



A Picture of Health

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B.C.'S MINISTRY OF HEALTH



Improving access to First Nations-led primary health care

Earlier this year, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), supported by the B.C. Ministry of Health, [announced](#) more than \$2 million in funding to help [Lu'ma Medical Centre](#) (Lu'ma) expand Indigenous primary health care services in Greater Vancouver.

The funding will be used to recruit additional family physicians, nurse practitioners (NPs), registered and licensed practical nurses, a dietitian, social worker, mental health professional and physiotherapist, in addition to Indigenous health-care providers, for First Nations and Indigenous peoples living away from home in urban Vancouver.

The services are part of the initial First Nations-led Primary Health Care Initiative announced in B.C. under the government's [Primary Care Strategy](#), which aims to significantly transform and improve access to primary health care for Indigenous peoples throughout the province by addressing First Nations' health equity, access and attachment, while honouring traditional practices and teachings.

Supporting the expansion of Indigenous primary health care helps to ensure Indigenous peoples are receiving culturally safe care and appropriate access to primary care services, which is just one way the ministry is demonstrating its commitment to the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action](#) and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).

An estimated 5,000 - 8,000 Indigenous peoples in the Vancouver area do not have a regular primary care physician or nurse practitioner. Many do not have suitable primary care options because of higher levels of social and medical complexity, including mental health and addictions, historical trauma, as well as a fear of racism and discrimination. Instead of receiving primary care through a regular provider, many use walk-in centres and emergency rooms to access services. This funding will expand primary health care services offered at Lu'ma including:

- access and attachment to primary care providers (i.e. GPs and NPs)
- chronic disease management, sexual health, immunizations and health education programs
- traditional healers providing cultural knowledge and teachings



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- programs to support nutritional alternatives rooted in traditional foods
- wrap-around mental health and wellness supports, including trauma counselling
- support with housing, employment, financial and other potential social barriers
- virtual visits by phone and telehealth (when requested)
- outreach services to attached patients living in supportive housing
- home visits when follow-up care is required (e.g. palliative visits).



First Nations and other residents in Metro Vancouver will have increased access to culturally safe and appropriate primary health care thanks to the Province and FNHA for supporting Lu'ma Medical Centre.

Lu'ma is operated by the non-profit Lu'ma Native Housing Society, which is a model of First Nations primary health care service delivery combining primary care, social services and Indigenous health supports in one team-based centre. A team of Indigenous and allied health practitioners offers culturally integrated and culturally safe primary care. Both Western medicine and traditional holistic approaches to health support cultural connections, identity, wellness support, preventative health and address the social determinants of health.

Currently, 91% of Lu'ma's 1,100 patients identify as Indigenous and the remaining 9% are non-Indigenous family members. The additional resources will enable Lu'ma to attach up to 1,750 new patients, bringing the total patient count to approximately 2,900. Additionally, the new resources will increase patient access to practitioners (e.g., nurses, mental health workers, dietitians, social workers, Elders).

Over time, Lu'ma will integrate into the local [Primary Care Network \(PCN\)](#) and will support the PCN's understanding of Indigenous primary health care by offering specific supports for Indigenous patients attached to other health care providers and supporting cultural safety within the broader network.

To learn more about the Lu'ma Medical Centre, visit [BC Gov News](#).