

NORTH

NORTHERN FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY NEWS | MAY 2022

SHARING STRENGTHS

NORTHERN PARTNERSHIP ACCORD
SIGNED AT SPRING CAUCUS

BONFIRE CHAT

37 YEARS IN
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

HAVE WE GOT A JOB FOR YOU!

DETAILS ON PAGE 4

FROM THE LAND
A HEART ATTACK AT
28 STARTED A
HEALTH JOURNEY

IN THE GALLERY

CATCHING UP AT SPRING CAUCUS



NORTHERN REGION
First Nations Health Authority

STORIES FROM THE LAND

A HEART ATTACK AT 28 CHANGED EVERYTHING

"I'VE BEEN BIG MY WHOLE LIFE," SAYS ROB MATTHEWS OF GITANMAAX. HIS TRADITIONAL NAME, GYETM GWIIS GIIGEEENIX, TRANSLATES TO "BIG MAN FROM THE EAST".

At 6'5", Rob, from the Gisgaast (Fireweed) clan, isn't kidding. In 2011 at the age of 28 he hit a new high—weighing in at 439 lbs, and a new low—a heart attack at 28.

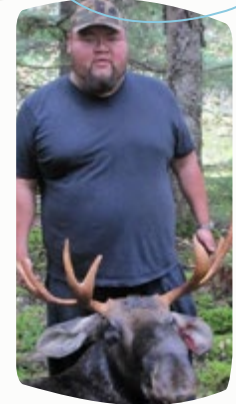
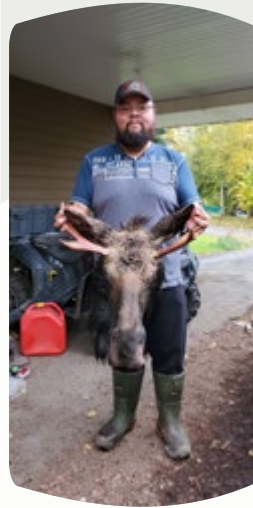
"One of my valves was 99% blocked."

Surgeons put in a stint, but the hardest part was what they said: if Rob didn't make some changes, he wouldn't be hunting again.

That warning kickstarted Rob into making changes. The first year he lost about 70 lbs, got a job and started to feel better. Eventually he switched jobs and became an environmental technician.

Then he was let go, the boss saying he was out of shape, and "that bothered me." Rob also had two degenerative discs, and a physiotherapist said he could end up in a wheelchair someday.

Once again Rob battled his health challenges. He stopped drinking ("I got tired of it; it wasn't fun anymore") and started a keto diet. A new, more



Rob near his top weight

Hiking, biking, hunting and water keep Rob in shape today

physical job with Gitxsan Watershed Authority in 2021 has also been a huge factor.

"Not much scares me in the bush." Rob hikes six to eight kilometers a day in and out of remote creeks. "Last year was hard; this year it's awesome. I look forward to the hikes."

What else does Rob do for health? You can find him peddling an hour a day on his stationary bike and working out to YouTube videos. Staying hydrated with water is also key. Rob drinks 5 litres daily.

Today Rob is down about 120 lbs from his top weight, and is 20 months sober. Sometimes people message him to ask how he's done it; he always responds.

Some advice?

"Start small to get into shape. Walk a little, loosen those joints, and drink water. Don't quit."

Download a digital copy of NORTH:
<https://fnha.bmeurl.co/DD860B4>

SHARING STRENGTHS

NORTHERN REGIONAL TABLE, NORTHERN HEALTH AND THE FNHA SIGN NEW ACCORD

THE FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY, NORTHERN HEALTH AND THE NORTHERN REGIONAL CAUCUS REPRESENTING 62 COMMUNITIES IN THE NORTH renewed their commitment to improving the health and wellness outcomes of our peoples through the signing of the renewed Northern Partnership Accord.

A signing ceremony was held in Prince George on May 10, witnessed by Chiefs, Elders, Health Directors and others.

“The partnerships between the FNHA and our regional health authorities are crucial to ensuring key decision-makers in each organization are able to meet and make the timely, important decisions related to improving First Nation’s peoples’ health,” said Richard Jock, CEO of the FNHA. “The Partnership Accord is a foundational piece that leaders in the FNHA and Northern Health can use to build stronger relationships between their operational teams, and more efficiently implement priorities set out by the Regional Caucus. A strong partnership with our regional health authority enables us to tackle these issues together in true reconciliation.”

First signed in 2012, the 2022 update to the Accord reflects the ongoing growth, evolution and strengthening of the partnerships and directs the development of joint work plans to support the implementation of their shared priorities.

