



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

501 — 100 Park Royal South  
Coast Salish Territory  
West Vancouver, BC  
Canada V7T 1A2  
T 604.693.6500  
F 604.913.2081  
[www.fnha.ca](http://www.fnha.ca)

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## **“Smokestack Sandra” FNHA Podcast Informs and Encourages Smokers to Quit Commercial Tobacco**

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) has launched a tobacco-cessation podcast that shares the personal journey of a respected northern First Nations leader as she commits to quitting commercial cigarettes. The candid and humorous three-part podcast, “Smokestack Sandra,” tracks Sandra Teegee, Deputy Chief of Takla Lake First Nation, over a series of weeks with personal stories and a number of guest speakers.

“I went out of my comfort zone and it opened up other doors and reawakened my dreams. We can all do this. This journey has liberated me and taken me away from all the things that were hindering my potential,” says Sandra, a smoker for 30 years. “I especially want people to know that they’re not alone on this journey to quit smoking.”

The podcast is narrated by Indigenous filmmaker Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers and features FNHA’s Chief Medical Officer Dr. Evan Adams and Vancouver Coastal Health’s Addictions Specialist Lindsay MacDonald. There are also cameos from BC AFN Regional Chief Shane Gottfriedson, FNHA Board of Directors Chair Lydia Hwitsum and a number of other northern First Nations Chiefs, Elders and friends and family of Sandra Teegee.

“Smokestack Sandra” allows listeners to feel as though they are walking alongside Sandra as she moves through her quitting journey. Listeners are right there with her when she is “sneaking a smoke” behind the band office with her Chief, reflecting in her truck with the cousin who gave her the first cigarette and listening to rock music – her biggest smoking trigger.

The FNHA invited Sandra to record her quitting journey on an audio recorder and she soon realized the power of sharing with others her daily challenges and ‘a-ha’ moments. Sandra is a leader in health and wellness in the north and a dedicated advocate for First Nations peoples’ healing journeys. Surprisingly, Sandra’s quest to kick her nicotine habit to improve her health transformed into a profound voyage of self-discovery and personal growth – a journey she recommends to others who are using commercial tobacco.

Sandra believes that quitting smoking is one of the best ways we can invest in our children and grandchildren because the message of quitting will impact the whole family’s health. Sandra has learned just how much cigarettes have taken away from her life and, in part, her quitting journey has been about trying her best to face challenges without cigarettes.

Most of all, Sandra invites others to begin their own journey towards becoming smoke-free. Sandra encourages others to seek out all the supports they can find to help them in their quitting journeys, from confiding in friends and family to using services such as QuitNow.ca, which provides a large variety of tools and resources to help smokers quit.

The “Smokestack Sandra” podcast series is comprised of three 30-minute episodes that will be premiered exclusively by Canada’s First Nations Radio on their show Journeys at 6 p.m. on Nov 24, 25 and 26 and airing again on December 7, 9 and 11.

The podcast can also be downloaded or streamed on [www.fnha.ca/respectingtobacco](http://www.fnha.ca/respectingtobacco) beginning Nov. 24.

**Media Inquiries:**

Trevor Kehoe  
First Nations Health Authority  
604-831-4898  
[Trevor.Kehoe@fnha.ca](mailto:Trevor.Kehoe@fnha.ca)