

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Nanaimo Youth Wellness Centre bolsters health care for youth and young adults

Nanaimo – The Nanaimo Youth Wellness Centre has relocated to the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre, a move that means more young people up to age 25 can access vital health and wellness services.

The youth wellness centre is a partnership between Island Health, the City of Nanaimo and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools. The centre was previously located at Nanaimo District Secondary School (NDSS) before moving into its new, larger space at the Aquatic Centre in July.

“The relocation efforts are an excellent idea to draw in youth to an accessible, welcoming space,” said Health Minister Adrian Dix. “Kudos to the health authority working with partners to encourage access to these services for young people and recognizing a need.”

Island Health public health nurses and an administrative assistant staff the youth wellness centre. Services are provided in a culturally sensitive, LGBTQ2+ safe space, and include general health and wellness support, STI testing, pregnancy testing, mental health support, sexual health and relationships, immunizations and substance use services. Counselling and physician services are also available.

“It is fitting to locate an innovative youth health and wellness centre in a safe, accessible public recreation centre,” says Leonard Krog, Mayor of Nanaimo. “Youth are our future, and helping to look after their health and wellness needs will better our community for decades to come. We look forward to working with Island Health and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools on this partnership project.”

The NAC is located at 741 Third Street in Nanaimo; the youth wellness centre can also be called or texted at 250-668-0761. Any youth under 25 can visit the centre during opening hours, which are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Wednesdays from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

“I’m pleased that the centre’s new location provides better access to health and wellness services for youth in the broader community,” said Sheila Malcolmson, MLA for Nanaimo. “This relocation of the youth wellness centre was made possible thanks to strong partnerships and a desire to enhance well-being and strong foundations for youth in the community.”

“We are very excited to realize the relocation of the Nanaimo Youth Wellness Centre, as it will continue to provide services and support for our community’s youth,” said Dr. Wilma Arruda, a pediatrician and Medical Director for Island Health’s Youth Wellness Centres. “I am grateful to our partners for their continued support, enthusiasm and commitment.”

“The Nanaimo Youth Wellness Centre is a great example of positive community partnerships,” says Dr. Sandra Barlow, a family physician and one of the facility’s doctors. “I am happy that it is open to youth across the region as a much-needed resource. This is a next step in the evolution of school-based clinics, which have been so successful thanks to the collaboration of our care teams.”

“This initiative expands on the success of the province’s first school-based youth wellness centre, which remains a unique resource for the students at John Barsby Community School,” says Charlene McKay, Board Chair of Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools. “Now, youth across the district will have access to a variety of health and wellness services.”

Other community partners include Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental Health, the Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre, the First Nations Health Authority, Discovery Youth and Family Substance Use Services, NDSS students and administration, UBC Family Medicine residents and the Nanaimo Division of Family Practice.

About Island Health:

Island Health provides health care and support services to more than 800,000 people on Vancouver Island, the islands in the Salish Sea and the Johnstone Strait, and mainland communities north of Powell River. With more than 22,000 staff and over 2,000 physician partners, 6,000 volunteers, and the dedicated support of foundations and auxiliaries, Island Health delivers a broad range of health services, including: Public health services, primary health care, home and community care, mental health and addictions services, acute care in hospitals, and much more across a huge, geographically diverse region

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