

July 11, 2017 – Communique Two

## **Information for Wildfire Evacuees**

As of today, thirteen First Nations communities in BC are under evacuation order or alert. With hot, dry weather expected to continue, more families and communities may need to leave their homes for safety.

We recognize and acknowledge the unique trauma to First Nations, which goes beyond loss of home and includes impacts to territory, plants and animals. Here is some important information about health and social services for First Nations communities impacted by wildfire in BC.

### **Refilling Prescriptions**

With the current evacuations taking place in BC, some patients may not have access to their medications and will require a refill or replacement. If you need to replace or refill a prescription for medication, please go to a local pharmacy and bring your identification. If possible, also bring a copy of your prescription or medication packaging. If you don't know the details of your medication, your pharmacist will be able to look it up for you, or they can call the NIHB Drug Exception Centre.

If you have any issues with this process, please call: 1.800.317.7878.

### **Medical Transportation**

If you require patient travel services due to the wildfires, including routine transportation to dialysis and other appointments, please contact FNHA Health Benefits at 1.800.317.7878 and we will guide you through what supports are available.

### **Medical Supplies and Equipment (Including Oxygen Tanks) and Eyewear**

For all medical supplies and equipment, including refill or replacement of oxygen tanks and related products, please contact FNHA Health Benefits at 1.800.317.7878.

### **Dental Items (Dentures)**

Please contact FNHA Health Benefits at 1.800.317.7878.

## **Mental Health Supports and Debriefing**

### **FNHA Mental Health Resources**

FNHA has deployed a number of internal and contracted mental health resources to support evacuees in Kamloops and Prince George. Mental health counsellors are visiting hotels with evacuees and evacuation centres.

Clients can also connect with FNHA Mental Health counselling at 1.800.317.7878 to be connected with a counsellor.

### **Counsellors at Thompson Rivers University**

Counsellors are available daily at the wildfire evacuee centre at Thompson Rivers University (TRU). Please go to the Secwepemc Health Caucus booth by the Sacred Space at TRU and the staff there can support connection to the counsellors.

Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) has a disaster psychosocial response program team available at TRU including a social worker, psychologist and other allied health professionals. Please locate individuals wearing purple shirts or ask reception centre staff to be connected to Disaster Psychosocial Volunteers (DPS Volunteers).

### **Traditional and Elders Support**

Traditional and Elders support is available throughout the day. To access this service, see the Secwepemc Health Caucus booth.

### **Support for First Nations at College of New Caledonia**

In Prince George at the College of New Caledonia (CNC), FNHA has a table set up in the gym to support First Nations. Health and social support are available from 9:00 to 5:00 daily. Please contact Julie Morrison, Crisis Response Advisor, FNHA Northern Region (778.349.4376) with any questions.

### **Nursing Health Centre Closures**

First Nations Health Authority Public Health Nursing services are closed due to evacuation order in the following communities: Ashcroft, Bonaparte, Oregon Jack Creek, Anaham, Stone, Toosey and Alexandria. The Interior Health-operated clinic at Alexis Creek is also closed. Nursing Services will work alongside Interior Health to identify safe and appropriate care areas and, as able, impacted nursing staff will be deployed to these areas.

Evacuated community members are being asked to seek medical care from the nearest medical facility in the receiving community, health clinic or hospital.

### **Patient Evacuations, Finding Family Members**

In addition to patient transfers within Interior Health, more than 100 patients and residents from Interior Health's hospitals and long-term care homes have, and are, being evacuated to facilities in Quesnel and Prince George. For those with loved ones in the hospital or long-term care, a central number has been established through Interior Health Patient and Quality Care Office (1.877.442.2001) to connect evacuees and families.

### **Clean Air Stations**

Air quality in many communities is a growing concern and FNHA Environmental Health Officers are available to work with impacted communities to create clean air stations in communities for vulnerable populations. FNHA Environmental Health Officers are available to support the development clean air stations and are currently contacting all impacted First Nations. Contact EPHS Regional manager Casey Neathway with any questions (778.875.3486).

### **Red Cross Support**

Red Cross is currently experiencing technical challenges with its online registration system. If you have been evacuated, please call the contact centre at 1.800.863.6582 to have an agent help you register. The call volume is high and individuals are experiencing long wait times.

The registration process will ask for your basic information about you and your household, such as name, date of birth, email address and home address.

### **Stay Up To Date**

Our FNHA [wildfire information page](http://fnha.ca/wildfires) (fnha.ca/wildfires) will be the main location for FNHA updates on the wildfire situation, current evacuation zones, road closures, emergency phone lines and other crucial emergency services. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and provide updates as needed.