



Winter 2025 update

December 1, 2024 - February 28, 2025

Northern Health acknowledges with gratitude that our work takes place on the territories of the Tlingit, Tahltan, Nisga'a, Gitksan, Tsimshian, Haisla, Haida, Wet'suwet'en, Carrier (Dakelh), Sekani (Tse'khene), Dane-zaa, Cree, Sauteau and Dene Peoples.

Northern Health leads the way in promoting health and providing health services for Northern, rural, and Indigenous populations. ([Strategic Plan, Looking to 2025](#)) Indigenous Health, within Northern Health, walks alongside Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) and communities we serve, as well as organizations, staff and medical staff in the North to strive for excellence and culturally safe care to uphold Indigenous people's rights to self-determined health and wellness.

Indigenous Health has organized into three areas of focus:

1. **Indigenous Health Service Delivery Integration** which includes the Indigenous Patient Liaison Program, HSDA Advisors and Community Collaboration and Indigenous Partnerships.
2. **Indigenous Health Learning and Quality Team** which includes the Cultural Safety and Anti-Indigenous Racism Education Team, Indigenous Patient Experience Team and Indigenous Health Data Evaluation and Research Support
3. **Indigenous Health Internal Service Transformation** which includes Administration, Capital Procurement, Communications, Investments, Strategic Projects, and Recruitment and Retention.

Indigenous Health Service Delivery Integration

Our team bridges senior leadership and Indigenous Health areas, fostering collaboration across Northern Health. We support leaders in cultural safety commitments, guided by Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Collaborating with FNHA, First Nations, Métis Nation BC, and Métis Chartered Communities, we integrate cultural approaches into health services, enhance access and equity, and provide leadership for the Indigenous Patient Liaison Program.

Community Collaboration and Indigenous Partnerships

The Indigenous Staff Community of Practice (CoP) is a virtual gathering space for First Nations, Inuit and Métis staff to engage and connect. Recognizing that all Indigenous staff may not be able to come together regularly, the CoP is exploring new opportunities to choose from. In addition, we appreciate and value their function as an engagement opportunity for the work of Indigenous Health.

The Indigenous Collaboration and Partnership Framework, developed with Indigenous and NH leaders, provides established pathways for collaboration in health service planning from the regional to the local level.

“Pathways to Partnership: Engaging Indigenous Communities” workshop will be launched soon. This resource is a virtual, hour long session for NH staff who engage with Indigenous leaders and community.



Métis Health & Wellness Plan



The Métis Nation British Columbia – Northern Health Métis Health and Wellness Plan is aimed at fostering a comprehensive and collaborative approach to improving Métis health outcomes across the north. This plan is a strategic roadmap that builds on the existing partnership between MNBC, NH and local Métis Chartered Communities. Guided by a commitment to culturally safer and equitable care for Métis, this plan identifies specific areas for change, outlines joint actions and envisions transformative outcomes over the next five years.

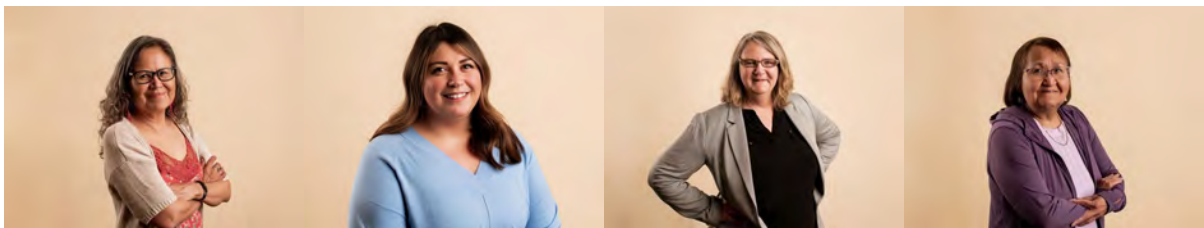
[See MNBC website for the full plan](#)

Indigenous Patient Liaison (IPL) Program updates

Indigenous health and healing are holistic, seeking balance and understanding that all things are interconnected—land, water, air, animals, individuals, families, and communities.

The IPL program plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between Western and traditional medicine, ensuring a health system that honors diversity to provide services in a culturally relevant manner. The Indigenous Health team supports a growing number of IPL locations throughout Northern Health. To enhance access and coverage for Indigenous patients, Northern Health has increased the number of the roles of Indigenous Patient Support in these positions.

Indigenous Patient Liaison staff highlights



Valerie
Setah's
story

Lyndsey
Rhea's
story

Kelly
Stalker's
story

Gloria
Lattie's
story

Indigenous Health Learning and Quality Team

Our team assists Northern Health (NH) with cultural safety and Anti-Indigenous racism education, aligning with NH's direction toward Truth and Reconciliation. We facilitate tailored workshops, provide dedicated support to each HSDA, and offer patient support in NH care sites.

We create safe spaces to discuss health harms, address concerns, and build better relationships with Indigenous peoples. Additionally, we lead strategies related to data, evaluation, and Indigenous-led health research, integrating Indigenous perspectives into NH's strategic efforts.

Cultural Safety and Anti-Indigenous Racism Education Team



The Respectful Relationships curriculum transitioned to the Learning Hub (LH) platform on December 15, 2024. The LH platform provides training to BC health organization employees, members of HEABC-affiliated organizations, privileged medical staff, practicum students, and volunteers. It remains accessible on the University of Northern BC (UNBC) learning platform for faculty and students. This transition allows broader reach across health authorities.

