



NEWS RELEASE – INDIGENOUS PATIENT ADVOCATE SERVICES EXPAND TO THE DEHCHO REGION

(Fort Simpson, July 24, 2024) – Today the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) - in collaboration with the Dehcho First Nations – are happy to announce the expansion of Indigenous Patient Advocate Services through the NTHSSA's Office of Client Experience. This service will now be available through in-person support in Fort Simpson and serving all Region.ts of the Dehcho

Established in early 2023 the Office of Client Experience created a central point for feedback for the NWT health and social services system and added supports to better serve Indigenous clients and families. Over time these supports will work to help advance system goals related to cultural safety and better care and services. Expanding with a new Senior Indigenous Patient Advocate position in the Dehcho will allow for enhanced access to these services within the region.

This role was established after collaboration between the NTHSSA's Office of Client Experience and the Dehcho First Nations Health and Wellness Division – who identified this function as something that could help enhance services for residents within the region and was needed. After a collaborative process to advertise for this new position a local Senior Indigenous Patient Advocate has been hired, Connie McNab – who is a Dehcho First Nations member – will be providing services in the region.

Services can be accessed at the Liidlii Kue First Nation Building, please ask for Connie McNab, Indigenous Patient Advocate, or by contacting the Office of Client Experience at:

HSS_Clientexperience@gov.nt.ca or call our toll free line at (1-855- 846- 9601).

Senior Indigenous Patient Advocates work directly with regional leadership of health and social services to identify areas of improvement and provide direct services to clients, patients, and families. Some of the services that are provided include:

- System navigation to all residents and guests in the Northwest Territories.
- Work to ensure patients receive culturally safe and equitable care to help deal with the impact of illness and hospitalization.
- Provide cultural, spiritual and emotional support.
- Help make connections with family members, elders and community organizations.
- Provide support and solutions for Indigenous residents and their families based on their needs.
- Advocacy services for Indigenous residents and guests.

QUOTES

“After speaking with our region, it was clear that this partnership would enable much-needed services to the people in the Dehcho sooner rather than later. This is part of the Dehcho region’s larger goal of our members having access to culturally safe and culturally relevant health services. We hope by having an Indigenous patient advocate within the region we will see more people accessing culturally safe and relevant services, which the Indigenous Patient Advocate program aims to achieve.”

- Kristen Tanche, Regional Health & Wellness Director, Dehcho First Nation

“I am pleased to welcome Connie to the Indigenous Patient Advocate role. I know that she will be a strong advocate for clients, families, and communities in the Dehcho. Expanding services in the Office of Client Experience so more residents can access navigation, advocacy, and a single point of contact for feedback is one way we are actioning our system-wide commitment to enhancing the cultural safety of our services for NWT residents.”

- Kimberly Riles, Chief Executive Officer, NTHSSA

Fast Facts:

- Dehcho First Nations Health & Wellness Division and the NTHSSA started conversations about a collaboration in 2023 with a focus on finding solutions to enhance services with a focus on cultural safety in the region.
- Part of this new service includes a commitment by Dehcho First Nations and the NTHSSA to ensure these services meet the needs of residents and Dehcho First Nations members.
- Senior Indigenous Patient Advocates are established in Fort Smith, Hay River, Yellowknife and Inuvik, and with this expansion now Fort Simpson serving the Dehcho Region.
- In the first year of operations with the Office of Client Experience met with over 800 clients to provide system navigation and client advocacy, to hear residents feedback, to engage in meaningful conversation and dialogue to ensure residents feel heard, and to help individuals resolve their concerns.
- This program is supported by temporary funding arrangements; with a continued focus on ensuring system sustainability working to secure permanent funding for these roles will be a priority.
- Indigenous peoples in the NWT experience significant health disparities compared to non-Indigenous residents. Health disparities are complicated or made worse when Indigenous peoples do not access care because of barriers like systemic racism.
- The Office of Client Experience Program was designed specifically to meet the needs of Indigenous residents, in a culturally safer and respectful manner, and aims to advance the goals of the [NWT Cultural Safety Action Plan](#).
- Indigenous Patient Advocates are in place to support Indigenous residents, in the NWT’s Acute Care Facilities and in the regions and to provide navigation, information, advocacy and connections to culture and language supports as required.



- A centralized intake process is initiated by phone or email. Clients and family members can be referred or self-refer. Based on the nature of the call you clients will be referred to either a Client Experience Liaison, Senior Indigenous Patient Advocate, or the System Navigator for service.

Media:

For media inquiries contact nthssacomms@gov.nt.ca