



whitehorse
dawson city
watson lake

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Video series highlights Yukon First Nations health programs

Whitehorse – First Nations Health Programs (FNHP) in Yukon’s hospitals have launched a three-part video series this month to put a spotlight on the significance of cultural understanding and to showcase these made-in-territory programs as national and international best practice.

The videos feature Yukoners sharing their own experiences with the programs by focusing on patient services, cultural programs as well as cultural competency. The series was produced locally for the hospitals and made possible with generous financial support from RBC Financial.

“About one-third of our patients self-identify as First Nations, Metis or Inuit – and we have worked to provide culturally appropriate care in our hospitals for more than two decades,” said Laura Salmon, who oversees the programs based at Whitehorse General Hospital. “Our sincere hope is that Yukoners and others are able to learn more about our programs and the barriers that exist for Aboriginals in the health system.”

FNHP has been successful in addressing and making progress in key areas, including calls to action made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – many of which are specific to health.

- Offering traditional foods and medicines, interpretation services and sacred healing space
- Advocating for First Nations, Metis and Inuit patients by providing moral and emotional support while in hospital
- Supporting mandatory cultural competency education to give hospital staff an increased understanding of cultural values, beliefs and experiences and the skills to communicate effectively.
- Working to increase the number of First Nations health professionals in our hospitals

In the past, FNHP has been recognized as a leading practice by Accreditation Canada and continues to gain the attention of health providers in Canada and around the world who look to the programs as a model, said Salmon. “These new videos are valuable

educational tools to create understanding and awareness, reflect on our role in the health system and look at how we can contribute to reconciliation.”

The three-part series can be viewed now at <http://bit.ly/1LCjzpJ>

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Backgrounder

First Nations Health Programs is a nationally recognized leader in health care services for Aboriginal People. Here are some quick facts about the program:

- The program’s mission is to promote the provision of quality, culturally sensitive holistic health care to Aboriginal people by:
 - Advocating for and guiding Aboriginal people through the acute care health system
 - Recognizing the impacts of residential school and colonialism on the health of Aboriginal people
 - Providing social and spiritual support, as well as access to traditional food, medicine and healing practices in an acute health care environment
 - Educating health care providers to increase understanding and awareness of Aboriginal culture to enhance safety and competence
- About FNHP services:
 - Liaise between hospital staff, patient and family to ensure good communication
 - Support people at all stages of life through their hospital journey
 - Access to traditional foods and medicines
 - Provide a traditional healing space for ceremony and healing practices
 - Assist with hospital discharge plans and follow-up care by connecting with community care providers
 - Promote First Nations language, culture and spirituality as well as a holistic approach to health
 - Provide opportunities to develop cultural competence

- The program provides support to approximately 5,000 patients each year and works with over 500 staff and physicians at the Whitehorse, Dawson City and Watson Lake hospitals
- FNHP fosters the vision of being balanced in all four directions, mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically.