

# Student & Youth Newsletter

December 2023

Student Feature: Mia MacInnis

## Service Delivery During a Wildfire Evacuation

During the unprecedented wildfire season of 2023, an estimated 68% of the population of the Northwest Territories was evacuated. By late August, three of four of the territory's largest population centres – Yellowknife, Hay River, and Fort Smith – were evacuated, creating logistical challenges for health and social services employees in delivering services to their clients and patients.

Mia MacInnis is a fourth year Human Kinetics Student at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. She joined the Northwest Territories Health and Social Service Authority for a second summer with the Adult Services team. When the evacuation began, many of her clients were flown to Calgary and Fort McMurray. Suddenly her role shifted dramatically, from assisting clients with long term goals such as housing and addictions treatment, to addressing immediate needs to help support her clients through the evacuation.

***"This involved a lot more improvisation, especially because I was unfamiliar with the available resources in Alberta." - Mia***

When Mia evacuated to Calgary, she discovered that many clients had been dispersed across the city. Mia worked tirelessly to connect with clients directly and offer emotional support. She made lists of client needs and over the next several days collected essentials that she delivered to clients. Mia recalls meeting with her clients, having them cry in her arms, sharing their fears, and anxieties.

After working for several days on her own in Calgary, Mia was redeployed to Fort McMurray where she rejoined part of the team that was staying and working at a lodge to help support their other clients. In her role she helped coordinate outings, schedule appointments, and build connections. As Mia recalls from her time in Fort McMurray, "I am so appreciative to have been a part of a very hardworking team that continues to change the lives of so many people." Mia thanked her supervisor, Case Manager Hannah Bond, for taking her on as a summer student and for putting so much trust in her.

Hannah had high praise for Mia's efforts during the wildfire evacuation.

***"Mia continuously exemplified exceptional and compassionate care throughout her time with Adult Services... Her person-centered approach was effortless a skill that cannot be taught, but that can be felt by everyone who walked into her office... Clients came in droves, to seek her out specifically, largely due to her ability to connect with them and listen to their story... I continue to hear stories about her impact on those she worked with during the evacuation... Mia goes above any expectation I could have had for a summer student, and I hope to one day work alongside her in this field."***

Thank you to Mia and the many other students who contributed tirelessly to the Health and Social Services System efforts during the evacuations!

## This Issue

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Mia MacInnis, Service Delivery  
During a Wildfire Evacuation

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Rural Resident Leadership Award  
Winner

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Mia MacInnis prepares bags of essentials for clients.

## Program Feature

### **Clinical Observership & Job Shadowing Program**

The Clinical Observership and Job Shadowing Program (COJS) was created to give students across the NWT a chance to observe and shadow professionals in a prospective health and social services career.

Samantha Morandin is a medical student that was able to partake in this program over the summer. Samantha says that she is hoping to practice family medicine in the north upon graduation and had her placement at the Primary Care Clinic in Yellowknife. During Samantha's time in the program, she was able to observe primary care, oncology, obstetrics and even witnessed the birth of a baby! Samantha reports that the COJS program solidified her interest in family medicine.

*"...as a long time Yellowknifer, [the COJS program] helped me gain valuable insight into the current healthcare system and the vast number of professional opportunities that lie in the north."*

*- Samantha Morandin*



What was your favourite part of the day?

*"I liked learning about the different job choices and what jobs are under the health care umbrella."*

*"The hospital tour. It was so cool!"*

*"Touching pig lungs."*

*"Talking to the surgeon and asking her questions."*

*- Student participants*

## Program Feature

### **Take Our Kids to Work Day 2023**

On November 1st, 2023, the NWT Health and Social Services System (NWT HSS System) hosted Take Our Kids to Work Day, a national annual event that welcomes grade nine students into the workplace so they can learn more about the career opportunities available to them. The NWT HSS System has taken part in this event the last several years by hosting in person and virtual events.

