

NEWS RELEASE



A New First Nations Focused Continuum of Care Model for Addiction Recovery Services in Pouce Coupe

Pouce Coupe, BC, June 18, 2024: Located within the Ancestral Territory of the Treaty 8 Peoples, North Wind Wellness Centre (NWWC) is developing a First Nations focused Health and Wellness Centre in the Village of Pouce Coupe. A new milestone for the Centre has been achieved with First Nations Elders providing a blessing ceremony at the site. This blessing dedicates the property for perpetual healing purposes. Groundbreaking for the first phase of the new Centre is expected to commence in July 2024, with service delivery for Phase One scheduled to begin in the winter of 2025.

Once both phases of construction are completed the NWWC's Health and Wellness Centre will use the Addiction Recovery Community Housing (ARCH) model. This model combines First Nations healing traditions and western medicine practices to holistically integrate four components: Early Recovery Housing, Addiction Treatment Housing, Recovery Supportive Housing, and a Recovery Community Centre.

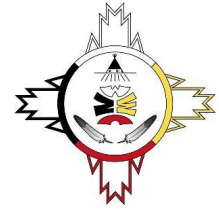
Having all four components in one facility provides an improved continuum of care that is needed for a supportive transition through the different stages of the recovery journey. This model will also include programming beyond treatment and housing to incorporate skills development in trades, education, entrepreneurship, farming, etc., to support participants in their self-discovery journey and their movement along their preferred lifepath.

There is no other ARCH model currently operating in Canada. This model will harness the energy and resources of people in long-term recovery to support those making the first steps on the recovery journey.

This project is supported under a Tripartite MOU between the Province, Government of Canada, and the First Nations Health Council, through the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). Each partner has committed \$20 million for a joint capital commitment of \$60 million to replace six existing First Nation-run treatment centres and build two new centres throughout BC.

In 2023, the Province provided an additional one-time funding of \$35 million to FNHA to support the completion of the eight community-based First Nations treatment center projects.

"First Nations are in the best position to determine what services are right for their communities," said Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. "We're proud to support the North Wind Wellness Centre, which will provide a new, holistic model of care to support the treatment, recovery and overall well-being of Indigenous people in a safe and culturally appropriate way."



Phase One of the project will include 10 addiction treatment units. The Centre is being designed with natural materials, a focus on communal spaces and a connection to culture and the environment.

"NWWC will be the first Canadian Health and Wellness Centre to use the ARCH Pathways to Recovery model. We will be establishing a new level of care for First Nations and non-First Nations people that are struggling with addictions in Northeast BC and throughout the province," said Shelley Gauthier, President, Board of Directors NWWC/Councillor, Blueberry River First Nations. "This new Centre will provide a complete continuum of care under one roof including withdrawal management, addiction treatment housing, and skills training which will provide our participants with the tools they need to continue with their recovery throughout their lives."

The Tripartite investment, being administered by FNHA, will provide \$8.96 million for the creation of the Center. The NWWC has also received strong support from the Northern Health Authority, Treaty 8 Tribal Association, Peace River Regional District, Streethome Foundation, and other local communities, which will support future phases of the project.

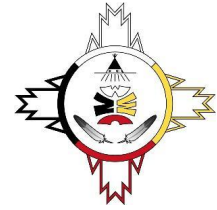
Work is still underway to determine the final design and cost of Phase Two of the Centre which will include all aspects of the ARCH model. It is estimated that the complete project will cost \$35-40 million, details on Phase Two will be announced in the fall of 2024.

"The North Wind Wellness Centre will promote First Nations cultural and healing practices as well as help to create a safe and welcoming space for people in Pouce Coupe," said Dr. Sheila Blackstock, FNHA's board chair. "First Nations people are disproportionately affected by the toxic-drug crisis, and the ongoing legacies of colonialism, racism, discrimination and intergenerational trauma create barriers for First Nation people seeking care. This new centre will bring us a step closer to ensuring our loved ones have the care they need."

The Centre will remove access barriers to treatment as people can self-refer or be referred by a counsellor, or other health practitioners. NWWC's support would be constant throughout all four components of care. This ensures that program participants are better supported throughout their recovery journey.

"We have been pleased to support the development of the North Wind Wellness Centre project, and the dedication of partners in the project toward bringing these important services to Northeast BC," said Susan Moore, Northern Health Specialized Services Director for the Northeast. "These partnerships make it possible to meet the holistic needs of individuals and making those person-centric services accessible."

More information, including pictures and video of the First Nations Elders blessing ceremony at the North Wind Wellness Centre site, can be found at <https://northwindwellnesscentre.ca/news-updates/arch-blessing/>.



Quotes:

Julie Morrison, FNHA's VP of North Regional Operations

"The First Nations Health Authority recognizes the support of our provincial and federal government partners to embed traditional healing practices in B.C.'s health system. Change requires effort at every level of government, NWWC and the Treaty 8 Tribal Association of First Nations Communities are leading the way with the implementation of the ARCH model of operations. This innovative approach is a first for the region, province and country and we look forward to seeing its positive impact when the centre begins operating."

Chief Sharleen Gale, Fort Nelson First Nation

"Treaty 8 Tribal Association supports NWWC's new Health and Wellness Centre. This initiative addresses the toxic drug crisis that continues to devastate our communities and the province. The Centre in Pouce Coupe will be situated on the traditional, ancestral territory of Treaty 8 First Nations."

Brad Sperling, Peace River Regional District Board Chair

"We are strong advocates for the NWWC to build a new Health and Wellness Centre in the region. This Centre will be the first of its kind in Canada and will provide the supports needed for those that are recovering from addiction not only within the region, but provincially as well."

Mike Bernier, MLA for Peace River South

"I am so proud of all the work that has been done by all those involved to help bring this much needed facility to reality. We know the barriers people struggling with addictions in the Peace Region have been facing with inadequate access to treatment, and this facility will go a long way in providing the care and supports to help so many people who want to work on a path to recovery"

Danielle Veach, Mayor of Pouce Coupe

"This new centre brings hope to our region. Many of our families have suffered unendurable losses due to the toxic drugs epidemic in the north. This centre offers a second chance to those struggling with addiction."

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