



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness



For Immediate Release

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## Telehealth Deployment Brings Physician and Family Services Closer to Home for First Nations Communities in Cariboo-Chilcotin

**Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver, BC)** – A new deployment as part of the First Nations Health Authority's (FNHA) province-wide First Nations Telehealth Expansion Project brings physician services and a wide range of child, youth and family programs and services to First Nations communities in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region. The Three Corners Health Services Society and Cariboo Chilcotin Child Development Centre (CCCDC) are now able to provide telehealth services to their local communities, cutting the barriers of distance, travel, and service availability.

Medical consultations and physical examinations from a distance are now possible in these communities. A 'clinical cart' video conferencing unit outfitted with medical peripherals and the support of a health care worker at the patient location make it possible. Doctors can view high-resolution images of the surface of the skin and directly into the ears, nose and throat without leaving their clinics.

"The FNHA Telehealth Expansion Project team ensures First Nations communities have strong partnerships in place with physicians, specialists and other allied healthcare professionals who are telehealth-enabled, creating an ideal scenario for delivering service to First Nations. We are currently working with 60 General and Specialist Practitioners across BC," said Joseph Mendez, Chief Information Officer and Vice-President of Innovation and Information Management Services with the FNHA.

For remote communities, a valuable telehealth feature is that family members and community health staff can participate in a patient's appointment. What results is an improved understanding of health status by patients, their families and on-site community health workers, leading to the opportunity for improved health outcomes and better patient advocacy.

"We are encouraging community members to access telehealth services and to learn more about what telehealth has to offer and how it can better support health outcomes. This project is based on partnerships and relationships and shows the kind of progress we can make when we work together," said Lori Sellars, Executive Director of Three Corners Health Services Society. "With coordinated efforts Telehealth has the ability to address our community's needs for access to physicians, community services and resources."

Two General Practitioners, Dr. Doug Neufeld and Dr. Mike Wolf, will be providing primary care via telehealth to the Three Corners communities of Soda Creek, Dog Creek and Williams Lake. CCCDC, in operation for forty years, provides support services to children and families with special needs. Services include pre-natal support, occupational therapy, speech therapy, physiotherapy, fetal alcohol syndrome disorder, family support programs and more. The organization prides itself on cultural-sensitivity and inclusiveness for First Nations peoples, making it a good match as a service provider for Three Corners.

"My biggest hope is to use telehealth to strengthen relationships with First Nations community members and staff so that we are getting to the kids that require services as early as possible. I want it to be easy for families to get the support they need when they need it," said Nancy Gale, Executive Director of Cariboo-Chilcotin Child Development Center.

The FNHA's telehealth expansion project team works with First Nations communities to understand their health service needs and supports the design and implementation of eHealth solutions. The team also provides technical training and ongoing support to the communities they serve, and builds successful partnerships with telehealth-enabled health service providers. With success and interest in opportunities in telehealth for First Nations communities in BC, the FNHA is planning for a second wave of expansion in 2016. The first wave of expansion will bring telehealth to 45 remote communities in BC by the end of 2015.

**Connect with us:**

First Nations Health Authority: [www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/ehealth/telehealth](http://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/ehealth/telehealth)

Three Corners Health Services Society: [www.threecornershealth.org](http://www.threecornershealth.org)

Cariboo Chilcotin Child Development Center: [www.ccccdca.org](http://www.ccccdca.org)

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