The Respectful Relationships curriculum is currently undergoing a project review that includes input from partners and community so that we can ensure updates and changes are made that reflect Northern context.

Monthly post-curriculum workshops, presented by IH Education coordinators, are undergoing annual Continuing Medical Education (CME) accreditation, expected to be completed soon. The education team is entering its third year of delivering CME-accredited workshops, with interactive discussions inspired by attendee groups. A large team in the Northeast (NE) is collaboratively working through the curriculum, providing opportunities for tailored group learning.



Bannock Bites are monthly educational sessions the education team has successfully developed and implemented since November 2024. These 1-hour educational sessions are accessible organization-wide, consistently attracting over 25 participants per session with positive feedback.

Indigenous Patient Experience Team

The Indigenous Patient Experience (IPE) team collaborates with patients, the Indigenous Patient Liaison (IPL) team and Patient Care Quality Office (PCQO) to ensure culturally safe experiences for Indigenous patients and families by fostering respectful and equitable relationships within the health system. Working with internal and external partners, the team develops, implements, and evaluates processes to address Indigenous peoples' experiences with Northern Health services. IPE Advisors support patients and sites by validating and assisting Indigenous patients through health care experiences, promoting cultural understanding, and building relationships with Indigenous communities to encourage feedback and complaints.

The team includes two IPE Advisors, though the Regional Lead position is currently vacant. Collaboration with the Indigenous Cultural Safety and Anti-Indigenous Racism Education team supports healthcare providers in cultural safety learning. Ongoing case management meetings with the PCQO and the Quality Care & Safety Office at FNHA further support patients, residents, and their families when complaints or care concerns arise.

Indigenous Patient Experience Advisors



Patricia Hoard's story



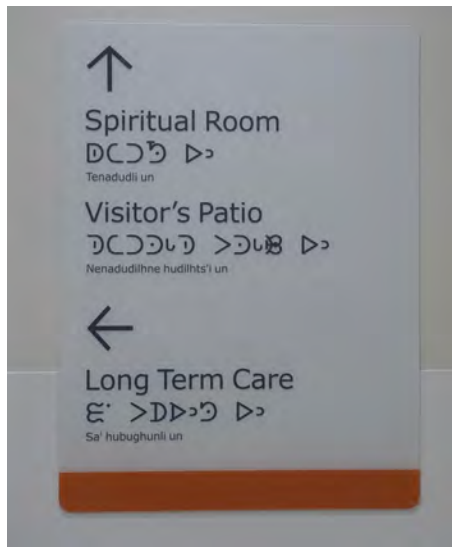
Rachel Weller's story

Internal Service Transformation Team

Our team provides administrative support to the entire IH team, coordinating activities related to financial and organizational planning, labor relations, human resources, and management. We ensure policies are implemented correctly, manage resources, and support scheduling, budgeting, and record maintenance. We support Indigenous procurement projects, ensuring facilities reflect Indigenous language and culture, and develop communication tools for IH and NHA initiatives. Additionally, we integrate Indigenous perspectives into recruitment and retention practices, lead administrative reporting cycles, manage grants and awards, and support the strategy and implementation of IH projects

Capital Projects and Procurement

The IH Lead for Capital Projects and Procurement is actively supporting strategic initiatives in collaboration with Indigenous partners, focusing on the inclusion of culturally safe spaces, such as gathering rooms, smudging areas, outdoor spaces, healing gardens, Indigenous art, and traditional language in both new and existing facilities. First Nation leaders are welcomed into partnerships with NH facilities and engaged with to confirm and guide respectful territorial acknowledgements. Indigenous Advisory committees have been established for all new major capital projects to support the development of culturally safe environments. Efforts are underway with rights and title holders on naming processes for new developments, and documentation of current Indigenous language, signage, art, and culturally safe spaces in NH facilities is being conducted to inform future planning.



Creating a culturally safe space at the new Fort St. James Hospital and Health Centre

Indigenous Recruitment and Retention

Indigenous Health's Indigenous Recruitment and Retention promote culturally safe work environment while focusing on recruitment and retention of Indigenous employees to ensure the workforce resembles the communities and patients we serve. Through engagement, Indigenous recruitment aims to support young Indigenous learners, new and current Indigenous talent in providing access to culturally relevant programs, obtaining employment, training, and leadership development opportunities within Northern Health.

At the heart of this team is understanding and embedding Indigenous Cultural Values that align with Northern Health values and our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. This will provide a foundation for creating and delivering culturally appropriate, and meaningful outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

[Job Search | NH Careers](#)

[Indigenous Talent information](#)

Strategic Projects

Indigenous Patient Self-Identification



The Strategic Projects team is launching a phased approach in 2025 to implement a culturally safe and supportive Indigenous patient self-identification process, emphasizing cultural safety education for staff and the importance of safe data collection, responses, and support for both staff and patients.

Indigenous Staff Self-Identification Initiative

Concurrently, an Indigenous staff self-identification initiative is underway, inviting all NH staff to voluntarily declare their identity (Indigenous and non-Indigenous). The Indigenous Health team also organizes events, learning opportunities, and ceremonies for NH staff to support experiential learning and enhance truth-telling and understanding.

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Maps of the First Nation and Métis Chartered Communities within Northern Health are now available



Access the maps on the Indigenous Health website



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