
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health
First Nations Health Authority

Improving access to First Nations-led primary health care

COAST SALISH TERRITORY/VANCOUVER – First Nations and other residents in Metro Vancouver will have increased access to culturally safe and appropriate primary health care thanks to the Province and First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) supporting expansion of the Lu'ma Medical Centre.

“Lu'ma will help connect more people, especially Indigenous peoples, with the health care they need, when they need it,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. “For people who have been struggling to access culturally appropriate and respectful health-care services, this will make a big difference in their lives, by linking Lu'ma to our current primary health-care strategy.”

The enhanced centre is the initial First Nations-led project to be announced in B.C. under the government's primary care strategy. The Ministry of Health and FNHA are partnering to provide more than \$1.8 million in ongoing funding and over \$200,000 in one-time funding to the Lu'ma Medical Centre to expand Indigenous primary care services.

Lu'ma provides health and outreach services to urban-based First Nations, Métis and Inuit, many of whom are living away from home and others who travel to the metro area to access medical treatment not available where they live.

"This announcement builds on the commitments made by the Ministry of Health and regional health authorities to transform health services for our urban Aboriginal citizens," said Charlene Belleau, chair, First Nations Health Council. "The majority of our citizens live off reserve in various urban centres and this facility/service will provide culturally safe care."

Lu'ma will soon be able to hire 12 more full-time equivalent health-care professionals who will provide culturally respectful, First Nations-focused care to 1,750 new patients, serving about 2,900 patients in total. The patients will receive wraparound support from a team of new and existing health-care providers, including doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, as well as access to traditional healers, Elders and social navigators. Together they will deliver integrated, wholistic and person-centred care that is rooted in tradition and culture, and is trauma-informed.

“When First Nations are in the driver's seat, there are tremendous benefits for Indigenous peoples accessing services,” said Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. “Importantly, Lu'ma will have wraparound mental health and addictions supports that are culturally safe and trauma informed, so people can find their own unique pathway to healing and hope that is free of stigma and judgement.”

FNHA has existing partnerships with Indigenous primary health care centres throughout the Vancouver Coastal region and throughout the province. FNHA will continue to engage with its

partners, including First Nations communities, the Ministry of Health and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, to support the provision of culturally safe care for Indigenous peoples in the region.

Quotes:

Joe Gallagher, chief executive officer, First Nations Health Authority –

“I would like to congratulate the Lu’ma leadership and our regional staff for the perseverance and leadership they have shown in bringing this vital project to fruition. Providing expanded culturally safe medical services to our people will significantly increase primary care attachment rates and help health outcomes for First Nations peoples.”

Michael Dumont, Lu’ma clinical director –

“We provide culturally integrated care through an Indigenous lens, which enables us to take back control of our own health and wellness through self-determination.”

Quick Facts:

- Just under half of the status First Nations population in the Vancouver Coastal region live in urban or away-from-home settings.
- Lu’ma was founded to address the significant health disparities faced by First Nations and Indigenous peoples.
- In its third year of operation, Lu’ma serves 91% Indigenous patients and represents 130 First Nations, whose traditional territories span 10 provinces and three territories.
- In the neighbourhoods served by Lu’ma, First Nations had 14.2% lower attachment, 10.9% lower general practitioner visits and 49.8% higher emergency department usage compared to other residents.
- Patients access Lu’ma from neighbouring communities in the Greater Vancouver area.
- Some people travel from as far away as Bella Bella for treatment.

Learn More:

To learn more about the Province’s primary health-care strategy, visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018PREM0034-001010>

To learn more about the Province’s strategy to increase the number of nurse practitioners,

visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018HLTH0034-000995>

To learn more about the Province’s strategy to recruit and retain more family medicine graduates, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018HLTH0052-001043>

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