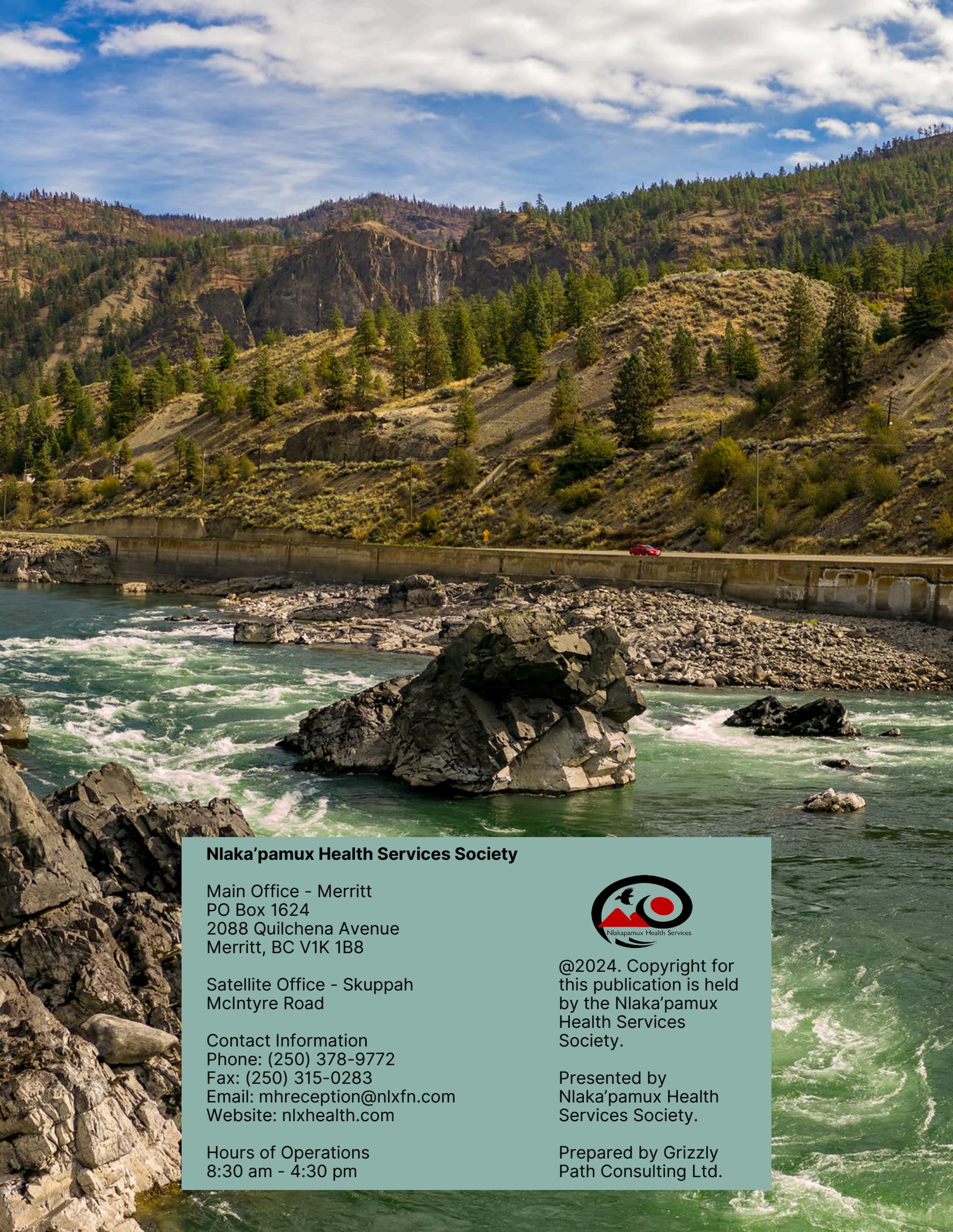


# **Annual REPORT**

**2023 / 2024**



**NLAKA'PAMUX  
HEALTH SERVICES  
SOCIETY**



## **Nlaka'pamux Health Services Society**

Main Office - Merritt  
PO Box 1624  
2088 Quilchena Avenue  
Merritt, BC V1K 1B8

Satellite Office - Skuppah  
McIntyre Road

Contact Information  
Phone: (250) 378-9772  
Fax: (250) 315-0283  
Email: [mhreception@nlxfn.com](mailto:mhreception@nlxfn.com)  
Website: [nlxhealth.com](http://nlxhealth.com)

Hours of Operations  
8:30 am - 4:30 pm



@2024. Copyright for  
this publication is held  
by the Nlaka'pamux  
Health Services  
Society.

Presented by  
Nlaka'pamux Health  
Services Society.

Prepared by Grizzly  
Path Consulting Ltd.



# Table of Contents

**03** About Us

**05** Vision, Mission, Values

**08** Message from the Board Chair

**09** Message from the Governance Representative

**11** Administration & Operations

**17** Land-Based Healing Plan & Traditional Wellness Framework

**19** Emergency Management

**21** Harm Reduction Services

**23** Home Care Nursing

**25** Mental Health

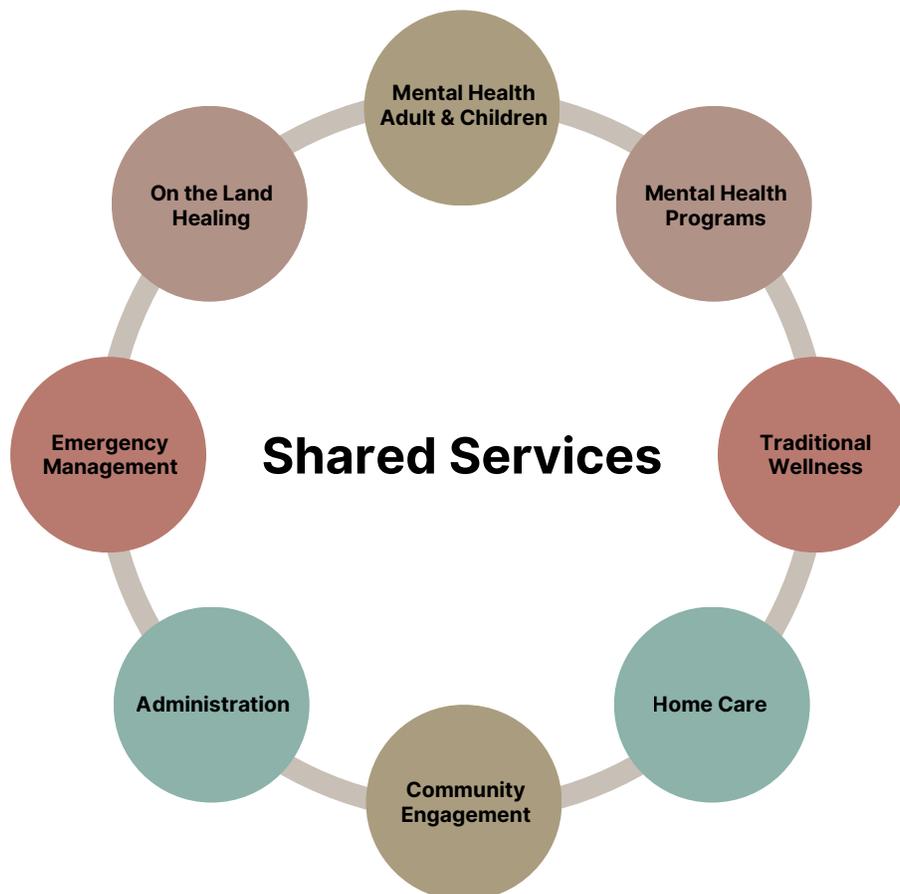
**31** Wellness Outreach

# About Us

At the April 9, 2019, Health Caucus/Nation Assembly, held in Lytton, 7 of the 12 Chiefs passed a motion moving forward with the development of the Nlaka’pamux Health Services Society for the delivery of Nation Shared services. At that meeting, leadership assigned an interim Board with the goal of have a legal society designation. On November 7, 2019, our Nation shared services was officially incorporated as a non-profit Society and named Nlaka’pamux Health Services Society.