The Accord speaks to reciprocal accountability that emphasizes collaboration and collective action as a way of accelerating improvement to First Nations health and wellness.

“We’re happy we’ve signed the Northern Partnership Accord with Northern Health. Our organizations have worked well together throughout the pandemic and we look forward to continuing to build on this relationship,” said Julie Morrison, FNHA Vice President of Operations for the North.

Each of the organizations signing the 2022 Accord will be accountable for contributing to a joint work plan, providing appropriate levels of support for its implementation, and monitoring and reporting on progress each year.

In signing the Accord, the partners have committed to improving health and wellness services accessed by First Nations in the Northern Region, and will work within their part of the health system to support the work under the Accord.



Colleen Erickson, Colleen Nyce, Cathy Ulrich, Richard Jock, Julie Morrison and Chief Tracy Woods sign the 2022 Northern Partnership Accord

HAVE WE GOT A JOB FOR YOU!



You enjoy facilitating learning and are culturally sensitive

- ✓ **POSITION:** Harm Reduction Educator
- ✓ **LOCATION:** Prince George BC
- ✓ Help communities and others learn about treatments for opioid misuse through in-person and virtual training sessions

THE TOXIC DRUG CRISIS NEEDS MANY STRATEGIES TO END IT. ONE OF THOSE STRATEGIES IS EDUCATION. BC's northern region has one of the highest incident rates in this crisis and you can help. Harm reduction educators provide training in First Nations communities or virtually. Often to community members, health care workers and others on many aspects of harm reduction including: how to administer naloxone, ways to use safely, and how to reduce stigma. There's a lot to this job. Not only are technical questions addressed, cultural knowledge and traditional practices are woven through the programs. We always want to ensure that people feel respected, safe and heard whether they are on a healing journey or minimizing harms associated with substance use. Understanding colonial impacts and trauma are key qualities for this position. Want to get more details? [Check out the listing here.](#)

FNHA JOB OPENINGS IN THE NORTH (click for more info)

[Advisor, Crisis/Emergency](#)

[Community Engagement](#)

[Coordinators:](#)

- [Gitxsan Wet'suwet'en](#)
- [Prince George](#)

[Education & Training Support](#)

[Electronic Medical Records](#)

[Environmental Health Officers](#)

[Indigenous Educator, Harm Reduction](#)

[Regional Financial Consultant](#)

[Regional HR Generalist](#)

[Medical Office Assistant, Primary](#)

[Care Response](#)

[Project Coordinator, eHealth](#)

[Regional Mental Health & Wellness](#)

[Liaison](#)

[Senior Business Analyst, eHealth](#)

NURSES IN CHARGE

[Telegraph Creek](#)

[Kwadacha](#)

[Tsay Keh Dene](#)

COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSES

[Gitanyow & Gitwangak](#)

[Fort St. John](#)

[Gitga'at](#)

[Kwadacha Fort Ware](#)

[Kitkatla](#)

[Kwadacha](#)

[Lax Kw'alaams](#)

[Telegraph Creek](#)

[Tsay Keh Dene](#)

[Resource Team across BC](#)

Check out all our jobs at
fnha.ca/careers

BONFIRE CHAT

WITH PAUL BRODA, MANAGER ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES



ONE OF MY FIRST VISITS TO A COMMUNITY SET THE TONE FOR MY CAREER tackling water, sewage, air quality, food safety and other public health issues. It was in Tache, where I first met Justa Monk, and his first question was whether a smart white guy just out of school was going to solve all his village's problems and tell them how to live.

This introduction to real cultural humility has shaped my work for 37 years, and as I approach retirement I think back on it more and more.

Environmental health is so many things: water quality, food safety, bed bugs, mold and other threats to health. It took me into the middle of people's

So I told her about a funding stream that might support a book and a video and we put together a proposal. I am pleased to say that "Plants and Medicines of Sophie Thomas" is still available today, as is the video "The Warmth of Love, the Four Seasons of Sophie Thomas".

So much has also changed for the better in practical ways, although many challenges remain for the next generation to take on, such as climate change and food security. At the start of my career most communities had no water treatment and failing sewage systems and that has steadily improved thankfully.

The answers to the challenges we still face are here in the North. I learned most of what I know about our environment through my relationships with community members—the interconnectedness of all things, the medicine wheel, and how we should listen and learn from all living things.

"...MANY CHALLENGES REMAIN FOR THE NEXT GENERATION TO TAKE ON, SUCH AS CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY."

lives and I remain grateful to all who welcomed me into their homes and encouraged me to sit down and drink some tea with them, when at times, all I wanted was a quick water sample.

