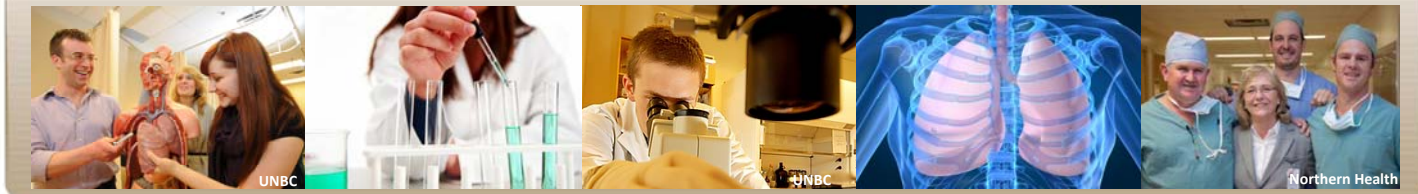




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## Guest Comment

*This month, Dr. Charles Jago, Chair of the Northern Health Authority, and IPG Board Member, offers a guest commentary on the significant medical advancements that have taken place in Prince George. Our thanks to him for contributing to this issue.*

Three recent events highlight significant advances in healthcare that have occurred in Prince George and northern British Columbia over the past several years.

On July 29, 2010 Premier Campbell and Hon. Kevin Falcon, the Minister of Health Services, were present in Prince George to participate in the groundbreaking for the construction of the BC Cancer Agency (BCCA) Centre for the North. The Centre will offer a broad range of cancer treatment options, including radiation therapy. As a key component of the Northern BC Cancer Strategy, developed by the Northern Health Authority and the BCCA in partnership, it will be linked to smaller cancer treatment centres throughout the north. The goal is to develop a highly integrated network of centres offering cancer prevention programs, diagnostic services, and treatments, enabling northern British Columbians to access as many cancer-related services as possible as close to home as possible.

The month before, on June 27, the University of Northern British Columbia held an event to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the health-care rally that occurred in Prince George in 2000. At that time some 7,000 people crowded into the Prince George multiplex to express their

concern over deteriorating medical services. As UNBC President at that time, I promised to seek a long-term solution to the problem of medically underserved communities in northern BC.

The eventual solution, fully operational by September 2004, was the Northern Medical Program (NMP), the UNBC component of the regionally distributed UBC undergraduate medical program. Currently, thirty-two students are admitted annually to the NMP, meaning that there are 128 medical students in training in northern BC at



**Dr. Charles Jago**

Chair,  
Northern Health Authority  
& IPG Board Member

any time. With clinical training sites in Prince George, Terrace, and Fort St. John, the NMP is truly northern. Some of the 2008 graduates have now completed their residency training and a number have established practices in northern BC.

Earlier in the year, on April 10, our local MLAs unveiled a new sign changing the official name of the Prince George Regional Hospital to the University Hospital of Northern BC. The hospital is currently the training centre for over 1,000 students per year including those in the NMP, undergraduate and graduate nursing students from UNBC, and medical laboratory students from the College of New Caledonia.

Many of the graduates of these programs are now practicing in northern BC, proving that educating health professionals in the north for the north works. To complement these educational programs, there is also growing activity in health research. A recently signed agreement between Northern Health and UNBC is intended to expand upon existing research programs through the creation of an Innovation and Development Commons. With a focus on linking academic research to clinical practice, Northern Health and UNBC plan to become Canadian leaders in research on northern, rural, and aboriginal health.

These three events, as different as they may seem, are all interlinked. Through expanded educational programs, improved health care facilities, and the close interaction of university faculty and clinical practitioners, they represent an increased local capacity in northern BC to provide and sustain a reasonable level of health services. The outcome will enable Prince George and other northern communities to attract and retain the skilled people our economy requires to prosper.

These developments represent significant investments in northern BC's social infrastructure – a social infrastructure capable of providing a secure foundation for a strong and flourishing northern BC knowledge-based resource economy connected to the world.

Dr. Charles J. Jago, C.M.



## UNBC Medical Research

Health research is one of the major pillars of the research effort at UNBC. Currently managing projects with an annual value of approximately \$6,000,000, UNBC health research already spans a spectrum from basic laboratory science studying diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease and nerve injury, through to studies on environmental health to research in health services and health care organization. UNBC now has an endowed chair in Aboriginal Environmental Health held by international toxicologist, Dr. Laurie Chan, and recently successfully recruited Dr. Margot Parkes from New Zealand to fill a prestigious Canada Research Chair in Health, Ecosystems and Society. UNBC is in the final stages of creating one of Western Canada's first doctoral degrees in health research to be offered outside of the major cities. UNBC continues to attract high quality trainees; very recently, a UNBC undergraduate, Randi Woodbeck won first place at a national research competition for her cancer work with Dr. Chow Lee.