Nlaka’pamux Health Services Society (NHSS) works closely with 12 Bands of the Nlaka’pamux Nation in order to enhance wellness opportunities identified by community leadership, frontline health staff, and members. Activities of NHSS include:

- Directly provide certain healthcare services.
- Supplement current services being provided within the Interior Health region.
- Support and enhance programs and services being provided by Nlaka’pamux Bands.



**Approach:** In order to build capacity in our Nation and communities, NHSS uses a shared services approach that was developed by the 7 Nations of the Interior and has been evolving since 2014 when leadership first moved this vision forward.

**Self-Determining:** The Nlaka’pamux Nation is charting our own path and defining shared services in the way that works best for us and our people.

# Communities We Serve

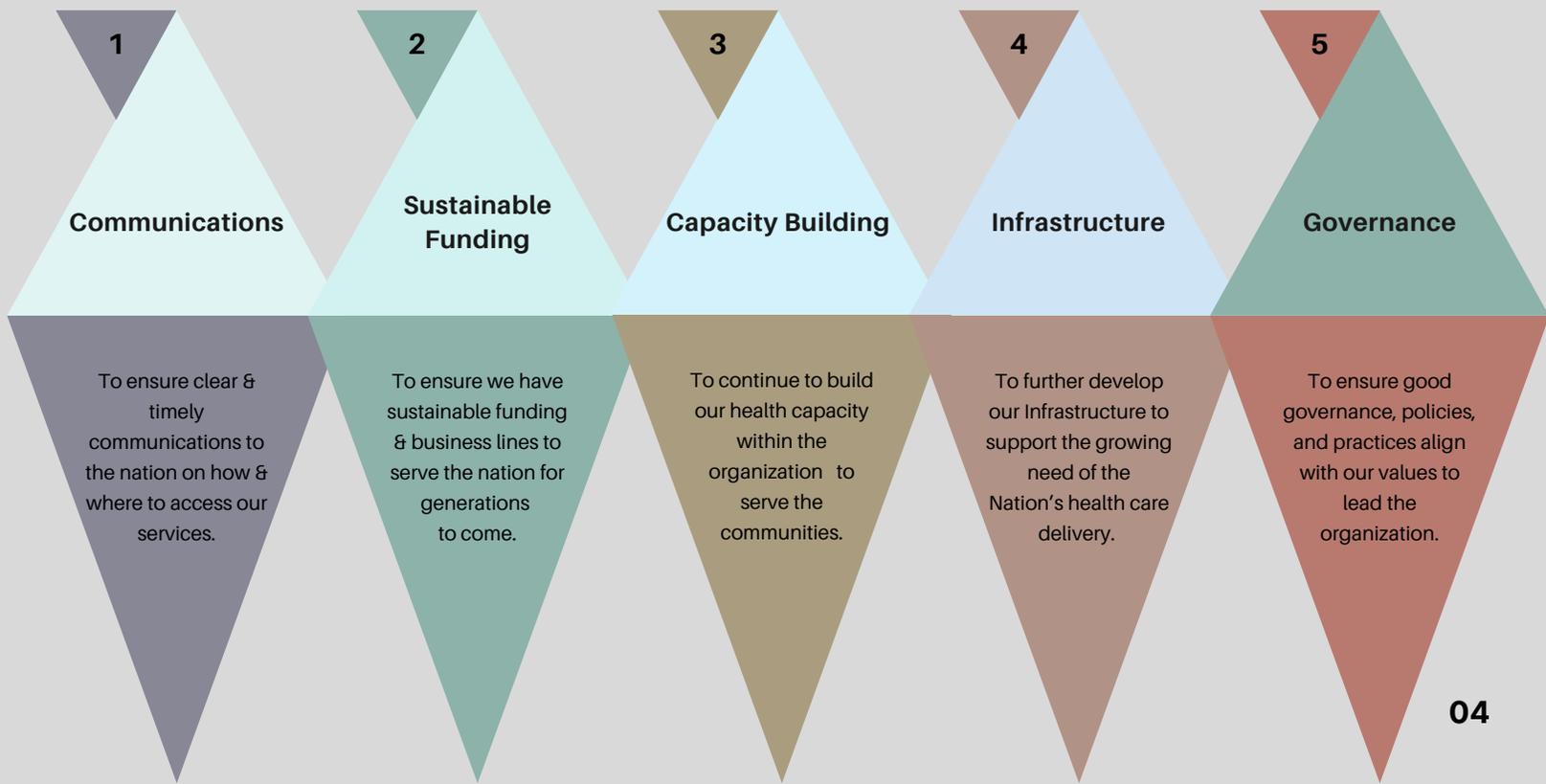
We serve the Nation and its people regardless of where they reside. Currently our capacity allows us to service the following communities.



## Strategic Priorities

Nlaka’pamux Health Services worked with its board of directors, staff, and external stakeholders to plan the organization's future and set out plans and priorities for the next five (5) years.

The priorities presented are long-term and will drive decision-making in the future. It does not tie the organization to these priorities but helps align the corporation's work with the Mission, Vision and Values established by the Board.



In 2023, Nlaka'pamux Health Service Society (NHSS) has developed our strategic plan in consultation with Nlaka'pamux Leadership, in collaboration with the Board of Directors and senior management, to ensure it reflects both our aspirations and the needs of the communities we serve. We've worked closely with health authorities to ensure alignment and effectiveness in our endeavors. We also defined NHSS's vision, mission, and values.

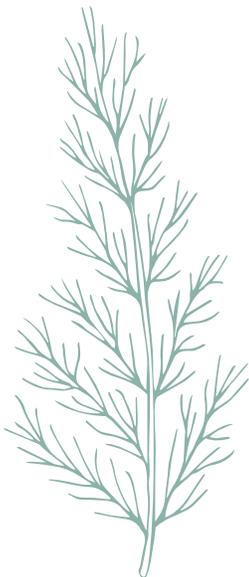
## Our Vision

To be the sustainable and trusted source of health services for the Nlaka'pamux Nation.

## Our Mission

Provide the Nlaka'pamux Nation with dependable and reliable health and wellness through

- Collaboration with partners
- Advocation for the nation
- Community engagement
- Capacity Building
- Primary health and wellness services
- Preventative health and wellness programs



# Our Values

Nlaka'pamux Health Service Society's values support our vision. They are embedded in our core work, how we view ourselves, and how we make values-based decisions. The core set of values are:

**Respect:** We have respect for our Nation, our Language, and our individual differences.

**Trust:** We maintain trust with those using our services through honesty and privacy.

**Transparency:** We believe in open and honest communication.

**Integrity:** We believe in doing the right thing, even when others are not looking.

**Holistic:** We put care into our work and use both traditional and Western approaches to health and wellness.

**Diversity:** The principles of equity, diversity and inclusion are integrated into our approach.



# Our Leadership Team

For fiscal year 2023-2024, NHSS was governed by 7 Directors and representatives and continues to welcome other Bands to select their own Board appointees.



**Debbie Abbott**

Board Chair  
Lytton First Nation



**Patricia Munro**

Vice-Chair  
Siska Band



**Jordan Spinks**

Treasurer  
Kanaka Bar Band



**Mary Angus**

Secretary  
Shackan Band



**Sherry McIntyre**

Board of Director  
Technical Representative



**Christine Walkem**

Board of Director  
Cook's Ferry Band



**William Sandy**

Board of Director  
Lower Nicola Band



**Ko'waintco Michel**

Governance  
Representative

**Board of Directors Meetings were held on the following dates:**

**April 4, 2023, April 19, 2023, October 11, 2023,  
November 21, 2023, January 17, 2024.**

**Nlaka'pamux Health Caucus dates:**

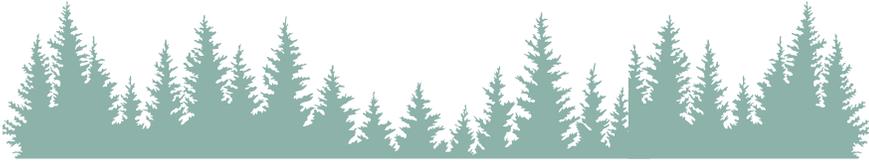
**May 9, 2023  
October 26, 2023**

**Interior Health Caucus dates:**

**June 6-8, 2023  
November 14-16, 2023**

**NHSS Annual General Meeting:  
February 7, 2024**

# Message from the Board Chair



**Debbie Abbott**  
Board Chair

Hello Community Members and Stakeholders,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the Annual Report for the Nlaka'pamux Health Services Society (NHSS) Board of Directors for the year 2023-2024. This year has been one of notable achievements and important milestones, reflecting our collective efforts and commitment to excellence in enhancing shared services across our Nation.

