

Northern Communities Respond to COVID-19

As the North responds and adjusts to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we have adapted the E-Brief to share ideas from our local communities, and resources from around the world. You will see two new sections this month. The first profiles stories of small and/or northern communities that are highlighting their innovation and resilience to respond to challenges, particularly amongst vulnerable populations. A later section summarizes opportunities for you and your organizations to share experiences, ideas and feedback with decision makers and researchers about how COVID-19 is affecting you.

In addition to the community level information, the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#), [HealthLink BC COVID-19 page](#), the [WHO FAQ](#), the [Health Canada FAQ](#) and [WorkSafeBC's COVID-19 Information and Resource](#) webpages are all great sources of trusted information. The [Provincial Health Officer's webpage on current health topics](#) has the most current information on restrictions on travel, gatherings and other issues.

Stories of Community Innovation & Resilience

- In **Queen Charlotte**, [Charlotte's Wellness Helpers](#) check in by phone with residents on a weekly basis to find out if people need support, and to make connections with local resources.
- In **Smithers**, the municipality set up a [wellness camp](#) where the homeless population can self-isolate and access social service agencies.
- In **Fort St. John**, Peace Villa's Long Term Care Home staff are [keeping residents connected to families](#) by setting up FaceTime/Zoom calls, and by reaching out to families directly to let them know about changes and options
- In **Terrace**, School District 52 sends [grocery budget funding to schools for direct distribution to families](#) needing support.
- In **Prince George**, a campaign to connect people by making and looking for [hearts on windows](#) has gone global.
- In **Sandspit**, Gale Force Indoor Cycle used proceeds from its by-donation Karma Cycle classes to buy over a dozen Easter [dinners for seniors isolated at home](#).
- In **Lethbridge**, AB, [volunteers delivered postcards through neighbourhoods](#) to residents without internet, in order to share information and resources.
- In **Nunavik**, QC, Inukjuak Hunters are [harvesting caribou to support community food supply](#).

Resources

A Northern Health Guide for Your Community

This [Northern Health resource](#) shares key information for community members about how to prevent infection and slow the spread, so we can stay as safe as possible. It also provides information about what Northern Health is doing to prepare for the COVID-19 outbreak. The resource will be updated with new information as available.

Public Health Association of BC Key Resources

The Public Health Association of BC is compiling a number of [resources](#) on key topics including coping strategies, food security, financial support, mental health, and provincial and federal updates.

Vulnerable Populations: COVID-19 Resources for NH Staff and Community Partners Working with Populations who Experience Vulnerabilities

This [document](#) provides COVID-19 information and resources for community partners who work with vulnerable people e.g. people experiencing homelessness and/or are under-housed, people with complex care, people who engage in sex work and/or people with mental health and substance use needs.

Kids Physical Activity: Keeping Children Active During the Coronavirus Pandemic

[Exercise in Medicine](#) provides some [tips around how to keep everyone in the family active](#) while following social/physical distancing guidelines.

Smoking, Vaping and COVID-19: What's the Risk?

FNHA has published a [FAQ sheet about COVID-19 risks for those who smoke or vape](#). The FAQ sheet includes resources for more information and support.

Cannabis, Smoking and Vaping: COVID-19 and Smoking and Vaping Cannabis: Four Things You Should Know

[The Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction](#) has published a [report](#) summarizing four important facts currently known about COVID-19, and how it can affect people who smoke or vape cannabis products.

Food Security: BC Food Security Gateway

The [BC Food Security Gateway](#) supports knowledge translation and collaboration to advance food security in BC. They have compiled a repertoire of credible resources intended to support communities in addressing food security during COVID-19.

Food Security: Leadership During a Pandemic: What Your Municipality Can Do

Preparing for and responding to a pandemic requires coordinated actions and communications by all levels of government and all segments of society. The Pan American Health Organization has developed a [toolkit for municipal-level pandemic influenza preparedness and response](#).

Farmers Markets: Modifying Operations During COVID-19

BCAFM provides recommendations on [how to modify farmers markets](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic, and provides resources to support transitioning sales online.

Alcohol: 25% of Canadians (aged 25 – 54) are drinking more while at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic

The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction conducted a [study to benchmark alcohol and cannabis consumption](#) during the COVID-19 outbreak, as well as drivers of behavior.

Substance Use Resources: Impacts of COVID-19 on Substance Use

The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction has [compiled resources on COVID-19 and substance use](#), and has organized it based on audiences, topics and types of resources. Materials come from academia, government and professional organizations, and cover topics such as alcohol, harm reduction, homeless/marginalized populations, opioids, treatment academia, services and recovery.

Adolescent Health: BC Adolescent Youth Survey Reports for the North Available

The McCreary Centre Society recently released [regional reports](#) with the findings from the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey. In addition to full reports, there are PowerPoint presentations summarizing key findings for the [Northwest](#), [Northeast](#) and [Northern Interior](#) areas of Northern Health.

