



CARRIER SEKANI
FAMILY SERVICES

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Creating wellness together

Addictions Awareness Week prompts additional support] from Carrier Sekani Family Services

November 22, 2021

For immediate release

Very recent media headlines have reported more than 1500 lives have been lost to illicit toxic drugs in the first nine months of 2021 in British Columbia.

We know from repeated and confirmed data that a disproportionate number of those who have lost their lives to toxic drug use are Indigenous. This is in direct correlation to historical and contemporary injustices and broken systems of support.

Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) is a non-profit health and wellness organization centred around the empowerment of Indigenous peoples, and asserting jurisdiction over child welfare. Among our many services, we provide support for people living with addiction. We provide these services to youth, families, and adults, through our Addictions Recovery Program.

To mark Addictions Awareness Week, which takes place from November 21-27, our Youth Services team is operating a campaign called #BreakTheStigma that is intended to shed light on a topic that is often not talked about – youth who are struggling with addictions. The campaign exemplifies CSFS's commitment to serving youth and those who are struggling to stay well. The campaign includes stories of those with lived experience, as well as red branded wristbands, which serve as a reminder to accept your peers, friends, and family members who battle addiction. It is also a reminder for those currently struggling that it is OK to get help.

The mental health impacts of the pandemic are well-documented. In order to help Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth, it is crucial that CSFS tackles this problem by breaking the stigma around addictions and getting help. Additionally, and now more than ever, we must highlight the solutions-based approach that CSFS is committed to with the planned Tachick Lake Healing and Treatment Centre.

CSFS Chiefs recently passed a formal resolution calling, once again, on both B.C. and Canada to fulfil their responsibilities and fully fund the capital costs of the Healing and Treatment Center. This has been formally communicated to the Premier of B.C. and the Prime Minister. As CSFS Board President and Cheslatta Carrier Nation Chief Corrina Leween has stated, we “can’t keep begging” for financial support to address the multiple crises we are facing in our region that include Toxic Drug Overdoses, COVID 19

and Homelessness. These are crises that we know, based on BC Coroner and FNHA data, are disproportionately impacting the North and, especially, Indigenous people living in the North.

CSFS has lobbied for a permanent Healing and Treatment Centre for over 20 years. The current interim outpatient facility was developed in the context of limited federal funding. For over two decades, these limitations prevented CSFS from expanding operations beyond seasonal programming or improving the facilities, which continue to lack running water and plumbing. CSFS has purchased a property (previously used as a resort) to house a new, year-round Healing/Treatment Center, and its completion requires financial commitment.

CSFS continues to engage with federal and provincial governments, along with the First Nations Health Authority, to seek support in fully developing the healing and treatment centre, which desperately requires sufficient capital commitment. This work is becoming increasingly urgent – the time for governments to act and commit has never been more urgent.

Contact Person:

CSFS Communications: 778-349-1676 (hours for response: 8:00am-7:00pm)