The development of health research at UNBC is a necessity for Northern BC. The growing size and sophistication of our health care system, as demonstrated by the new Northern Cancer Centre, means we must recruit and retain health professionals at the cutting edge of their fields. Such people expect to work in an environment with the resources and intellectual vigour that can only be found in research-based health care. The research oriented programs are essential to train high level technical support staff in fields such as medical physics and genomics. We cannot assume that health research in southern cities will respond to or reflect health priorities of the North. We must develop the capacity to research and innovate to meet our own needs.

We have both assets and challenges in health research. We have talented and enthusiastic faculty and students, while communities are eager to participate in and support health research. Housing the Public Health Agency of Canada's National Collaborating Centre on Aboriginal Health under the direction of Dr. Margo Greenwood will enable us to respond to the interests of First Nations. UNBC and the Northern Health Authority have recently cemented their unique collaboration with an MOU that moves towards a common framework for managing health research that is already being used to create an Innovation and Development Commons, a unit where University researchers and students come together with health care personnel to address quality issues in health care. Funding for health research is the most competitive of all fields, and our ongoing success will be built on developing new community, industry and philanthropic partnerships that support early stage programs, projects, and people until they are ready to compete for national and international funding.

— Dr. Malcolm Ogborn



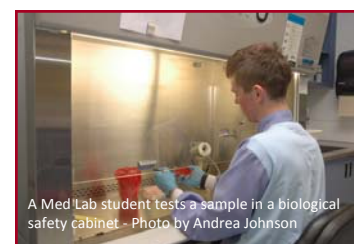
## CNC Building the Medical Hub

The College of New Caledonia (CNC) is making a significant contribution to the emerging medical hub in Northern BC with a variety of programs that train medical professionals in a number of areas including practical nursing, medical lab tech, and most recently, medical radiography.

The practical nursing program at CNC is very competitive with only 32 seats available each year. The faculty includes three full-time instructors with a pool of sessional LPN and RN instructors, who provide clinical instruction. The small class size offers a unique learning environment. The college teams with a variety of partners in the community such as Northern Health, the Prince George Regional Correctional Centre, and the Simon Fraser Lodge to provide students with a variety of clinical and practical experiences off-campus.

The medical laboratory technologist program at CNC is an intense 2.5 year program which trains students to perform a variety of specialized tests using high-tech instrumentation to help physicians diagnose, treat, and prevent disease. Students in the program collect and prepare specimens for analysis; test blood, bodily fluids and tissue samples, and interpret results. The program also includes a work term to provide crucial practical experience.

It was recently announced that the provincial government will provide CNC with nearly \$2.7 million in one-time funding to establish a Medical Radiography Technology (MRT) program, which will start in September 2011. "We are very excited to be implementing the MRT program at CNC. It will fulfill a critical need for skilled medical imaging technologists to work in hospitals as well as in support of the Northern Cancer Control Strategy and new cancer clinic in Prince George," said CNC President John Bowman. CNC will use the funding to build an MRT radiography suite, with three radiography rooms on the third floor of the Prince George campus. The college will use state-of-the-art educational and radiographic technology, including advanced online learning systems. The college already has over 230 people interested in the 16 seats that are available when the program officially begins.





## Train in the North, Retain in the North

"I've wanted to be a doctor since I was six. This is a dream come true for me." Those were the words used by Jennifer Parker upon opening her own family practice in Fort St John. Dr. Parker is a practicing physician who is joined by 12 others who are the first Northern Medical Program (NMP) graduates to complete their residency. They are the first to fulfill the promise of the NMP: to increase the number of doctors in the North by training them here.

Jennifer Parker is joining the Fort St. John Medical Clinic and establishing a new, full-service family practice including maternity, palliative care, and emergency services. She will also be offering consultation services for breastfeeding. Dr. Parker was raised in Fort Nelson and Chetwynd and was the first medical student to undertake a residency based in Fort St. John. Throughout residency, she delivered 160 babies.

"My family always encouraged me and believed in me, even when I was terribly discouraged," says Dr. Parker. "As I start my practice, I can't help but be very thankful to them. I'm also proud that I'm a northerner who had the chance to complete a medical degree and residency in the North. Now, I'm starting a practice here and my plan is to stay here."