I remember Saik'uz Elders Sophie Thomas and Mary John who were strong leaders. Sophie was always preparing medicines for people when I saw her. Sophie would tell me about making each medicine for a specific ailment, including making remedies for those who had not even contacted her yet.

And she said she wanted to share what she knew about traditional plants and medicines.

It is not complicated but it is hard. As Sophie would say "If we look after our earth, it will look after us. If we destroy it, we'll destroy ourselves."



Paul hard at work, heading out to catch fish for mercury testing 1986

WHAT TO DO IF THE WATERS RISE DURING FLOODING

BE PREPARED

- Monitor local news media and the Government of BC's flood warning website bcrfc.env.gov.bc.ca/ warnings for flooding status.
- Follow instructions given by community or emergency officials on evacuation.
- Keep at least a 72-hour supply of water and food available.

BEFORE FLOODING

- Move as many items as possible from basements and crawl spaces to higher floors.
- Sandbag around surface water intakes to protect from damage caused by debris.
- Turn off power to well pumps so flood water is not drawn into the well.

DURING FLOODING

- Stay away from flood waters and fast-moving rivers.
- Follow instructions given by first responders and other emergency personnel.
- If flood waters cover your sewage disposal field, stop using the sewage system.
- If power goes out, keep the door closed on the fridge/freezer and keep food inside it. This will help keep food safe (up to about 12 hours for a fridge, 24 hours for a half-full freezer, and up to 48 hours for a full freezer).
- Wash hands with soap and water if you come in contact with flood water. It could be contaminated.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR YOU

Temporary Increase to Medical Transportation Mileage Rates

Effective May 16, 2022, the MT mileage rate will increase to \$0.32/km. This change will be in effect until August 31, 2022. The increase will also apply to the special mileage rate applicable to certain remote communities. For different rates and their effective dates: <https://www.fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/a-health-benefits-message-on-updates-to-the-temporary-increase-to-medical-transportation-mileage-rates>.

One Stop Shop for Regional Envelope Funding

Apply for four streams:

- Health Actions
- Indigenous Treatment & Land Based Healing
- Men's Wellness Initiative
- Tobacco Initiatives

Health Directors, check your email for details.

Contact NRPlanning@fnha.ca, your CEC or Keith.Henry@fnha.ca for info.

Deadline for submissions: **July 31, 2022**

On the cover

The FNHA CEO, Richard Jock, gives a thumbs up after signing the 2022 Northern Partnership Accord, which governs the relationship between our Nations, Northern Health and the FNHA.



Have a great picture for our cover or a story idea? Send to SubscribeNorth@fnha.ca

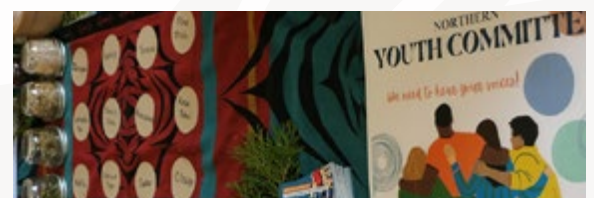
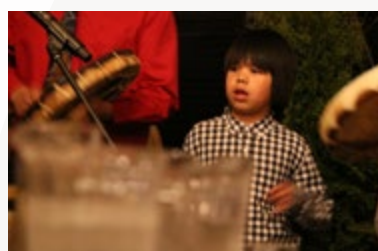
Email SubscribeNorth@fnha.ca to sign up for our eZine

STAFF CHANGES

- **Julie Morrison** isn't acting anymore (unless you catch her on TikTok). We're proud of our new Vice President of Regional Operations!

THROUGH NORTHERN EYES

SEEN AT THE NORTHERN CAUCUS



NEXT MONTH: Celebrating National Indigenous Peoples Day?
Send us your photos to SubscribeNorth@fnha.ca

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFO

FNHA Virtual Doctor of the Day
1-855-344-3800

First Nations Health Benefits
1-855-550-5454

**National Indian Residential
School Survivors Society**
1-800-721-0066

Kids Help Phone
1-800-668-6868
Text "connect" to: 686868

KUU-US Crisis Response
1-800-588-8717

Mental Health
(no area code needed)
310-6789

Health Link BC
811

BC Suicide Line
1-800-784-2433
<https://crisiscentre.bc.ca/get-help/>

Northern BC Crisis Line
1-888-562-1214

**Northern BC YOUTH
Crisis Line**
1-888-564-8336
Text: 250-564-8336