The year 2024 has been a year of expansion and advocacy for additional resources for our Nation. Despite facing numerous challenges, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to providing vital services to our 12 Nlaka'pamux Communities and addressing the gaps within our Nation's healthcare needs.

One significant focus has been working alongside our leadership to restore services in the Canyon area, following the loss of these services during the 2021 Lytton wildfire. While we have seen some services return from our partners at Interior Health, which has alleviated some pressure on NHSS operations, the journey of recovery continues.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our NHSS Board of Directors, Health Directors, and Chiefs for their unwavering guidance and leadership. I also want to acknowledge the hard work, dedication, and resilience of all our NHSS employees whose contributions are critical to our success.

As we look ahead to 2025, we remain optimistic and motivated. Together with our 12 Nlaka'pamux Communities, we will continue to build on our successes and move forward toward greater achievements, driven by innovation and collaboration.

Thank you for your ongoing support and trust in the Nlaka'pamux Health Services Society. We look forward to continuing to serve our Nation.



# Message from the Governance Representative

These past fiscal few years the Nlaka'pamux Health Service Society (NHSS) experienced Climate Change impacts to due fires, floods and road closures. The Climate Change impacts has delayed some health services and staff work schedules for our communities. The NHSS has had to find creative ways to provide continued services during these Climate Change impacts.

This is NHSS's 4th Annual General Meeting, which is commendable. The NHSS is the first of the seven Interior Nations to form a Health Service Society. The NHSS has Board members appointed from each of the 12 Nlaka'pamux (NLX) communities. The Board members oversee the operations by given direction to the Executive Director to ensure Human Resource and Finance policies, and other policies are in place to manage the Nation Shared Services for the 12 NLX communities.

The body that addresses the Political and Governance matters within our Nlaka'pamux Nation for our health matters is the NLX Health Caucus. The NLX Health Caucus is the 12 NLX Chiefs, who meet twice year to address political health governance matters and ensure health resources needed for NHSS, are advocated with the Federal and Provincial governments.

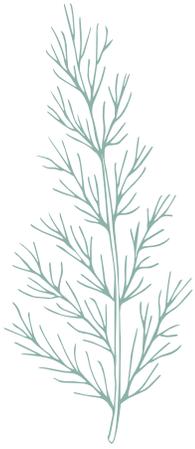
As the NLX Health Governance Rep, I take direction from the NLX Chiefs and Technical Representative and bring the health concern matters to the proper tables to be addressed. The two tables that receive Federal and Provincial Funds for First Nation Health Services, that I bring health concerns from Chiefs are:

- Interior Region Nation Executive (IRNE), which addresses Federal Funds
- Partnership Accord Leadership Table (PALT), which addresses Provincial Funds.



**Kowaintco Michel**  
Governance  
Representative





The IRNE table is made up of seven Interior Nation representatives appointed/elected by Chiefs of their Nation, and First Nation Health Authority (FNHA) Interior Senior Staff. The Partnership Accord Leadership Table (PALT) is made up of the seven Nation Reps and Senior Interior Health (IH) representatives. The NLX Chiefs also appoint a Technical Representative along with me to attend these meetings as a technical advisor on NLX Nation. Though our NLX Nation is made up of 15 communities, we have three communities that receive health services from the Fraser Region. The 12 NLX Communities receive health services from Interior Region Health

This past fiscal year the main health matter addressed, through Chiefs direction was to support a Nlaka'pamux Primary Care Initiative (NLX PCI), which is mainly to get more Doctor and Nurse Practitioner services. The Chiefs directed a Technical Committee made up of NLX Health Directors and Health Leads to provide guidance and direction for the NLX PCI.

As NLX Health Governance Representative, the other Health issues of concern addressed by direction of the Chiefs, and Health Technical Advisor is: Toxic Drugs, Racism, Cultural Safety, Mental Health, Primary Care, Elder Care, Early discharge from Hospital matters – to name a few. I address Health concerns at the IRNE and PALT tables.

Another role I hold is First Nations Health Council (FNHC) – I am 1 of 3 elected by the Interior Chiefs for the FNHC Interior Region. Wayne Christian (aka Wenecwtsin) and Allan Louis are the other 2 FNHC Interior Region Elected Reps. There is total of 15 FNHC elected reps, with 3 elected by each of the 5 regions in BC. The FNHC meet and bring health issues concerns to the Federal and Provincial Ministers.

# Administration & Operations



## Message from the Executive Director

As we reflect on another year of dedicated service to our 12 Nlaka’pamux communities, I am both proud of the progress we have made and grateful for the unwavering support of our staff, health directors, chiefs, volunteers, and partners. 2024 has been a year of growth, learning, and resilience as we have navigated challenges and celebrated accomplishments that have improved the health and well-being of our Nation.

This year, we continued to expand our programs and reach, delivering essential health services, health promotion and resources to our membership, we have made significant strides in promoting healthier lifestyles and empowering individuals to take control of their health.

Our work would not be possible without the dedication and passion of our team. Together, we have built stronger partnerships with other organizations and expanded our community outreach efforts. As we move forward, we remain committed to advancing our vision of a healthier, more equitable future for all our communities that receive services.

However, we also acknowledge the challenges we faced this year—whether it was navigating fluctuating funding or having limited services return to the canyon that have been impacted from the Lytton wildfire.



**Tamara George**  
Executive Director



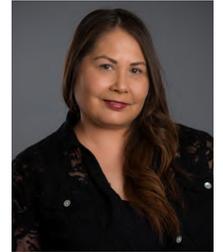
**Andrea Elliott**  
Project Manager



**Bernadette Collins**  
Community Engagement  
Coordinator



**Wendi Harder**  
Finance/Admin Assistant



**Paula Clarke**  
Receptionist

Due to the widespread demographic of the Nlaka’pamux Nation, you can imagine, operating in such a large area creates about a 60% to 40% split between service delivery and travel, which is always an on-going challenge for our Society. These obstacles have only strengthened our determination to continue providing high-quality services and exploring new ways to overcome barriers to care.

Looking ahead, we are excited to embark on a new initiative in partnership with our 12 NLX Communities, First Nation Health Authority and Ministry of Health to develop a Nlaka’pamux Primary Care Centre aimed at expanding our impact and addressing health needs in our community. Our goal is to continue improving the lives of those we serve, building sustainable solutions, and fostering partnerships that amplify our collective impact.

I want to take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation to all who have been part of our journey this year. We are deeply grateful for your trust and commitment to provide health services to our communities.



## Purpose of Nation Shared Services

To improve Health Services for Nlaka'pamux members and to supplement and enhance current community programs and services served with the Interior Health Authority.

## Program Highlights and Achievements

**Homecare Department:** Our Homecare team has made significant strides in supporting elders to age in place and maintain their connection to their communities. Throughout the year, we have successfully continued to provide care for our elders within the comfort of their own homes. This has been made possible by maintaining a stable and dedicated team consisting of a registered nurse and three Health Care Assistants (HCAs). These team members have provided essential health services and companionship, ensuring that our elders are well-cared for and supported in their aging process.

**Sustained Care:** The team remained intact for the entire year, ensuring continuity of care.

- **Elder Support:** Delivered health services to elders within their homes, ensuring safety and wellbeing.
- **Community Integration:** Worked closely with families and communities to support elders in aging within familiar surroundings.

## Land-Based Healing & Traditional Wellness Framework

This year, we took a significant step toward developing and implementing a Land-Based Healing & Traditional Wellness Framework, designed to offer our community members access to culturally appropriate wellness programs. Through 19 community engagement sessions, with 330 members participating, we gathered invaluable input that led to the creation of two separate but complementary frameworks. These draft frameworks are now available for use by the Nation, promoting the integration of traditional knowledge and land-based healing practices with contemporary wellness strategies.

