COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Fort St. John

UNIQUE EXPERIENCES IN NORTHERN BC

What is Fort St. John?

Fort St. John is the oldest non-native settlement on the BC mainland. There are four First Nations reserves close to Fort St. John which brings about diversity in health care delivery.

As the “Energetic City” of British Columbia, Fort St. John’s stable economy is primarily based on oil and gas exploration and production, forestry and agriculture; diversified by tourism; and breaking ground this spring for a OSB plant. There is an abundance of work.

IRP in Fort St. John?

IRPbc students were first welcomed to Fort St. John in January 2004. Students lived in hospital residence and participated in a number of team activities as well as discipline-specific learning. The team project was a staff inservice on body mechanics and prevention of injuries.

The students reported having a “cool time” in northern BC, enjoying skiing and toboganning. A particular highlight was a trip to Liard Hot Springs – driving 8 hours, jumping in at minus 35 degrees, seeing a wild buffalo at the side of the road and drinking champagne from plastic glasses in the hot springs while watching a glorious display of the Northern Lights.

Health services in Fort St. John?

Fort St. John Hospital is a regional referral centre with 44 acute care beds and a number of specialties, including an active obstetrical program with one of the highest birth rates in BC. Services include cardiac rehabilitation, diabetes education, regional cancer clinic, dialysis and nutritional services. There is an active visiting specialist clinic with orthopedics, dermatology, ENT, neurology, nephrology, pediatrics, pediatric cardiology, rheumatology and the UBC Eye Clinic Program.

Students from medicine, medical radiology, physical therapy and nursing, Winter 2003

IRP threosme in snow, Winter 2003

The Interprofessional Rural Program has enabled health care students from southern BC to experience the challenges in environment, lifestyles and health care delivery in Northeast BC. The program assisted the students to work as a team member across the continuum of care.

—ANGELA DE SMIT, Director of Nursing, Fort St. John Hospital & Health Centre

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