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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

### **Sobering centre offers safe space for people in Prince George**

PRINCE GEORGE – More people in Prince George and the surrounding area have access to a new sobering centre operated by Carrier Sekani Family Services in partnership with the Province and Northern Health.

"There is a vital need for people to have access to sobering and assessment services close to home," said Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. "Together with our partners at Carrier Sekani and Northern Health, we're bringing these critical services to Prince George to save more lives and keep people safe."

The centre is a 10-bed facility that provides a safe space for people 18 and older who are intoxicated from alcohol and/or other substances and unable to safely care for themselves. People can refer themselves or they can be referred by a family member, supportive care person, health-care providers, emergency services or other community partners.

"Carrier Sekani Family Services is happy to provide the services of the new Prince George Sobering Centre," said Travis Holyk, executive director of health with Carrier Sekani Family Services. "We see this as a required part of the care continuum for vulnerable community members in Prince George."

The centre is currently supporting clients overnight, four nights a week from Thursday to Sunday at 1133 Second Ave., Prince George. Various support services, such as referral to community resources, laundry facilities, snacks and a safe place to sleep, will gradually be added until the centre is able to support clients seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

"The sobering centre is an important addition to the continuum of services in the North where people with substance-use challenges can access care and connection to additional supports and services," said Ciro Panessa, president and CEO, Northern Health. "We appreciate the Province's investment in mental-health and substance-use services and the collaboration with Carrier Sekani Family Services that have brought the sobering and assessment centre to fruition."

The Province is providing \$1.8 million over three years in funding for the facility as part of its investments in substance-use and treatment services. The Prince George Sobering Centre is a critical part of the Province's work to improve access to mental-health and addictions care so more people can get the services they need in their communities.

#### **Quick Facts:**

- Budget 2023 invests a historic \$1 billion in targeted funding to continue building an integrated system of mental-health and addictions care that includes \$586 million for

substance-use treatment and recovery programs.

- As of June 2023, there were 3,277 publicly funded adult and youth community substance-use beds across the province, including 114 in the North.

**Learn More:**

To learn about Carrier Sekani Family Services, visit: <https://www.csfs.org>

To learn about mental-health and addictions support, visit:  
<https://MentalHealthAndAddictionsCare.gov.bc.ca>

To learn about mental-health and addictions resources in Northern Health, visit:  
<https://www.northernhealth.ca/services/mental-health-substance-use>

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