

FORT ST. JAMES HEALTH SERVICES COMMUNITY UPDATE

August 12, 2026

The community of Fort St. James and surrounding First Nations have long been supported by a dedicated team of health care providers and staff. This includes many long-serving physicians, locum physicians, and physicians who have provided care while completing various stages of their medical education and certification.

Like many rural and remote communities across Canada, Fort St. James is now experiencing physician staffing challenges. At this time, Nats'oojeh Hospital does not have enough physicians to safely maintain 24/7 emergency department coverage, while also preserving access to daytime primary care services and supporting the well-being of the remaining physicians. As we continue our efforts to recruit physicians and stabilize access to services, the emergency department will temporarily operate on a reduced schedule that focuses on maximizing access to emergency care during daytime hours, when most visits occur.

The emergency department will remain open:

- 8:00 am – 8:00 pm Monday to Friday (8:00 am to 4:00 pm in the event of reduced physician coverage).
- Weekend coverage to be communicated weekly, as we continue to seek locum support.

We want residents to know that emergency care continues to be available in Fort St. James 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The emergency department will remain open during regular daytime hours, and if you call 9-1-1 after hours, local BC Emergency Health Services are ready to respond and provide care.

If you have a medical emergency at any time, day or night, please call 9-1-1 immediately.

There are also a variety of options available for non-urgent health care needs, such as the NH Virtual Clinic for patients without a primary care provider, the First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day, HealthLink BC (8-1-1), and appointments with a pharmacist. Learn more about these [health care options](#) on the NH website.

We are committed to keeping community members informed as we navigate this challenging period together. Northern Health will provide weekly updates about upcoming emergency department hours, which may vary depending on the physician availability, and primary care clinic hours.



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At any time, Fort St. James and area residents can visit [Northern Health's Emergency Department Status website](#) for real-time information on the open/temporarily closed status of Emergency Departments across the region.

In addition, we will continue to share regular monthly updates on our efforts to stabilize and improve access to emergency care, primary care and family physician access, and other health services in Fort St. James.

We have been engaging with the District of Fort St. James, local First Nations, BCEHS, community and other partners and we share a common goal: supporting residents, strengthening local health services, advancing recruitment efforts, and ensuring the community remains informed about ongoing developments with local health care.

We know how important timely access to emergency care and primary care is for people who live and work in Fort St. James and the surrounding area. We are grateful for the patience, understanding, and support the community continues to show local health care providers and staff as we work together to strengthen health services in the future.