workforce not typically faced by non-Aboriginal Canadians.



[International Indigenous Policy Journal \(IIPJ\), Vol. 8, Issue 4, 2017](#). The volume 8, issue 4 release of the International Indigenous Policy Journal includes articles on ethical research practice, implementing Indigenous Knowledge systems in natural resource research.



[National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Interim Report](#). The interim report of the inquiry provides a strong reminder of why it is essential to focus on the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The mandate and scope of the inquiry are included in the report as well as a brief summary of goals, preparations, and considerations in the pre-inquiry phase.