



NEWS RELEASE

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Northern Lakes College opens doors to innovative training centre

HIGH PRAIRIE- Northern Lakes College's newest addition for health program education is the High Prairie Health Careers Learning Centre.

"A priority initiative of Northern Lakes College is to identify solutions for healthcare skills shortages in our northern region," says Trevor Gladue, Chair of Northern Lakes College Board of Governors. Health career programs have been an area of growth for Northern Lakes College over the past three years, with over 62% increase in the number of programs offered. The Health Careers Learning Centre will directly offer:

- Emergency Medical Responder
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Health Care Aide
- Practical Nurse
- Sterile Process Technician
- Mental Health & Addictions Services
- Medical Receptionist
- Aboriginal Practical Nurse preparation combined with Health Care Aide
- Biology & Math Equivalency Prep

"The High Prairie Health Learning Centre will provide community-based and distance learning access to quality programs in health care" says Northern Lakes College President Rick Neidig, and "the approval of the Emergency Medical Technician program is our most recent example of how these programs continue to grow". The Alberta College of Paramedics, the Health Disciplines Board, and the Department of Advanced Education & Technology gave the green light to offering this program at Northern Lakes College.

Greetings were brought from Pearl Calahasen, MLA for Lesser Slave Lake; as well as from Mr. Rick Dumont, Mayor, Town of High Prairie; Mr. Ken Matthews, Councillor, MD of Big Lakes; Chris Noskey, President of the Northern Lakes College Student Association; and, Archie Cunningham, Vice Chair, Northern Lakes College Board of Governors. Also speaking to the more than 60 attendees was Glenn Monteith, Assistant Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness.

"On behalf of the Minister of Health and Wellness, the Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, I am pleased to be here today to celebrate the opening of the High Prairie Health Learning Centre," said Mr. Monteith. "This

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centre will help improve Alberta's health workforce capacity by providing a local training facility for people in the community and surrounding area to become qualified Licensed Practical Nurses, Emergency Medical Technicians and Responders as well as Health Care Aides. Increasing access to education and focusing delivery of that education in rural areas supports the Government of Alberta's commitment to ensuring access to patient centred care."

"I am very excited about the new opportunities this Health Career Learning Centre, and look forward to seeing this facility filled with students. My office is located in this beautiful building, and I welcome anyone who has questions related to health career programs, who would like more information on any of our health programs, or who would just like to see this facility, to stop by and visit," said Julia Melnyk, Dean, University Studies and Health Professions.

High Prairie Health Learning Centre is a 5,500 square foot building purchased by Northern Lakes College Board of Governors in 2009. The new space that can accommodate up to 60 students is additional to an existing High Prairie campus that is currently operating at capacity for other programs.

In addition to two large classrooms for face-to-face program delivery, the campus is equipped with one healthcare simulation lab with four hospital beds, designed to replicate an in-hospital learning environment. The lab houses medium and high fidelity patient simulators, providing hands-on training for students in the practical nursing program. The learning centre also has four distance learning rooms for students to connect in real-time to other students in similar facilities across the region.

Janine Gauchier, practical nursing student, is very excited to be a part of the Learning Centre. "The Centre is amazing. Learning in a hospital-like environment really helps me to become familiar with what it is going to be like in the workplace. Small class sizes make it easy to get to know your instructors, and for your instructors to get to know you." Gauchier went on to say, "I have two kids. It's so much easier being able to go to school close to home, instead of having to move a city. I have the support of family and friends."

Northern Lakes College has campuses in over 30 communities across north-central Alberta. Programs range from upgrading to careers, from university to apprenticeship trades. Flexible learning opportunities include full time or part time options. As well many classes are offered to students online or using various technologies including video conferencing.

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