

Nelson Fentanyl Task Force, Castlegar Fentanyl Opioid Working Group, and Grand Forks Community Action Team Annual Report June 2021 to May 2022

Our ongoing collaborative and interagency Nelson Fentanyl Task Force (NFTF) work continues in the region this year. We have 330 members in our three community action team groups. Our funding comes from Community Action Initiative (CAI), the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (MMHA), and the Overdose Emergency Response Centre (OERC). We work ongoing to collaborate with REDUN and HOPE peer group members, local social service, healthcare, municipal representatives, and emergency responders. We look at improving overdose response, reducing deaths, provision of education, reducing stigma, and collaborating across agencies. Part of our focus this year has been on Indigenous harm reduction education, and deepening diversity and inclusion for local Indigenous people/peers in healthcare.

Here is some of our NFTF regional work this year:

Release [NFTF Interviews Project: Peer Equity and Healthcare Equity in the West Kootenays](#), a collaborative qualitative research project with Amber Streukens, with ANKORS/REDUN. Ongoing [media and publication regarding the needs identified for peers and people in our region](#) in relation to the overdose crisis as cited by the research. Published on ANKORS resource page. Provides context for the NFTF work.

Present at the BC Centre on Substance Use Annual Conference for 2022 on the local NFTF work in the region. Part of the Community Action Team-CAT Abstracts group, where 4 CAT groups were picked to represent their work in BC. We were honored to represent the region at the BCSSU conference and advocate for the needs of our local populations in the West Kootenays. All work is only possible with ongoing peer collaboration.

Ongoing meetings in the three communities, to create space for the peer voice to be valued, identified, and included as we work to transform healthcare systems, and bring more services into the region. Ongoing sharing of information among service systems including Interior Health, FNHA, COINS, and other groups involved, especially with focus on gaps in the system and sharing new services.

Mention of NFTF Interviews project by Brittney Anderson in her speech in the Legislature in October 2021, and ongoing collaboration with her office.

Ongoing funding streams from province for Overdose Prevention Site, peer outreach services, and ANKORS outreach services in our communities. Funding streams for new Indigenous ANKORS worker in Grand Forks. Grant writing work and reporting for the groups to the MMHA, OERC, and CAI on ANKORS local work and educational events. Consultation and support for local and provincial initiatives when consulted.

Support for, collaboration, and facilitation of local educational events for West Kootenays, as well as audiences throughout BC. All planning works to be collaborative with local workers, and peer groups.

Provision of [Len Pierre Renewal event](#), 100 participants, with peer pods for virtual learning. Focus on decolonizing substance use and self-care for workers. Great feedback on event from throughout BC.

Ongoing collaboration with First Nations Health Authority. Two Courageous Conversations events to reduce stigma and decolonize, one Lateral Kindness event, to reduce lateral violence in our Indigenous communities. Plans for Not Just Naloxone event in February 2023.

Provision of educational events from Overdose Emergency Response Centre, to participate with other CATS, and learn more about the Risk Mitigation document and other issues.

Participation in events to represent our area in BC Patient Safety Quality Council learning events. Erin Thomson represented regarding safe supply work in Nelson, for the Safer Supply session. I represented regarding NFTF work, REDUN is representing regarding their work in the local communities, and peer perspective ongoing.

Provision of Doukhobor historical learning session as related to mental health and substance use with local expert Laura Savinkoff for education for region.

Compassion in Action Community Conference in Grand Forks is set for June 24th, and June 25th to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and bring education there. This is an in-person event, the first big event since 2019. This has been an incredible collaborative effort by all involved. Current guest list number is at 85 people, room for 100. Community support from Doukhobor community and local Indigenous community through the BANAC group. Speakers include Leslie McBain and Zak Matieschyn. This is a collaboration with the BC Centre on Substance Use, so they can develop a report representing local needs. Media articles include these in the Boundary Sentinel [here](#) and the [Nelson Daily here](#).

Pass resolution of support in Nelson City Council, with Mayor Dooley's support, for ANKORS/NFTF work in the region, [with media coverage in Nelson Daily](#) and [Toronto Star](#). Presentations to Castlegar and Grand Forks City Councils on ANKORS and local community work.

Collaborative work with REDUN, HOPE, Freedom Quest, FNHA and others for last year's [Overdose Awareness Day event](#) in Nelson at Cottonwood Falls with about 80 attendees, in Castlegar as part of ongoing Booth educations, and in Grand Forks with a Booth education and community vigil and parade. Media coverage ongoing.

Attend the Community Action Team Convening event in Vancouver with two representatives from the region, Tanis Carson, and Tiffany Teal. Also, Polly Sutherland attended from ANKORS East. Personal address from Minister Malcolmson thanking us for the work we are doing in our communities.

Work to plan the upcoming Getting to Tomorrow federal project event in October 2022 with the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition, alongside others at ANKORS.

Please save the date for October 17th and October 19th, 2022. Virtual event with peer pods.

All work is only possible with the commitment from workers and advocates throughout the region who go the extra mile for clients, support their friends and family, and work to educate, advocate, and transform the way we practice healthcare, social care, enforcement, and emergency care.

I am truly honored to work alongside so many committed people. We manage to keep each other inspired and hopeful in this work, where there is so much loss and struggle. I am committed to equity, inclusion, and diversity in all the regional meetings and events, so that we can have safety and room for everyone to participate. Let's keep moving forward with a vision of well-being and social change, where we can continue the work of Nelson Fentanyl Task Force in the region.