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WGH part of national effort to harness the healing power of food

Whitehorse – Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH), along with other health care organizations across Canada, is taking part in a collaborative effort to elevate the role of food in patient care.

The initiative is called '[Nourish](#)' and it has assembled a community of 25 health care providers (including WGH) to look at new ways to use food to enhance the patient experience, institutional culture, and community well-being. As part of the program, hospital can connect and collaborate with its peers, work with mentors and identify best practices to harness the healing power of food.



WGH's Manager of Food and Nutrition Leslie Carson (right) works with Cook Jim Shewchuk to prepare moose meat for one of the traditional First Nations dishes served to patients at the hospital.

“We’re always excited about the opportunity to work with other facilities and spread best practices across the health system,” says Yukon Hospitals’ CEO Jason Bilsky. “This joint effort will provide insight how other centres use food in the healing process and allow us to share some of our own successes, including incorporating traditional foods for First Nations patients.”

Over the next two years, the Nourish initiative will do just that – offering resources and support to enhance the role of food in healing, while at the same time helping WGH closely examine its own food services to share with the other collaborators.

“In addition to the traditional meals we prepare, our team also plans to showcase its partnership with a local farm, which has enabled us to provide fresh Yukon grown vegetables to our patients,” says Leslie Carson, WGH’s Manager of Food and Nutrition Services. “We’re very excited about participating in the group. In fact, one of our first projects is to begin offering homemade, mineral-rich bone broth to all of our patients.”

Nourish aims to help health providers examine everything from managing budgets to building relationships with local producers. Participants will complete activities, such as building new menus, developing food policies, and researching the health benefits of food in the healing process.

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