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## Aboriginal supportive recovery beds planned for newly opened wellness centre

Interior Health (IH), in partnership with the Esk'etemc First Nation and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), is pleased to announce plans for six new Aboriginal supportive recovery beds in the brand new Alkali Lake Wellness Centre, to enhance mental health and substance use (MHSU) services for Aboriginal residents of the Thompson Cariboo region.

“As I have spoken with First Nations and Indigenous people across the province, I have heard again and again the need for culturally appropriate recovery services to help people on their healing journeys,” said Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. “As we grapple with the overdose crisis taking such a toll in particular on Indigenous communities, these new beds will be instrumental in helping to create a support system for Indigenous people living in the area that offers real pathways to hope.”

“Esk'etemc has long been recognized as a leader in First Nations approaches to recovery and healing,” said First Nations Health Authority Chief Executive Officer Joe Gallagher. “We are pleased to support a \$1 million capital contribution to enhance available culture-based recovery and stabilization services for First Nations in BC. We are also encouraged by Interior Health's progressive approach to addiction bed allocation which recognizes and supports First Nations ways of knowing and healing.”

The six Aboriginal supportive recovery beds will be housed in the brand new Alkali Lake Wellness Centre, named the Letwilc ren Semec or “Heal My Spirit” Centre which celebrated its grand opening today. The centre will offer a variety of services designed to help provide assessment, treatment, and community outreach for clients with mental health and substance use concerns. The centre is also the first net-zero ready energy building to be built on First Nations land in Canada.

“Partnerships have always been key to our success and will continue to be the cornerstones of our recovery center,” said Esk'etemc First Nation Chief Charlene Belleau. “We thank the First Nation Health Authority and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada for their contributions and value our partnerships with Interior Health to deliver a culturally appropriate recovery service. We look forward to supporting communities within the interior region as we strive for safer and healthier families and communities.”

Supportive recovery beds provide MHSU clients a safe, medically supported setting while they await residential treatment, return from residential treatment, or transition to a more stable lifestyle. IH is committed to offering a service that is not only accessible but recognizes the value of culture, traditional practices, and community connectivity for those individuals moving towards a drug- and alcohol-free lifestyle.

“I'm pleased with the partnership and collaboration that has brought to fruition this important service,” said Doug Cochrane, Interior Health Board Chair. “Supportive recovery beds represent a place where clients can feel safe and secure, knowing they'll receive the treatment needed to restore their health in an environment that respects culture and treats all with dignity.”

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“The Government of Canada is pleased to support Esk’etemc First Nation, in partnership with FNHA and Interior Health, for this new supportive recovery centre that will foster hope among First Nations youth, their families and communities,” said the Honourable Jane Philpott, Minister of Indigenous Services. “Beds at the Alkali Lake Wellness Centre will ensure that Indigenous people have access to culturally sensitive treatment in their healing.”

*Interior Health is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and providing a wide range of quality health-care services to more than 740,000 people living across B.C.’s vast interior. For more information, visit [www.interiorhealth.ca](http://www.interiorhealth.ca), follow us on Twitter [@Interior\\_Health](https://twitter.com/Interior_Health), or like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/InteriorHealth](https://www.facebook.com/InteriorHealth).*

*The First Nations Health Authority is responsible for planning, management, service delivery and funding of health programs, in partnership with First Nations communities in BC. Guided by the vision of embedding cultural safety and humility into health service delivery, the FNHA works to reform the way health care is delivered to BC First Nations through direct services, provincial partnership collaboration, and health systems innovation.*

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