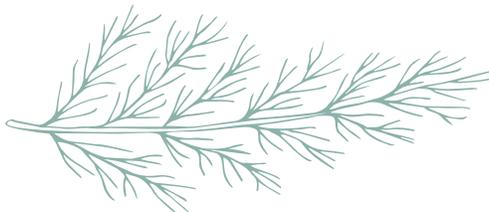
- **Framework Development:** Successfully developed two key wellness frameworks based on community feedback.
- **Cultural Integration:** Integrated traditional healing practices with modern wellness initiatives, offering holistic approaches to health.

## Partnerships and Collaborations

We continued to strengthen our relationships with local and regional agencies to better serve our community's needs. These partnerships are essential in addressing both immediate and long-term challenges faced by our people. We worked closely with Interior Health, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), the Ministry of Health, and various delegated agencies to ensure the health and wellbeing of our members.

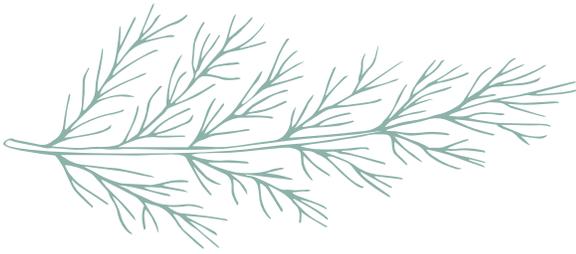
- **Collaborative Initiatives:** Maintained strong partnerships with key agencies to enhance service delivery.

**Holistic Support:** Leveraged the expertise and resources of our partners to address a wide range of community needs, from health care to mental wellness.



**Emergency Management** In response to the increasing frequency of natural disasters, we prioritized building capacity within our Nation to better prepare and respond to emergencies. This year, we successfully conducted emergency management training, aimed at enhancing the skills of our staff and volunteers, ensuring that additional resources are available to respond swiftly and effectively in times of crisis.

- **Training Success:** Delivered emergency management training to Nation members, building local capacity.
- **Increased Readiness:** Ensured that more individuals within the Nation are equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond to natural disasters.
- **Community Preparedness:** Strengthened our emergency response system and enhanced overall community preparedness.



**Mental Health Department** Our Mental Health Department focused on building internal capacity to better serve the mental health needs of our community. This year, we supported the professional development of our staff, with several members completing their master's degree programs. This effort increased the expertise of our team and added a new trained Art Therapist to our staff, expanding the therapeutic services available to our community. Additionally, we successfully graduated our third cohort of the Indigenous First Responders in Mental Health (IFOT) program, further strengthening our team and the services we offer.

- **Staff Training:** Provided in-house staff with opportunities to pursue their master's degrees, increasing capacity within the department.
- **New Art Therapist:** Hired a trained Art Therapist, enhancing the range of mental health services offered to the community.
- **IFOT Graduation:** Graduated the third cohort of IFOT, increasing the number of trained mental health responders within the Nation.
- **Enhanced Support:** Provided expanded mental health services and support to community members, including art therapy and specialized care.



## Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and express my heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to the success of Nlaka'pamux Health Service Society (NHSS) this past year.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to our 12 Nlaka'pamux Communities. Your unwavering support and commitment to health and wellness have been the foundation upon which our initiatives have been built. Working together as a collective strengthens our ability to respond to the diverse needs of our people.

I would also like to recognize and thank the NHSS Board of Directors, NHSS Staff, and Leadership Team for their dedication, hard work, and tireless efforts in advancing the mission of our society. The growth we have experienced this year is a testament to your continued leadership and collaboration.

A special thank you goes to Ko'waintco Michel, our NLX Governance Representative, and Sherry McIntyre, our Technical Representative, for their invaluable contributions at the various health tables—both political and operational. Your representation of the NLX Nation has been pivotal in ensuring our voices are heard, and your efforts in maintaining clear communication with our Health Directors and Leadership have been invaluable to the success of our initiatives.

I would also like to extend my sincerest appreciation to all Managers and staff for their unwavering contributions to the growth and development of NHSS. This past year has been one of tremendous growth, and your hard work and dedication have played an essential role in that journey.

Looking towards the future, I believe it is crucial that we continue to prioritize our future generations when planning programs and services. At NHSS, we are always striving to expand our services by identifying health gaps and planning culturally appropriate programs that truly meet the needs of our communities. Our work is never finished, and I am excited to continue this journey of growth and opportunity alongside all of you.

Finally, I want to express that it has been an absolute blessing to serve my own Nation. I am deeply honoured to work with such a dedicated team and community, and I look forward to another year of opportunities, growth, and success at Nlaka'pamux Health Services Society.

Thank you all for your continued support, and I look forward to what we will accomplish together in the coming year.

K<sup>w</sup>uk<sup>w</sup>scemx<sup>w</sup> (Thank-you)  
Tamara George  
Executive Director



# Community Engagements & Meetings

- First Nations Health Authority Gatherings**
- First Nations Mental Health & Wellness Summit - April 4-6, 2023
  - BC Elders Gathering - August 14-17, 2023
  - Healing our Spirit Worldwide - September 11-15, 2023

- Nation Events & Meetings**
- Weekly Nation Meetings
  - Decompression Event - February 2-3, 2024
  - Beyond Borders - February 26, 2024

- Health Lead Meetings**
- July 25, 2023
  - September 21, 2023

- IRTT/PATT Meetings**
- April 12-13, 2023
  - May 8, 2023
  - January 10-11, 2024

- IRNE/PALT Meetings**
- May 24-25, 2023
  - November 22, 2023
  - January 30, 2024

- IH LOU Meeting**
- November 17, 2023

- Health Caucus**
- NLX Health Caucus - May 9, 2023
  - Interior Region Health Caucus - June 6-8, 2023
  - NLX Health Caucus - October 26, 2023
  - Interior Region Health Caucus - November 14-16, 2023

- Strategic Planning**
- Staff/Managers Meetings
  - Managers - September 15-17, 2023
  - Managers Strategic Planning - September 7-8, 2023
  - Staff - October 16-18, 2023
  - Health Leads - January 7-9, 2024

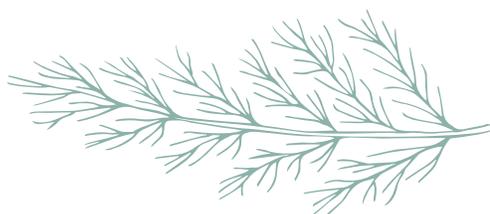
- First Nations Primary Care Initiative**
- All Nations Healing House Tour - January 15, 2024
  - Service Planning - January 29, 2024
  - Health Directors - March 4, 2024

- Annual General Meeting**
- February 7, 2024

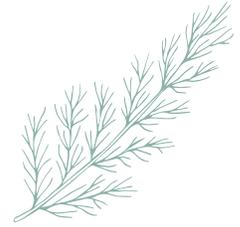
- Interior Health**
- Aboriginal Partnership - February 28-29, 2024
  - Interviews - Cultural Safety & Humility Team Manager - March 25, 26 & 28, 2024
  - IH Rebuild Meetings - April/May 2023
  - Lytton Primary Care Clinic Opening - September 27, 2023
  - RIH Aboriginal Discharge Toolkit - September 26, 2023
  - Interviews - Indigenous Patient Navigator - November 8 & 17, 2023
  - IPN Orientation Package Review - November 24, 2023

- PCN/CSC/ISC**
- Ashcroft LHPT May 10, 2023
  - Lillooet LHPT May 17, 2023
  - Informational Engagement Session on Primary Care Pharmacist Transition - September 19, 2023
  - Interdivisional Strategic Council - March 6/7, 2024
  - Interior Rural MoH Attachments Data Presentation
  - Interior Rural Collaborative Services Committee - November 20, 2023
  - Merritt LHPT - November 23, 2023
  - Discuss Lytton and Ashcroft LHPT - March 6, 2024

- Training**
- Psychosocial Resilience in Disasters Training



# Indigenous Treatment and Land-Based Healing



Enhance and expand culturally-based, culturally-safe and trauma-informed healing and treatment care for Indigenous people living on and off reserve. Projects offer access on both a community level and Nation level with focus on key populations and groups, in particular youth and families which will increase the number of cultural family-based and group-based treatment and healing activities available, including cultural access as aftercare support for those coming out of treatment.

