



NEWS RELEASE

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Aboriginal Liaison improves health services for First Nations Peoples

First Nations People, especially Elders in the Hazelton and Bulkley Valley, will benefit from improved health service delivery thanks to a new full-time Aboriginal Patient Liaison Worker linking patients' culture to the health care system.

The new Aboriginal Patient Liaison Worker is a full-time position supporting Northern Health's East Cluster communities in the Northwest Health Service Delivery Area; Hazelton, Smithers, Houston, Dease Lake and area First Nation communities. The position is based out of Wrinch Memorial Hospital in Hazelton.

The Aboriginal Patient Liaison (APL) Worker is responsible for assessing and planning health service delivery for First Nation people related to admission, discharge and health service access with the goal to improve health services provided to First Nation Peoples, especially Elders.

This position is a link between First Nation patients, their culture, and the health care system. The APL promotes the exchange of information between the patient/resident, their family, and health care professionals. They provide support to individuals dealing with the emotional and physical challenges of being away from their home communities, and the challenges of dealing with a different cultural environment.

"Angie Combs is an APL who brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in both health care provision and traditional languages and cultures," said Cormac Hikisch, Northwest HSDA-East Cluster health services administrator for Northern Health. "This position is an integral part of the health care team in providing effective services to our significant aboriginal population."

Northern Health also has Aboriginal Patient Liaison Workers supporting improved health care services for First Nations patients in Prince Rupert, Terrace, Lakes/Omineca, Prince George, Quesnel, Chetwynd and Fort St. John.

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