This year's in-person event in Yellowknife featured a series of hands on workshops. Students sutured a banana, witnessed a defibrillated egg explode, and ventured through a massive inflatable colon. The day concluded at Stanton Territorial Hospital where the students were given a tour, including getting fully gowned up so that they could visit the Operating Room!

The Hay River Health and Social Services Authority also organized an in-person event. Students participated in tours and hands-on demonstrations and exercises in several departments ranging from Infection Prevention and Control to Family Preservation, and everything in between.

130 students from Aklavik, Behchokǝ, Gamètì, Inuvik, Tsiigehtchic, and Tulita participated in the virtual events, heard from health and social services professionals, and competed in a series of interactive games.

A very special thank you to all the health and social services professionals that helped share the important and impactful work that they do.

Mark your calendars, Take Our Kids to Work Day 2024 will be on Wednesday, November 6th. See you there!



## Success Story

### Andréa Brabant Wins Leadership Award

Andréa Brabant, a second-year medical resident with the University of Alberta Family Medicine Residency Program and the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, has been praised as an individual who reflects the best of rural medicine and physician leadership. Originally from Ottawa, Andréa is thrilled to continue her journey in Yellowknife, exploring all that's to learn of Northern medicine. She is the co-founder and chair of the University of Ottawa Sustainability and Climate Change Committee (SACC), a committee member of the CFMS Health and Environment Adaptive Response Taskforce (HEART) and is currently designing Canada's first planetary health elective in family medicine. Her impressive resume speaks for itself, leaving no wonder as to why she is now a Rural Resident Leadership Award Winner!



*"...[Andréa] is leading the NWT in our push to better understand the impacts of climate change on health... I can think of no one better deserving of this award..."*

*- Dr. David Pontin*

The Rural Resident Leadership Awards are presented to two residents each year in good academic standing who have demonstrated a sustained interest in rural medicine. Andréa has a deep passion for rural medicine and looks forward to offering culturally safe care. She is incredibly motivated by the healing nature of the environment and will continue to explore the intersections of health and climate change and climate justice.

## Career Fairs and Conferences Queen's University Career Fair

PracticeNWT was thrilled to attend the Queen's 2023 Career Expo in Kingston, Ontario, on October 4th, 2023, to speak to Queen's students about career opportunities with the NWT Health and Social Services.

It was great to see almost 1,000 students, including Jada Beck – a Queen's medical student from Hay River and a 2023 NWT Health and Social Services Bursary Recipient.

PracticeNWT will be visiting several universities in the new year. If you are a health and social services student interested in having PracticeNWT attend your school career fair or visit with your class, let us know! Connect with us through social media @PracticeNWT.



Jada Beck, a Queen's Medical Student from Hay River, meets with Coralee Round, Program Specialist with PracticeNWT

## PracticeNWT Initiatives

### NWT Health and Social Services Bursary Program

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services System Bursary Program is available for application to Students who are residents of the Northwest Territories pursuing an education in a health and social services-related field. This includes allied health, midwifery, nursing, social services, and medical professions.

If approved for a bursary, students in the Northwest Territories can receive funding ranging from \$2,500/year for full-time diploma programs, to \$10,000/year for a medical degree. The number of applicants supported through the program will vary from year to year, based on available funding.

Funding is still available for the 2023/2024 school year! Check out the [NWT HSS Bursary Program Guidelines](#) for additional information!

Interested applicants who meet the eligibility criteria should submit their application complete package to [NWTHSS\\_Bursary@gov.nt.ca](mailto:NWTHSS_Bursary@gov.nt.ca).



[PracticeNWT.ca](https://PracticeNWT.ca)



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### NWT Health and Social Services Career Guidebook

Wondering if a career in health and social services is right for you? Check out our Career Guidebook to learn what education and skills are needed for different careers. Read about the duties of each profession, future employment outlooks and salary ranges. Too many options to choose from? Take the career quiz!