To provide and promote mental health and wellness activities for the nation, as well as continue to share information via social media. These activities will create engagement and will focus on continued support, on land treatments and cultural activities.

While hosting many in-community events to bring community members, as well as the NHSS staff members, together for various gatherings, celebrations, meetings, and learning opportunities though out the year.

The project opened opportunities to hold events which created a sense of belonging and togetherness. Opportunity to connect with each other and their culture. Nation and community level supports and programs provide an opportunity to for inclusion in a healthy lifestyle and cultural connection without stigma. Especially for those who are struggling or supporting individuals who presently at risk or recovering from substance misuse, and impacts of trauma.

Often times those who are healing or struggling can isolate themselves. The programs and service provide an alternative and health lifestyle connections to self and community, but more importantly healing through traditional activities and connection to the land. The activities and programs vary and are at times unique for those who are focused on.

- In-home visits in Oregon Jack Creek
- Nation Elders Bingo
- Youth Bingo-In person and on line
- Family Support with Funeral Items in Nicola Valley
- Pink Shirt Day
- Mental Wellness Supports for Christmas Holidays
- Youth Collaboration Luncheon
- Participation in the Nicola Valley Pow Wow
- Aboriginal Grad-Merritt
- Water Slides-Bridal Falls
- Traditional Wellness Presentation
- Pumpkin Patch Day in Ashcroft (Picking, Hay Rides, Photo Booth)

The outdoor events and gathering provided an opportunity for people to convene and enjoy some time together.

Some events we were able to provide:

- Food and fruit snacks, veggie bags, soups, and Bannock
- Fabric and supplies to make ribbon skirts
- Essential Oil kits for the year ahead
- Cedar Boiling – to cleanse the air
- Encourage participation in circle and round dance
- Provide bus transportation to events and gatherings on the land
- Drum making & Rattle Making
- Harvest planning
- Traditional Wellness Items and wellness bags
- Anxiety rings
- Beading supplies for Beading Sessions
- Tote bags

**Land-based healing activities are effective, traditional methods for mental health and wellness healing**



# Land-Based Healing Plan & Traditional Wellness Framework

The purpose of the development of a Traditional Wellness Framework is to guide the Nlaka'pamux Health Services in carrying out the vision of the Nlaka'pamux Peoples for Traditional Wellness. The Framework includes a Nation Vision, Nation Guidelines, Wellness Practices, Priorities, Honorarium Guidelines, and Traditional and Cultural Supports Guidelines. Through the community engagements, we looked to understand what Traditional Wellness means to individuals and what the hopes are for Traditional Wellness in the Nation to ensure a holistic approach to health service delivery.

The purpose of the Land-Based Healing Plan is to identify key priority areas that the Nation wants to implement specific to land-based activities, practices, and teachings to support individual healing that is supported by Nlaka'pamux beliefs and practices versus Western Peoples and use it as a guide for Nation-Based efforts.

The development of these plans is dependent on the engagement with Nlaka'pamux individuals and communities. We want to ensure we are hearing from as many people as possible.

The Traditional Wellness Framework and Land-Based Healing Plan will be available to the Nlaka'pamux Health Services Society, all Nlaka'pamux Communities and their services providers to support and guide programs and services.



## Community Engagement Sessions

- Scw'exmx Elders Group
- Nicola Valley Session
- Zoom Session
- Canyon Area Session
- Men's Group Session
- Service Providers Sessions in Lytton and Merritt Areas
- In community sessions:
  - Ashcroft Indian Band,
  - Coldwater Indian Band, Cook's Ferry Indian Band, Kanaka Bar Indian Band, Lower Nicola Indian Band, Lytton First Nation, Nicomen Indian Band, Nooaitch Indian Band, Oregon Jack Creek Indian Band, Shackan Indian Band, Siska Indian Band & Skuppah Indian Band.

# 330

**Community Members had input into these documents**



**Scw'exmx Elders Group**  
**June 20, 2023 at Elks Hall**  
**40 Elders in attendance**

**Kanaka Bar Indian Band**  
**February 8, 2024**  
**12 in attendance**

**Coldwater Indian Band**  
**March 12, 2024**  
**25 in attendance**

**Nicola Valley Area**  
**June 26, 2023 at Comfort Inn**  
**15 in attendance**

**Cook's Ferry Indian Band**  
**February 13, 2024**  
**8 in attendance**

**Shackan Indian Band**  
**March 13, 2024**  
**20 in attendance**

**Zoom Session**  
**July 10, 2023**  
**10 in attendance**

**Oregon Jack Creek Indian Band**  
**February 27, 2024**  
**9 in attendance**

**Nooaitch Indian Band**  
**March 14, 2024**  
**17 in attendance**

**Canyon Area**  
**July 20, 2023**  
**10 in attendance**

**Ashcroft Indian Band**  
**February 27, 2024**  
**9 in attendance**

**Lytton First Nation**  
**April 9, 2024**  
**30 in attendance**

**Siska Indian Band**  
**January 24, 2024**  
**7 in attendance**

**Men's Group**  
**March 10, 2024**  
**30 in attendance**

**Nicomien Indian Band**  
**April 10, 2024**  
**18 in attendance**

**Skuppah Indian Band**  
**February 6, 2024**  
**12 in attendance**

**Lower Nicola Indian Band**  
**March 11, 2024**  
**11 in attendance**

**Service Providers - Lytton Area**  
**April 9, 2024**  
**24 in attendance**

**Service Providers - Merritt Area**  
**April 10, 2024**  
**23 in attendance**

**Total: 330 in attendance**



# Emergency Management



**Kevin Sampson**  
Emergency Management  
Coordinator

Our Nlaka’pamux Nation communities continue to deal with multiple emergencies as situations are compounded by climate change. Extreme temperatures once again impacted the entire nation. Communities were hard hit by the wildfires of Stein Mountain, Ponderosa, and Kookapi Creek fires in 2023. Specific emergencies affecting the nation communities will require attention in the future, including food security, transport incidents, and the drug crisis.

**Strengthening Communities:** The Emergency Program Coordinator continues to support communities in responding to these new realities. In-community engagement and relationship building are the foundation of the work of strengthening the preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities of the Nlaka’pamux Nation. The Emergency Program Manager helps communities improve coordination and collaboration in emergency management in numerous ways including holding Nation Emergency Planning Sessions, organizing supports for enhanced communications in emergencies, sharing resources and personnel, and supporting knowledge sharing both informally and through formal reports and commitment letters. Coordinating with neighboring St’at’imc Nation has been a focus with plans to enhance relationships in the Nicola Valley communities, as well as T’kemlups te Secwepemc and Okanagan Nation Alliance.

**Building Capacity:** The Emergency Program Manager has spearheaded regional funding and training opportunities for communities on important topics including psychosocial resilience in disasters, essentials of setting up an emergency operations centre, community evacuations, extreme temperature risk mapping and assessments, emergency operations center equipment and training, and developing community-to-community networks and supports. A focus on the sharing of resources and personnel in emergency will be a priority moving forward into the future.

**Strengthening Communities**

**Building Capacity**

**Responding to Need**

**Looking to the Future**

Responding to Need: NHSS is committed to being responsive to community needs as they arise. While the Emergency Program Manager was originally a liaison focused on building capacity in community, NHSS recognized the impact of the Lytton area fires and responded by seconding the EPM to Lytton First Nations during fire season to serve as their Director of Emergency Operations Center, employing his emergency response capacity and knowledge to navigate through their emergencies.

Looking to the Future: NHSS emergency program is looking to establish a Nlaka'pamux Nation-wide coordinated alert system, exploring opportunities to increase funding and capacity of the emergency programs at the Nation level and at the community level, and continuing to strengthen relationships in the region to enhance community response to emergencies. Capacity building will again be a primary focus to achieve success in the emergency management programs in the Nlaka'pamux nation.