Online Courses, Programs and Activities

Mental Health: Y-Minds Now Online & Supports for Mind, Body and Spirit Ongoing

[Y Minds and Teen Y Minds](#) is a free mental health program available for youth aged 13-30. As of May, participants can [access the program online](#). A few Ontario-based YMCAs have also compiled online-based resources and activities to [support mind, body and spirit](#) while physically distant.

Mental Health: Foundry Virtual Online Counselling Sessions Ongoing

Foundry is offering [virtual drop-in counselling sessions](#) by voice, video and chat to young people ages 12 – 24 and their caregivers, and will be expanding its virtual services over the weeks and months to include primary care and peer support.

Events: Public Health Association of BC Online Events Compilation Ongoing

Public Health Association of BC has compiled [a huge list of free online learning opportunities](#) for individuals, covering topics like [gardening](#), [composting](#), [baking](#), yoga, [mindfulness](#), [fitness](#), and [what we need in a reimagined future](#). To submit events, email coordinator@phabc.org.

Webinar: Food Matters! How municipalities can build a stronger community through healthier eating environments May 8, 2020 from 2:00pm – 3:00pm

The final part of the Healthy Futures Webinar Series focuses on how municipalities can [build a stronger community through healthier eating environments](#). Previous webinars, exploring [health-in-all-policies](#), [smoking and vaping](#), and [active travel policy](#), are also available online.

Cancelled: ParticipACTION Community Better Challenge

The [2020 Community Better Challenge](#), planned for June 2020 has been cancelled – stay tuned for 2021!

Funding Opportunities

Northern Health Summary of Food Program Funding Opportunities Varied

Northern Health has compiled an [extensive summary of food program funding opportunities](#) relevant to northern communities. If you are currently, or plan to start, providing food support to local community members please review this list.

PlanH Community Connectedness & Healthy Community Engagement Grants Deadline: Extended to July 15, 2020

PlanH is offering [\\$5,000 for community connectedness](#) and up to [\\$15,000 for healthy community engagement initiatives](#). The Community Connectedness Grant (formerly Social Connectedness) parameters have been revised in response to COVID-19, and now prioritize community belonging, mental health, and community resiliency.

Vancouver Foundation – Responsive Neighbourhood Grants

Deadline: To be determined based on Public Health Orders

The [Responsive NSG grant stream](#) provides grants of up to \$500 for projects led by BC residents that connect people socially or involve sharing skills or talents with each other. Projects must comply with public health orders for physical distancing. The funding stream opened April 15.

Breakfast Club of Canada – Special Grant Application

Deadline: Ongoing

Breakfast Club of Canada is issuing special grants for community organizations to help ensure [children and families have access to food during the crisis](#).

President’s Choice – School Nutrition Grant

Deadline: Ongoing

Provides up to \$10,000 to schools and non-profit to [deliver meals, snacks and food-based education programs](#). The grant supplements existing programs, allowing for higher quality, more sustainable programming.

Share Your Experiences and Ideas

- PHABC wants to know about [food security and supply](#) – share your household experiences and review comments from others on this topic and others.
- A researcher from the University of the Fraser Valley wants to learn about [physical activity behaviour, environmental preferences and mental health](#) since the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic and physical distancing parameters.
- The University of Alberta would like to know what the impact of COVID-19 is on [physical activity during pregnancy and Postpartum](#).
- The Institute for Sustainable Food Systems at Kwantlen Polytechnic University wants to know how COVID-19 has impacted the [consumer food experience](#).

Northern Health Stories

Trauma-Informed Yoga and Wellness for Women: One Year Later

In the fall of 2018, the IMAGINE Grants funded a project focused on trauma-informed yoga and wellness on Haida Gwaii. Led by Masset-based organization Haida Gwaii Society for Community Peace (HGSCP), this yoga practice aims to ease the effects of past trauma through meditation, breathing techniques, and poses geared toward relaxation and stress release. Shauna Huber, who coordinates the Stopping the Violence Women’s Counseling program with HGSCP, led the group after completing a trauma-sensitive yoga course aimed at women... [continue reading](#).

Healthy Eating During COVID-19: Tips from Northern Health Dietitians

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on our daily lives, including how we feed ourselves and others. The notion that healthy eating is flexible, and is shaped by the contexts of our lives, has never been truer. Although there are challenges, we're not alone in this, and we can lean on one another for support – virtually, of course!... [continue reading.](#)

COVID-19 Helpful Behaviours

Northern Health staff and physicians are working hard to keep you safe, but we need your help. Remember to stay at home when you are sick, even if mild symptoms. Wash your hands regularly, avoid crowded spaces and take care of your mental well-being... [continue reading.](#)

See the latest stories at stories.northernhealth.ca.

E-Brief Information

The Healthier Northern Communities [E-Brief](#) is produced by [Northern Health's regional Population and Preventive Public Health program](#).

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