

MEDIA RELEASE

North East LHIN's Work Leads to 'First Class' PSW Graduation in Far North

Access to Care Increased for James Bay Community Members

July 24, 2014 / Moose Factory ON – A feast held in Moose Factory celebrated local students' first-ever graduation from a new health care program which will mean more supportive care for elders in their own community.

"My next step is to work in our community to continue to support our elders with dignity and respect that they all deserve," said Valedictorian Natalie Cheechoo, of Moose Factory.

The North East LHIN is extremely proud to have been a partner in the historic graduation of 10 locally trained personal support workers (PSWs) on July 3 who will provide care to older adults living at home in these far northern communities.



(Left to right) Kayla Cheechoo, Nellie Moses, Allyson Katapaytuk, Dana Sutherland, Lana Shanush, Krystal Wabano, Mary Rickard, Natalie Cheechoo, Lucy Beck. Missing from the photo is graduate Nellie Blackned.

"I have had the pleasure of travelling to the coast communities on many occasions and have heard loudly and clearly that supportive care, delivered in in a culturally appropriate way, is needed for older adults living in this unique, beautiful and remote region," said Danielle Belanger-Corbin, Acting Chair of the NE LHIN.

Working in partnership with the Red Cross, the NE LHIN supported work to develop and implement a culturally appropriate PSW training program. It began last November in Moose Factory, with local students enrolled. Students were able to remain in their home community as they completed their studies. Another group of students started the program in Fort Albany in December, and will graduate in August.

"The success of this program included the support of Northern College, Moose Cree Education Authority, Mushkegowuk Education and Training, and Moose Cree First Nations," said Heather Cranney, First Nations Community Health Development Lead, Canadian Red Cross.

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Graduates are supporting a new Assisted Living Program in Moose Factory through the Moose Cree First Nation. Assisted Living addresses the needs of “high risk” elders who are frail and/or cognitively impaired and require personal support, homemaking, care coordination and security checks on a 24-hour basis.

In his address at the graduation ceremony, Earl Cheechoo, Deputy Chief, said: “The role of a Personal Support Worker, I believe, formalizes the helping mentality that has always existed among our people. Many years ago we relied on each other in times of need and in times of crisis and we survived and grew because we were always there to help and care for each other. Even today when a family in our community is grieving or needs help, as a community, we rally around that family. I see the role of a Personal Support Worker in this light --- as an individual that has a calling to help others.”

Nine women and one man graduated from the PSW training. The program aligns with the North East LHIN’s strategic plan priority to enhance access to health care services that are culturally appropriate.

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