
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2023HLTH0025-000345
March 17, 2023

Ministry of Health
First Nations Health Authority

Sts'ailes will receive improved access to First Nations-led primary care

STSAILES – People living in Harrison Mills and north of the Fraser River between Agassiz and Mission will have access to First Nations-led primary care with the development of the Sts'ailes Community Care Campus (SCCC) at 46090 Lougheed Hwy.

“I’m proud of our government’s partnership with the Sts’ailes and our many other partners,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. “The work we are doing in Harrison Mills is making the lives of people living in B.C. better and it’s another step forward in our collective journey towards reconciliation. When it opens, the Sts’ailes Community Care Campus will provide a fully integrated blend of contemporary medical services and person-first, culturally appropriate health and wellness services to Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and residents alike.”

The Sts'ailes will own and operate the SCCC, which will open in a phased approach. In the first phase, beginning in 2023, Sts'ailes intends to begin construction of the permanent facility while providing some services from its temporary location in Agassiz at the Sts'ailes Administration Building at 4690 Salish Way.

“I would like to thank everyone involved in this project, from our partners at the provincial level to our neighbouring communities, for honouring their commitment to the health and well-being of our people,” said Ralph Leon, Chief of the Sts'ailes. “Our people in our communities depend on us to do good work, and we are taking the necessary steps to make a real difference for the people living in the northern Fraser region.”

The campus will combine primary health care, social services and Indigenous health supports into one team that will provide culturally safe, person-first health-care services to residents in Harrison Mills and north of the Fraser River between Agassiz and Mission, while restoring traditional laws of health and wellness. Once fully staffed, patients will benefit from approximately 14.7 full-time health-care workers, including primary-care providers, Traditional Healers and allied health practitioners, as well as administration support, leadership and clinical services.

“This is great news for Sts'ailes and Indigenous people in the region,” said Kelli Paddon, MLA for Chilliwack-Kent. “I know how much work and consideration has gone into this project and have heard from community members what this means to the Nation and the region. I look forward to seeing the campus open so residents can have even greater access to public health-care services.”

The campus will work collaboratively with the Chilliwack Primary Care Network. Several more First Nations-led primary-care centres are being planned as part of the Province’s primary-care

strategy.

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) has existing partnerships with First Nations primary health-care centres in Fraser Health and throughout the province. FNHA will continue to engage with these partners, including First Nations communities, the Ministry of Health and Fraser Health, to support the provision of culturally safe care for Indigenous Peoples in the region.

“FNHA celebrates the partnership with the Ministry of Health and with First Nations’ communities to implement team-based culturally grounded primary-care initiatives,” said Richard Jock, CEO for FNHA. “These transformational models give full expression to B.C. First Nations self-determination and support a vision where First Nations people in B.C. have access to quality, timely and inclusive health and wellness services, which are rooted in culture and are welcoming spaces for the people being served.”

The development of the campus aligns with the Ministry of Health’s commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to deliver services that are First Nations-led, and informed by traditional wellness values and by the lived experiences of Indigenous people.

The SCCC is a part of the Province and FNHA’s First Nations-led Primary Health Care plan, which is intended to improve and increase access to culturally safe health services provincewide. This announcement builds on the 2019 opening of the Lu'ma Medical Centre in Vancouver and the 2022 opening of the First Nations Wellness Centre in Williams Lake.

Learn More:

To learn about Lu'ma Medical Centre, B.C.'s first FNPCC, visit:
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2019HLTH0129-001783>

To learn about the First Nations Wellness Centre in Williams Lake, visit:
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022HLTH0217-001657>

To learn about actions underway for the 24 recommendations from In Plain Sight, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021HLTH0075-002294>

A backgrounder follows.

Contact:

Ministry of Health
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BACKGROUND

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What people are saying about the Sts'ailes Community Care Campus

Angela George, SCCC clinic director –

“Our vision is to ensure everyone living in the northern Fraser region has access to the health-care services they need and deserve. The SCCC will weave together traditional and contemporary approaches to health care to help several individuals, families and communities access timely, person-centred health-care that is closer to their homes.”

Colleen Erickson, board chair, FNHA –

“I look forward to seeing these developments becoming reality. This is a concrete example of the ways the FNHA is supporting First Nations’ communities in British Columbia through innovation and inclusion.”

Carolyn Neufeld, vice president, Fraser Health, Indigenous Health and Cultural Safety –

“Access to patient-centred, culturally safe primary-care services is fundamental to a sustainable and equitable health system that puts people first. We are pleased to partner with the Sts'ailes and First Nations Health Authority on this important project that will ensure First Nations-led, culturally appropriate primary care is available to people for many years to come.”

Alix Arndt, interim CEO, Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC –

“The Association of the Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC is pleased that the knowledge, skills and expertise of the entire health-care team will improve access to health care for British Columbians through the Sts'ailes Community Care Campus. We believe that this approach will be pivotal in ensuring B.C. families feel connected to their health-care team and we are excited to see the construction of another First Nation-led primary care centre.”

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