# Harm Reduction Services

Tammy Pierre has been with NHSS throughout the 2023-2024 fiscal year, working as a Street Angel (harm reduction, outreach support). Tammy has settled into this role with an active and growing caseload while also checking in on at-risk nation members as needed. Tammy distributes harm reduction supplies, provides wellness checks, food support, participates in community events to provide education on harm reduction, and dedicates time to advocating for and mentoring youth in the community.

Tammy's role has evolved over the fiscal year. Initially, she traveled extensively across the Nlaka'pamux and surrounding Territories, connecting with evacuated clients. Now, Tammy's outreach program has shifted towards an increasing number of home wellness checks, conducted weekly or more frequently as needed. This change is due to the lack of a local and central office location following the 2021 Lytton fire and the inability to walk the streets to connect with clients as before. During these home checks, Tammy distributes harm reduction supplies and other essential items.

Tammy has excelled in building trusting relationships with each client in a non-judgmental and accepting manner

Through these relationships, Tammy helps clients reconnect with family, friends, and Nlaka'pamux culture. Tammy supports clients in accessing cultural programming within NHSS and other community agency events, including berry picking, water ceremonies, Elders' support, medicine picking and making, and community gatherings (e.g., Lytton First Nations IRRS Elders' "Rekindling Our Childhood"). Tammy also organizes meals, offering hot lunches several times throughout the year, including Thanksgiving, Christmas, and International Overdose Awareness Day.

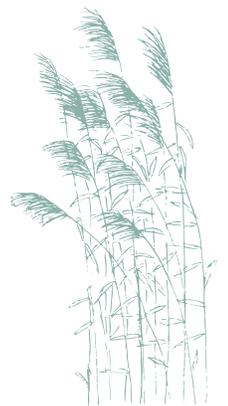
Tammy has created a culturally safe and welcoming environment for her clients at the NHSS office. However, she also offers rides to the office as her clients are spread out across the canyon communities. This has led to increased travel time due to construction from the 2021 fires and floods, and missed opportunities to support community members who would have "dropped in" if a centrally located office were available. Despite these challenges, Tammy continues to support the Nation members. Tammy's connection to members and her ability to engage with external resources when necessary have been invaluable to the program.

## Street Angel (Harm Reduction)

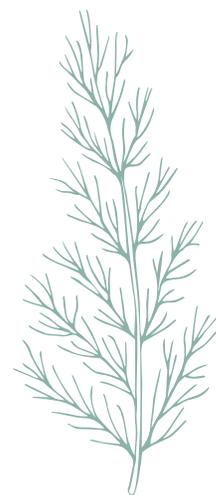
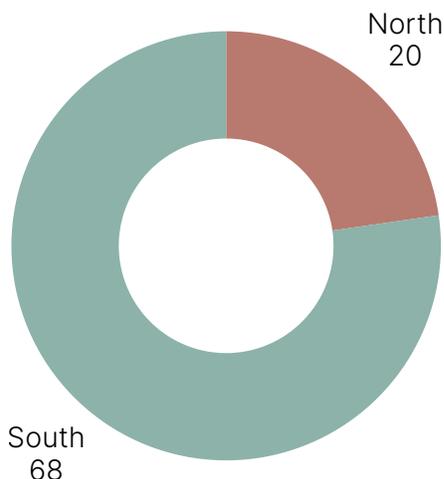
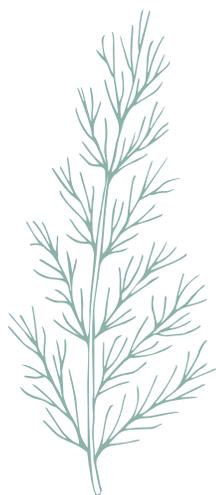
Direct Client Hours	1248.5 hours
Point of Contact Hours	177 hours
Total Wellness Check-ins	1881
Total Clients	35
Travel Hours	155 hours

## Client Supports

Harm Reduction Supplies	35%
Support for Entering Treatment	4.5%
Community Resources/Referrals	6.5%



## Wellness Checks

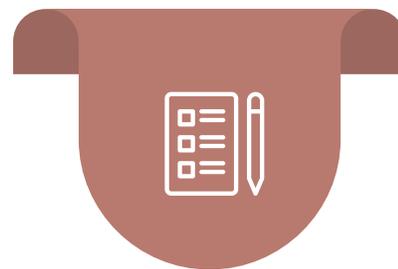


\*North = Coldwater, Lower Nicola, Nooaitch, Shackan, Ashcroft, Oregon Jack Creek  
South = Cook's Ferry, Nicomen, Lytton, Skuppah, Siska, Kanaka Bar



### CHALLENGES

- Clients have become more dependent on relief centers established after the Lytton fire. With these centers closing after three years, there is a concern about clients' ability to budget, support their substance use, and ensure they have enough food throughout the month
- The lack of services in the Canyon area; dentist, access to addiction services such as AA/NA, support groups
- Clients using substances alone, increasing the risk of death from drug poisoning



### SUCCESSSES

- Consistent management and mentoring
- Maintaining connection with clients and other communities' members and providing ongoing support and referrals throughout the year
- Seeing clients enjoy the influx of in-person events
- Supporting clients returning to their home territory after being evacuated for 2 to 3 years due to the 2021 fire and floods

# Home Care Nursing

The home care nursing team has prioritized updating our client information this year to reflect their Health demands and needs. This requires new assessments for each client that will determine changes needed to our services provided, involving an advanced review of care. Each care plan takes approximately 2 hours per client.



**Angie Pigeon**  
Home Care Coordinator  
Contractor



**Emily Weston**  
Licensed Practical Nurse  
(LPN) Team Lead



**Christeena Clark**  
Health Care Assistant



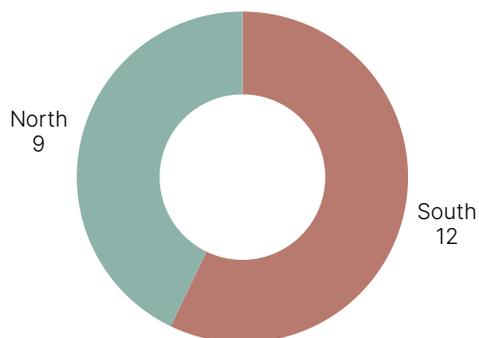
**Chandler Raymond**  
Health Care Assistant



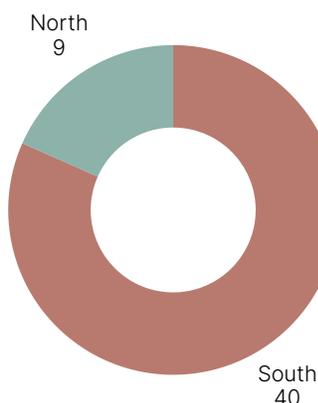
**Lana Clydesdale**  
Health Care Assistant

**Care Plans Completed: 14**  
**Charting Time: 450 hours**

**The Nursing Team held 21 clients  
for the 2023-2024 year**



**Travel Time Per Month (hours)**  
**Annual Travel Time = 550 Hours**



\*North = Coldwater, Lower Nicola, Nooaitch, Shackan, Ashcroft, Oregon Jack Creek  
South = Cook's Ferry, Nicomen, Lytton, Skuppah, Siska, Kanaka Bar

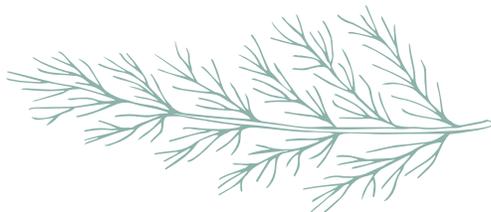
## Needs Based Services for Each Community

- Complex Health Needs
- Vital Signs/Wellness Checks
- Medication Reconciliation
- Diabetes Patient Education
- Foot Care Services
- Medication Delivery
- Palliative Care
- Shower Assistance
- Injections x 4



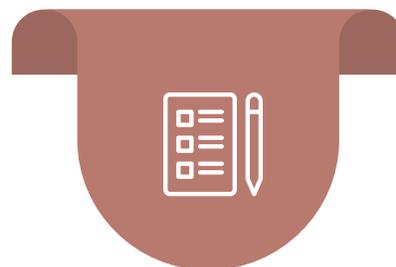
Home Care 2023-2024	Direct Client Hours	Inquiries to Service	Discharges
North	336	3	3
South	360	7	1

\*North = Coldwater, Lower Nicola, Nooaitch, Shackan, Ashcroft, Oregon Jack Creek  
 South = Cook's Ferry, Nicomen, Lytton, Skuppah, Siska, Kanaka Bar



## CHALLENGES

- Nicomen Bridge Repair/Road Closures leading to a delay & impact of service from care staff.
- Environmental Hazards including some animal & housing hazards for our staff has been identified and challenging. We now complete home safety assessment to protect our clients & staff.
- Communication/Turnover of Nursing Staff. Ensuring proper contact information for our clients & phone interruptions are an ongoing challenge with our staff.



