

<b>Date:</b>	August 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2020
<b>To:</b>	NH Executive; NW and NI Senior Leadership Teams; Medical Directors; MMH, UHNBC, and Stikine Health Centre Staff and Physicians
<b>From:</b>	Jordan Oliver, Executive Lead, Emergency, Trauma & Transfer Services Dr. Patrick Rowe, Medical Lead, Emergency, Trauma & Transfer Services
<b>Re:</b>	Stikine Health Centre Patient Transport Improvements

**Situation:**

Following joint discussions between the Premier of BC, the Ministers of Health and Transport, and the Tahltan First Nation on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, BCEHS and NHA have been tasked to implement immediate changes to address interfacility transfer delays and improve access to care for the Dease Lake community and surrounding areas.

**Background:**

The Dease Lake region is supported by one ambulance with a Primary Care Paramedic team and one part time Community Paramedic. The Stikine Health Centre is classified as a Level 1 Diagnostic and Treatment Centre that operates Monday to Friday 0830 to 1645 hours with a physician and nurse on-call 24/7. There are no inpatient beds available at this site; therefore, interfacility transport is necessary for patients who require access to services that are available in larger centres, such as Terrace or Prince George. Over the last number of years, BCEHS averages approximately 14 medical evacuations per year in Dease Lake.

There have been ongoing challenges with long response times when transporting Dease Lake patients to definitive care. These delays are due to factors such as significant distance to an acute care facility, challenging terrain, unpredictable weather patterns and limitation of airport infrastructure which restricts air ambulance landing to daylight hours only.

**Actions:**

Below is a series of actions that have been developed collaboratively with NHA and BCEHS to improve processes within the transport planning phase of the patient's journey:

1. Mills Memorial Hospital (Terrace) and the University Hospital of Northern BC (Prince George) have agreed to a No Refusal Policy for all patient conditions being transported out of the Stikine Health Centre.
  - o A No Refusal policy with automatic acceptance of all Dease Lake patient transfers will allow BCEHS to initiate transport planning immediately (early activation) in order to maximize daylight flying hours.
2. Transfer requests from Stikine Health Center will continue to be made through calling the Patient Transfer Network with care conferences between sites still organized by the PTN call taker; however, the following process changes will occur:
  - a. PTN Call Taker immediately notifies the Patient Transfer Coordination Centre (BCEHS Dispatch) for all Stikine Health Centre transfer requests regardless of the acuity of the patient
    - A warning has been added to the BCEHS Computer Aided Dispatch System to alert BCEHS staff of the challenges associated with transports from this region

- b. BCEHS transports the patient directly to the Emergency Department of the most appropriate NH regional facility for assessment and further management.
  - A secondary transfer to definitive care from Terrace or Prince George to a tertiary or quaternary centre may be required with this new process.
3. Please refer to the attached '*Stikine Health Centre Early Activation and No Refusal Patient Transfer Process Algorithm*' on page 3 that outlines the above process changes for both NH and BCEHS.
4. Both BCEHS and the NH Patient Transfer and Flow Office have agreed to a 24/7 escalation process for all Stikine Health Centre transfers that require "in the moment" resolution. Further communication will be developed describing the escalation process in more detail for NH staff and physicians.

**Next Steps:**

BCEHS and NH Emergency, Trauma and Transfer Services leadership will be attending the Tahltan Primary Care Physician Integration Working Group's bi-weekly meetings to continue dialogue, work through the list of actions, report on improvements, and monitor successes.

Further planning is underway which includes the following considerations:

- enhancing transport team based care and upskilling paramedics in the Northwest
- improving the use of ad hoc service providers in the Northwest to support rotary wing response with upgrades to aircraft medical equipment and night time flying capabilities
- working to establish a MoU with Yukon Health Services for the acceptance and subsequent repatriation of Dease Lake patients to and from Whitehorse General Hospital
- support for Dease Lake airport upgrades to improve runway and lighting conditions to allow for nighttime landing
- exploring the possibility of increasing fixed wing resources in the north for 24/7 response

Representatives from the Ministry of Health, Tahltan Nation, Stikine Health Centre, Terrace and UHNBC site leadership have been briefed on the planning underway and are supportive of these enhancements.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

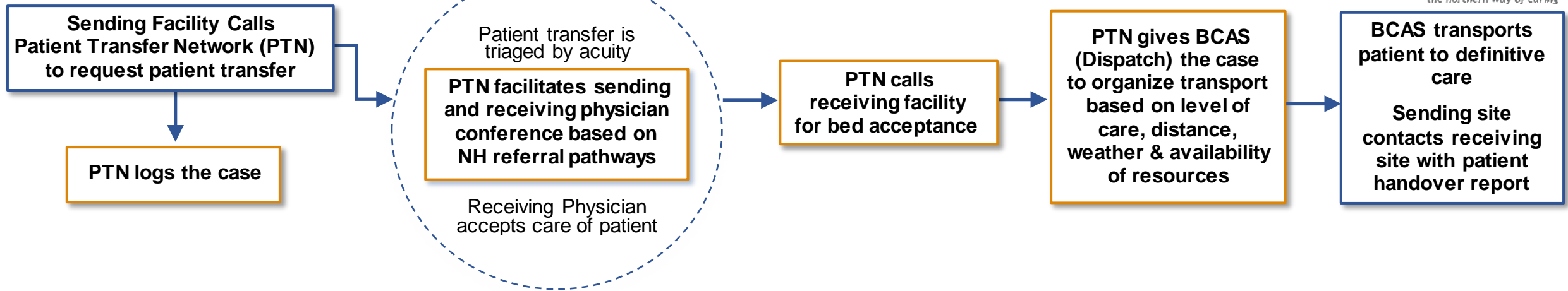
Dr. Patrick Rowe - Medical Lead, Emergency, Trauma and Transfer Services  
Jordan Oliver - Executive Lead, Emergency, Trauma and Transfer Services

# Stikine Health Center (Dease Lake)

## NEW Early Activation & No Refusal Patient Transport Process



### FORMER "INTER-FACILITY" PATIENT TRANSFER PROCESS



### NEW EARLY ACTIVATION & NO REFUSAL STIKINE HEALTH CENTRE PATIENT TRANSFER PROCESS

