



Air Quality Briefing Note

Date: December, 2019

Issued by: Paula Tait

Agency: Northern Health (NH)

Description

Each member of PGAIR is requested to provide an annual update on implementation activities related to the 5-Year Strategic Plan.

2016 - 2021 PM 2.5 Goal

- Strive towards meeting long-term annual fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) targets of 8 ug/m³ (BC's Annual Air Quality Objective) and 5 ug/m³.

Questions

What have you done in the last 12 months?

- Northern Health (NH) is working with a post-doctoral research fellow at Simon Fraser University's Faculty of Health Sciences. The research fellow will be working with the NH Population and Public Health Support Unit to support projects focused on air quality-related health impact assessments and surveillance during her two-year fellowship tenure;
- NH supported UNBC with hosting a live-streamed event of the BC Lung Association Air Quality and Health Workshop in Prince George;
- NH's air quality technical advisor continues to provide a presentation regarding outdoor air quality and health to all medical students passing through the Population and Public Health student programming in Prince George;
- NH updated their [Air Quality](#) web page with new wildfire smoke and health information;
- NH's air quality technical advisor supervised UNBC Health Promotion students with an applied project entitled 'Wildfire Preparedness: Health Messaging for Communities' and coordinated the dissemination of a Community Wildfire Preparedness letter to communities across the northern region;
- NH supported the 2018 North Central BC Clean Air Forum and provided a wood smoke and health presentation;
- NH reviewed draft BC 'Guidance for Prospective Human Health Risk Assessment';

Actions continued from previous years:

- NH's air quality technical advisor dedicates approximately 0.5 FTE to support outdoor air quality and public health efforts across the NH region;

- NH supports existing and new air quality roundtables across the NH region;
- NH continues air quality education and awareness efforts through printed materials, social media, the Northern Health Matters Blog, and the media;
- NH disseminated a 'Spring Dust Season and Air Quality Considerations' letter to northern communities in March, 2018;
- NH continues to work in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and other partners to issue and communicate air quality advisories/bulletins;
- NH continues to respond to and follow-up on public and media inquiries and concerns related to indoor and outdoor air quality across the region. We have collaborated with outside agencies when possible;
- NH's internal 'Air Quality Steering Committee' continues to provide internal leadership and support on indoor and outdoor air quality issues in Northern Health;
- NH continues to participate with the 'Provincial Air Quality Liaison Group', to exchange information and expertise across provincial health authorities and health agencies;
- NH participates as a working group member on Environmental Assessments across the region, including the West Coast Olefins Ethylene Project;
- NH continues to review Official Community Plans and Land Use Referrals as they relate to air quality maintenance or improvement;
- NH continues to review new or updated provincial air quality-related legislation and guidance documents;
- The air quality technical advisor participated in many professional development activities related to air quality; most notably, the BC Lung Air Quality and Health Workshop, the Canadian Symposium on Wildfire Smoke Communication (web access) and the BCCDC Practical Wildfire Smoke Workshop hosted in Prince George; and
- NH continues to participate with the 'Provincial Health Sector Wildfire Smoke Coordination and Response Group' and the 'NH Public Health Wildfire Planning Group'.
 - Does the action address a goal and/or strategy from the Strategic Plan 2016-2021?
 - If yes, please list the goal and/or strategy.
- These actions combined support the six 5-year goals for PGAIR and strategic priorities.

What are you planning to do in the next 12 months?

- NH will continue to engage in the actions already mentioned with special emphasis placed on:
 - Supporting a live streaming event of the 2020 BC Lung Association Air Quality and Health Workshop in Prince George;
 - Continuing support for air quality roundtables across the NH region, including the review of the new Prince George Air Emissions Inventory;
 - Continuing improvements to the NH Air Quality web page and other public education and awareness tools;

- Leveraging and communicating the research that our post-doctoral research fellow will be completing in air quality health impact assessment and surveillance;
 - Reporting progress to the NH Board and Executive regarding the outdoor air quality program and planning; and
 - Continuing participation in the provincial environmental assessment process and provincial initiative reviews.
- Does the action address a goal and/or strategy from the Strategic Plan 2016-2021?
 - If yes, please list the goal and/or strategy.
- These actions combined support the six 5-year goals for PGAIR and strategic priorities.

What is your long-term plan to meet the 2016 -2021 goal?

As mentioned in previous years, Northern Health’s goal over the long-term is to continue educating and bringing awareness to the public, industrial proponents and other stakeholders on air quality issues to encourage best practices, better policy, behavior change, and action. We plan on doing this by continuing to identify opportunities within our own and partner organizations. We will work with regulatory agencies and decision makers to incorporate health considerations into policy and land-use decisions. NH will continue to strive to support the same goals/strategies as we have in previous years.

Please indicate your self-assessed progress during the past 12 months:

Low

Medium-high

High