



April 2021

2021 BC Budget Focuses on COVID Recovery and Health Care Investments

VICTORIA – The [2021 BC Budget](#) presented today is strongly focused on COVID-19 recovery spending and health care investments that will ensure that British Columbians can successfully navigate their way through and out of the pandemic. NNPBC is pleased to see substantial investments in health, and we applaud the broad focus of spending that will not only ensure adequate COVID-19 management but will also ensure that BC's overdose crisis is given necessary resources while also focusing on health and human resources, primary care and infrastructure spending. In particular we applaud the focus on Indigenous health and the funds allocated to address and combat racism in health care.

"COVID-19 has changed our world and universally governments and people are grappling with how to recover from the global pandemic. As an organization, we are glad to see that the 2021 Provincial Budget demonstrates a commitment to health care. A strong focus on health, health human resources and infrastructure planning means that British Columbia will end this pandemic in a stronger position than when it started", said Sherri Kensall NNPBC Board Chair.

In particular NNPBC commends several announcements in this budget including:

- \$900 million set aside for COVID-19 management that includes vaccine distribution, testing and increased screening for COVID-19 at long-term care homes
- An expansion of home health monitoring systems to protect seniors
- \$68 million over three years to fund care aides
- \$585 million in the area of health and human resource planning primarily to educate/retrain and hire up to 3,000 people as health care workers
- \$45 million to address racism against Indigenous people in the health care system
- \$330 million to fund substance use treatment and recovery services which includes 195 new substance use treatment and recovery beds added across the province
- \$97 million to build a network of mental health supports for youth with \$61 million of the total over three years to improve access to supports for eating disorder care and suicide prevention for youth
- \$14 million of the above mentioned \$97 million will be distributed to the First Nations Health Authority for services to Indigenous peoples to ensure that culturally safe mental health care services are provided
- \$495 million to increase capacity in surgery and diagnostic imagery with an eye to decreasing wait times
- \$300 million over three years to cancer care and Pharma Care
- \$253 million to expand urgent primary care centres
- \$7.8 billion in ongoing infrastructure developments that will support major health-care construction projects at Surrey Hospital, St. Paul's Hospital and for the development of new hospitals in Cowichan District, Dawson Creek, Terrace and Stuart Lake

"NNPBC has appreciated the BC Government approach to pandemic recovery. By focusing on people, we can move forward as a province not only to recover from COVID-19 but to apply key lessons learned in particular in the area of health", noted Kensall.

NNPBC looks forward to continued partnership with the BC Ministry of Health and the BC Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions in moving this important work forward.