
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions
First Nations Health Authority

\$40 million to upgrade First Nations treatment centres throughout B.C.

VANCOUVER – To support the healing journeys of First Nations individuals, families and communities, \$40 million is being provided to build and revitalize First Nations-run treatment centres throughout British Columbia.

The funding, provided equally by First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and the Province, was announced by Grand Chief Doug Kelly, Chair of the First Nations Health Council (FNHC), and Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, at the First Nations Primary Care, Mental Health and Wellness Summit in Vancouver.

“This treatment centre upgrade allows us to upgrade our facilities and upgrade our service delivery in the midst of one of the most urgent public health epidemics in recent memory,” said Grand Chief Doug Kelly. “The extra beds will create hope, save lives and give people help on their healing journey. We must combine traditional healing with the best of western medicine.”

The Province and FNHA are contributing \$20 million each to build two new urban treatment centres and repair and renovate others. These centres support access for First Nations people to mental health, wellness and substance use services.

First Nations-led treatment services have Elders and traditional healers directly involved in patient care alongside doctors, nurses and addictions specialists. The new and updated centres will feature increased and much-needed programs for women and two-spirited people.

“I have heard from First Nations across B.C. about the urgent need for culturally safe treatment centres in urban and rural communities to support people on their healing journeys,” said Darcy. “Our partnership with the First Nations Health Authority is about ensuring that First Nations are in the driver’s seat with the resources to support mental health and wellness.”

This funding commitment is in addition to \$30 million announced by the Government of Canada, the Province of B.C and the FNHC in May 2018 to support Nation-based approaches to the planning, design and delivery of mental health and wellness services.

“This is the first significant investment in First Nations treatment centres for a generation,” said M. Colleen Erickson, Chair, FNHA Board of Directors. “These upgrades are critical to the health and wellness of our communities, especially in the midst of the opioid epidemic. The trauma of colonialism continues to affect us deeply, and these centres are a big part of the solution.”

“With the onset of the opioid crisis, our programming model has had to change,” said Marlene Isaac, Executive Director, Round Lake Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centre. “Individuals with concurrent addictions and/or long-time drug use require longer treatment and recovery programs. Fentanyl and carfentanil may make it unsafe for them to go home after just five or

six weeks of treatment. Therefore, we now offer a 12-week treatment program. The additional time allows us to offer a much more intensive program. We also opened a recovery house for those who require even more support before beginning their new life, and we broadened our admission policy to accept applicants who are on suboxone maintenance therapy.”

This announcement reaffirms the commitments by the Government of Canada, the Province of B.C. and the FNHC through the tripartite agreement signed in July 2018, to improve mental health and wellness services for First Nations in B.C. It also demonstrates progress in the implementation of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Learn More:

For more information about the tripartite agreement, visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2018/05/a-new-approach-for-tripartite-investment-in-first-nation-mental-health-and-wellness.html>

To learn more about Indigenous treatment centres, visit:

<http://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/mental-wellness-and-substance-use/treatment-centres>

To find out more about First Nations Health Authority, visit: <http://www.fnha.ca/>

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