## SUCCESSSES

- Pharmacy Delivery Service Utilized - Dynocare. Transfer of service to Lillooet pharmacy to ensure prompt delivery of medications without demographic barriers.
- Complex Wound Change/Collaboration of Service. Healthy collaboration with the Lytton Primary Clinic was a notable success in this initiative.
- Contracted Registered Nurse. Our contracted RN was onboarded in January 2024 to expediate our Care Plans for each client, anticipated completion is April 2024.



# Mental Health

The mental health department has had a year of changes. We began the fiscal year with four programs under the umbrella: Adult Mental Health, Child and Youth Mental Health, Clinical Art Therapy and Harm Reduction/Mental Health Outreach. There was some internal re-organizing of department structures and in July 2023 the Harm Reduction/Mental Health Outreach positions were transferred to the Wellness department which was broadened to include outreach services. This left the mental health department solely with mental health counsellors, which streamlined the department and its focus.



**Stacey Hebner**  
Mental Health Manager



**Wanda Dexel**  
Adult Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor



**Melissa Dexel**  
Child & Youth Counsellor



**Trish Rainville**  
Child & Youth Counsellor



**Tammi Froese**  
Child & Youth Counsellor



**Diana Lepine-Thomas**  
Art Therapist

The below tables give a synopsis of client numbers for the 2023-2024 fiscal year:

Mental Health Clients 2023-2024	# of Clients	Direct Client Contact Hours	Points of Contact Hours	Travel Hours
Clients - Aged 19+	25	299	122	108
Clients - Ages 4-18	56	1054	671	297

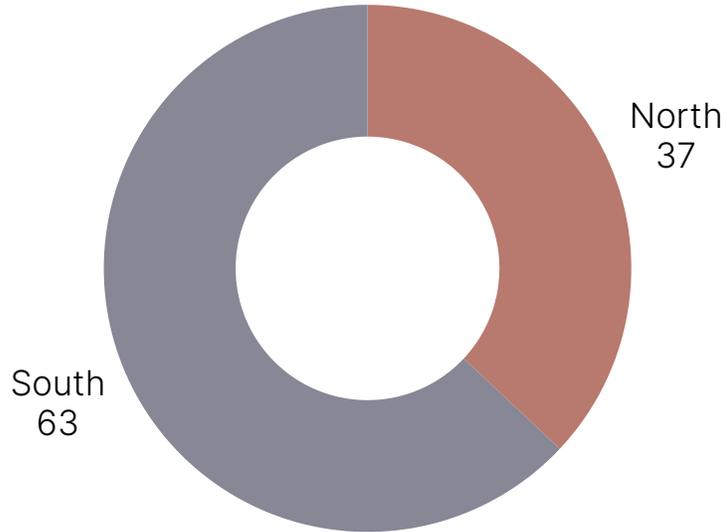
## Travel and Service Delivery

Counselling support delivery remains a mix of in-person and virtual/tele-counselling. As we provide client centered services, the clients decide on their preferred method of service delivery. We have found that many adult clients prefer a hybrid model, of both in person and virtual counselling sessions. Children and youth are mainly seen in person, with a few preferring virtual counselling. Art Therapy is primarily in person for all age ranges.

Travel remains a challenge due to road construction, wait times and weather events. This means caseloads must be adjusted to accommodate the lengthy travel. Once in community there are sometimes challenges around space. Many adult clients are not comfortable receiving counselling in their health centers. Counselling children and youth in school settings is typically positive as the schools are welcoming. Appropriate counselling space for confidentiality and client safety can be a challenge due to schools being busy.

Below are pie charts showing the distribution of clients per community for adult clients and child/youth clients.

### Percentage of Clients Aged 19+ per Community



### Percentage of Clients Aged 4-18 per Community



\*North = Coldwater, Lower Nicola, Nooaitch, Shackan, Ashcroft, Oregon Jack Creek  
South = Cook's Ferry, Nicomen, Lytton, Skuppah, Siska, Kanaka Bar

## High Needs

The mental health team has a staff with strong training and resources to do their job effectively. We do, however, receive referrals that are out of our scope. A counsellor, ethically, cannot work outside of their level of competency. This is a challenge when we receive referrals with high psychological needs, or concurrent addiction issues. There are limited resources in communities for psychological support. This is compounded further for children and youth.

<b>Indicators of trauma</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>Grief and loss</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Suicidal ideation</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Self-harm</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Indicators of anxiety</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>Indicators of depression</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>Addiction</b>	<b>19.5%*</b>
<b>Disordered eating</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Gender/sexual identity supports needed</b>	<b>10%**</b>
<b>Anger/violence/domestic violence</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>General behavioral concerns/risky behavior</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Social isolation</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Family issues (substance misuse, separation/divorce, parental conflict, etc.)</b>	<b>48%***</b>

\*higher rate in adult mental health

\*\*only youth clients

\*\*\*child and youth clients

## Waitlist and Caseload

The child and youth department has carried a waitlist for many years. This year there has been a trend towards lower waiting time. The reason behind this is that the department is currently well staffed, and there is an increase in counselling services, specifically in the canyon. The additional supports mean that children and youth are waiting less time to be seen through NHSS and other agencies. The longest waiting time for child and youth counseling this fiscal year was approximately one month. The adult mental health department has carried a small waitlist on and off throughout out this fiscal year. The longest waiting period for services was approximately one month.



## Group Work and Psychoeducation

Last fiscal year it was indicated that more group and psychoeducation work would be of benefit to communities. This year the team was able to provide group workshops in both the north and south communities, focusing on grief and loss for adults, using Indigenous Focusing Oriented Therapy and Somatic experiencing techniques. The child and youth team has also provided similar group workshops in the Nicola Valley schools with plans underway to roll out the program in Lytton and Ashcroft in the 2024-2025 school year. There has also been psychoeducation for parents around anxiety, and various other information sharing workshops. The mental health team has also been available to provide wellness support at many community events hosted by NHSS or in partnership with other agencies.

**Group Participants - Aged 19+**

**North: 245**

**South: 250**

**Group Participants - Aged 4-18**

**North: 153**

**South: 137**

## Adult Mental Health

From April 2024-July 2023 Adult Mental Health had three staff: Wanda Dexel (Adult Mental Health Counsellor), Cheryl Billy (Mental Health Outreach Navigator) and Tammy Pierre (Street Angel). After re-organizing of the department from July 2023 to present, Wanda Dexel and Diana Lepine-Thomas work with adult clients.

Wanda continues to work with a full caseload of clients aged nineteen and up. She specializes in Indigenous Focusing Oriented Therapy (IFOT) and Somatic Experiencing counselling modalities. Wanda has also been the key point person for the third round of IFOT training, with a class size of sixteen who will be graduating in June 2024.

In addition to direct client work and IFOT coordination, Wanda acts as the Team Lead for the mental health department. When the manager is away or unavailable, Wanda steps in to support the team with administration and leadership.



IFOT Class



Community Workshop

## Clinical Art Therapy

Diana Lepine-Thomas transitioned from the Programs Manager to full-time Clinical Art Therapist last fiscal year. This year she has carried a full caseload with a 50/50 divide of child/youth and adult clients. Along with her individual clients, Diana has been preparing land-based art supplies and doing curriculum development for upcoming art-based therapy groups.

