

April 28, 2020

To: Physician and Nurse Practitioners supporting patients who use substances

Re: Call for Interest in Regional Network of Pandemic Addiction Prescribing

In March 2020, a guidance document was published by the BC Center on Substance Use titled [Risk Mitigation in the Context of Dual Public Health Emergencies](#). This document called for extraordinary measures to be taken to support people who use drugs and to prevent ongoing community spread of COVID-19 among a vulnerable, often immune-compromised population.

The recommendations in this document outline pharmacotherapy approaches for patients seeking to abstain or reduce their substance use. For those who are not able to reduce their use, the guideline provides prescribing recommendations that facilitate self-isolation without the need to seek street drugs, thereby reducing potential for overdose, unsafe withdrawal, and transmission of COVID-19 within this population and the broader public.

Northern Health is planning to implement a regional virtual care model to enhance patient access to these protocols for those who are eligible and who do not have a current means of access.

The Addiction Medicine Team is seeking expressions of interest from prescribers who feel comfortable working within the pandemic pharmacotherapy protocols established by the [BC Center on Substance Use](#).

You would be joining a Northern network of prescribers who will provide coverage across the region, utilizing a virtual care model. This would involve providing support that will be coordinated by a central point of contact for patients requiring this care. Clinical support will be available through the Regional Addiction Leads for Northern Health as well as education offered through the BCCSU and based on established virtual care work already underway using this guideline in other parts of the province.

If you are interested in becoming a part of the network, or if you have questions about the model, please reach out to:

Dr. Gerrard Prigmore, Regional Medical Lead for Addiction & Harm Reduction
250-613-1374
gerrardprigmore@me.com

Dr. Crystal Page, Northwest Regional Lead for Addiction & Harm Reduction
250-877-9594
Crystal.toews.page@gmail.com

Dr. Onyema Ohaeri, Northeast Regional Lead for Addiction & Harm Reduction
250-793-3278
onyemaohiaeri@gmail.com

Dr. Lawrence Fredeen, Prince George Lead for Addiction & Harm Reduction
250-613-2615
Lawrence.Fredeen@northernhealth.ca

Please contact Rebecca Bennett for interest or further information,
On behalf of Michelle Lawrence, Executive Lead – Mental Health & Substance Use
250-565-5989
Rebecca.Bennett@northernhealth.ca