## Child and Youth Mental Health

The Child and Youth Mental Health team has had a productive year with individual client support, psychoeducation, and child/youth workshops. All counsellors have carried a full caseload throughout the year and provide dynamic support to clients with diverse needs throughout the nation. The staff draw from a variety of counselling techniques; Expressive Play Therapy, Indigenous Focusing Oriented Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Narrative Therapy, and many others. There have been few significant changes this fiscal year, the team is well established and well connected with partnering organizations and the local schools.



Wildfire Evacuee Support Event: child and youth supports-Summer 2023

## Mental Health Department Challenges

Some challenges have come up this year around limited resources for clients who require more specialized support. Although the mental health counselors can provide support to clients with psychiatric concerns, ethically they cannot work beyond their scope of competency. This leaves clients in a difficult situation when the NHSS counsellors could do more harm than good if they continue with services, however there are limited or no other options to refer to. This is true with adult clients, but even more problematic with children.

There have been some challenges around reporting and other administrative tasks, simply due to time constraints. Client scheduling and client cancellations are another challenge. Parent engagement with young clients is important to the therapeutic process and it is often difficult to make those connections. This ties into misunderstanding about counselling: clients must be committed to the process, changes typically do not happen quickly, not all counsellors are equipped to work with all presenting concerns, and confidentiality is an ethical necessity, information can only be shared without client consent.

Lastly, fears and anxiety around fires and floods are difficult for many people in the community. Encouraging community wide support around resilience and preparedness has improved these challenges but the work will need to be ongoing due to the nature of environmental changes.

## Success

Though there have been challenges, the team has had a successful year. We have provided more group support than in the past, including responding to emergency support events. Each team member has taken training throughout the year which expands their knowledge and skills to better help clients. We have also focused dedicated time each month to team meetings for problem solving, support, and team wellness.

**If you are looking for urgent mental health support please call one of these numbers:**

**Hope for Wellness Help Line** offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention by phone or online chat. **Call toll-free 1-855-242-3310** or start a confidential chat with a counsellor at **hopeforwellness.ca**.

**Indian Residential School Crisis Line** is a national service for anyone experiencing pain or distress as a result of their residential school experience.

**Call toll-free 1-866-925-4419.**

**Kuu-Us Crisis Line Society** provides crisis services for Indigenous people in BC. Adults/Elders line: **250-723-4050**

Youth line: **250-723-2040**

Or call toll free **1-800-588-8717**.

Learn more at **www.kuu-uscrisisline.com**.

**Métis Crisis Line** is a service of Métis Nation British Columbia.

Call **1-833-MétisBC (1-833-638-4722)**.

**Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868** provides kids and teens access to a professional counsellor by phone to discuss their issue or concern 24 hours a day.

Call **1-800-SUICIDE at 1-800-784-2433** anytime of the day or night if you or someone you know is thinking about ending their own life or needs someone to talk to about suicidal thoughts or ideas.

**If you are experiencing a mental health emergency call 911 or go to the nearest hospital.**

# Wellness Outreach



**Hiliary Willis**  
Wellness Outreach Manager



**Cheryl Billy**  
Mental Health Outreach Navigator



**Tammy Pierre**  
Street Angel Outreach



**Andrew Dexel**  
Wellness Coordinator, NLX



**Julia Munro**  
Wellness Coordinator, Merritt



**Joel Raphael**  
Wellness Coordinator, Canyon

## Wellness Team Community Visits April 2023

- Activities: rattle making, medicine bags, key chain lanyards, beaded lanyards, dream catchers
- Wellness supplies & mental health brochures provided
- 120+ in attendance

## On the Land - Traditional Harvesting Canyon May 2023

- Harvested
  - Stweta
  - Devil's Club
  - Other traditional medicines
- 13 members went out harvesting

## Indigenous Focusing-Oriented Therapy (IFOT) Training

- 2023-2024 Cohort
- Indigenous Focusing Oriented Therapy & Complex Trauma training uses Focusing-Oriented Therapy as a safe and effective method of working with clients who experience complex trauma. The program emphasizes both knowledge and application through classroom instruction, clinical experience, supervision and observation.

## Beading Circles Monthly

- 8 different beading circles - monthly
- Red Dress Pin, Earrings, Poppy, Christmas Ornament, Heart Pin or Earrings, Beaded Hat

## Youth Summer Events June-July

- Fun Factor event - June 2024 - 60+ in attendance
- Bridal Falls Waterslide event - July 2024

## Canyon Evacuee Support Aug-Sept

- Wellness Gatherings
  - Aug 18 - Kamloops
  - Sept 1 - Merritt
- ESS Kamloops - Support, Gift Cards, Snacks
- Apex Adventure Park Gift Cards
- Cultural Elder Support

## Youth Outreach Luncheons Collaboration Monthly

- Monthly - Sept to June
- Provide everyday essentials for youth, school supplies, hygiene, snacks, basic needs items

## Leaning into Land & Wellness Community Workshops May-July 2023

- Cook's Ferry Band Hall
  - May 17, June 28, July 18
- Lytton First Nations Community Hall
  - May 16, June 29, July 19
- Introduction course to a Body-Centered Approach to Mental Health from an Indigenous lens

## Awareness Event Sept 22 Skuppah

- NHSS hosted an Overdose Awareness event at our Canyon office in Skuppah to distribute harm reduction kits and information



**Elders  
Wellness Day  
Sept 27  
Merritt**

- National Truth & Reconciliation Elder's Wellness Event - Sept 27, 2023
- Hosted at Merritt Civic Centre
- 47 Elders in attendance

**Desert Hills  
Family Event  
Oct 20, 2023  
Ashcroft**

- Pumpkin Patch Family Event at Desert Hills Ranch included pumpkin picking, hay rides, corn mazes, professional family photos and other activities
- 151 Members in attendance

**Ethan Bear  
Event  
Dec 3 2023  
Lower Nicola**

- NHSS hosted special guest Ethan Bear who plays in the NHL
- Community Skate
- Autograph and Photo Session
- Snacks and Refreshments Served

**Youth  
Christmas  
Bingo  
Dec 13 2023**

- Nicola Valley youth were invited to a youth Christmas bingo event on December 13th, 2023 in collaboration with SCHSS & SCFSS
- Cards and Dabbers were provided. Prizes were from the organizations..

**Collaborations**

- The Wellness Team collaborated on different events with different organizations
  - Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly
  - Scw'exmx Child & Family
  - Scw'exmx Community Health Services
  - Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
  - Conayt Friendship Society
  - Nlha'7kapmx Child and Family Services
  - Han Knakst Tsitxw

**Wildlights  
Events  
Dec 16  
Wildlife Park  
Kamloops**

- Hosted Wildlights event in Kamloops
- Provided members with a gate pass to the park, hot dogs, hot chocolate and train ride.
- Goal was to bring community together to experience the Wildlife Park
- 198 members in attendance

**Youth Bowling  
Event  
Jan 3 2024  
Merritt**

- Nicola Valley family bowling
- Pizza and drinks were provided
- Rented all 8 lanes for bowling
- 58 members were in attendance

**Decompression  
Event  
Feb 2 & 3 2024  
Merritt**

- An event for frontline workers
- Event held for decompression gathering, targeting staff and community workers for a day of self care

**Dr Gabor Mate  
Event  
Feb 21 2024  
Lytton**

- The topic was trauma, illness and healing in a toxic culture workshop with guest speaker Gabor Mate.
- Lytton First Nation, Nlaka'pamux Child & Family Services and Han Knakst Tsitxw partnered with NHSS to ensure the event's success
- 211 members were in attendance

**Youth Harper  
Mountain Event  
Feb 22 2024  
Harper  
Mountain**

- Collaboration with SCHSS
- Family met at Harper Mountain in Kamloops
- Tickets, snacks, refreshments and hot dogs were provided





**Main Office - Merritt  
PO Box 1624  
2088 Quilchena Avenue  
Merritt, BC V1K 1B8**

**Satellite Office - Skuppah  
McIntyre Road**

**Contact Information  
Phone: (250) 378-9772  
Fax: (250) 315-0283  
Email:  
mhreception@nlxfn.com**

**Hours of Operations  
8:30 am - 4:30 pm**