"This is just the beginning of what the NMP and its graduates will do for communities such as ours," says Dr. Becky Temple, Medical Director (Northeast) for Northern Health. "We have hosted many medical students in our region since the Northern Medical Program began, but Dr. Parker is the first to complete her education and set up a practice here. On behalf of our local medical community, I'm thrilled to welcome Dr. Parker as the first NMP graduate to our medical staff. We look forward to many more."

The Northern Medical Program is part of the UBC Faculty of Medicine delivered in collaboration with UNBC, physicians throughout the province, and Northern Health. The program started in 2004 as part of the Government of British Columbia's commitment to double the number of doctors educated in the province. From the beginning, the program has had a vital connection with northern communities.

To date, UNBC has produced 631 Nursing grads, 14 Nurse Practitioners, and 66 recipients of a master's degree in Community Health Sciences. There have been 70 graduates of the Northern Medical Program.



Dr. Jennifer Parker, Graduate of the Northern Medical Program at UNBC  
- Photo courtesy of UNBC

## Construction Starts on BC Cancer Agency Centre for the North

Construction on the new BC Cancer Agency Centre for the North is underway.

The Centre for the North will be the BC Cancer Agency's sixth regional centre, and will include a chemotherapy unit, outpatient clinics, and two linear accelerators which will deliver radiation therapy in Northern BC.



Rendering of the BC Cancer Centre Agency for the North

The new centre is a key component of the Northern Cancer Control Strategy, a partnership of Northern Health, the BC Cancer Agency, and the Provincial Health Services Authority. The strategy is focused on improving cancer services across the North, including screening, diagnosis, treatment, and patient supports.

The BC Cancer Agency has contracted with Plenary Health to design, build, finance and maintain the centre for 30 years, ensuring it is built on time and on budget. Construction began in early August and is expected to be complete by September 2012.

Interested in following the construction progress? Check out the live webcam view at [www.bccancer.bc.ca/RS/north](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/RS/north). For more information, visit [www.centreforthenorth.plenaryprojects.com](http://www.centreforthenorth.plenaryprojects.com).

— Sonya Kruger

The Canadian Cancer Society will be building a cancer lodge as well to support those undergoing treatment at the future Northern Cancer Treatment Centre. The lodge is expected to open when the cancer centre opens in December of 2012.

For more information on the cancer lodge visit: [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca).



## Evening of Pink

On September 18, 2010 at the Prince George Civic Centre the 6th annual **Evening of Pink** will be held. Tickets are still available, but are going fast so purchase yours today! Proceeds go to breast cancer research and patient care.

Tickets are \$75.00 per person; tables are also available for purchase. The evening will begin at 6:00 pm with cocktails and dinner will be served at 7:00 pm with a dance to follow.

This year's dinner will feature guest speaker Bif Naked, a well known rock star and breast cancer survivor.

For more information on the event or to purchase tickets, phone Monica at 250-552-4114.



## Did You Know?

**In the 2010 KPMG Competitive Alternatives Study Prince George ranked ahead of Grand Prairie, Red Deer, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, and Toronto, in all three R&D categories (Bio-Technology, Clinical Trials, and Product Testing) in an overall competitive cost comparison.**



### APGST Funding

Initiatives Prince George and the Prince George Airport Authority received \$57,000 in provincial funding to provide cargo training and certification for workers at YXS.

The funding is provided by the Asia Pacific Gateway Skills Table (APGST), which was created by the federal government to promote human resource development and training for cargo shipping in BC.

Katherine Scouten, Vice President, Economic Development at Initiatives Prince George, says "The training is really important; when carriers are making decisions on where to operate, they look at the training and staff."

The training will include refuelling for cargo craft, cargo handling, dangerous goods handling and aircraft maintenance engineering. The majority of the training will take place in the workplace with courses lasting a couple of weeks or a couple of days.

### Terrane Acquired by Thompson Creek

On July 15, 2010, Terrane Metals Corp. (Terrane) announced an agreement whereby Thompson Creek Metals Company Inc. (Thompson Creek) will acquire Terrane and its assets through a Plan of Arrangement.

To learn more, you can view the press release on the Terrane website at [www.terrane.com](http://www.terrane.com) or visit the Thompson Creek website at [www.thompsoncreekmetals.com](http://www.thompsoncreekmetals.com).



Photo from the TERRANE website —Mt. Milligan Photo Gallery



### IPG Invests in Downtown Renewal

Prince George City Council has ratified a plan devised by Initiatives Prince George (IPG) for the use of \$477,757 of residual proceeds from the sale of the former ACS Call Centre building to Terasen Gas Inc.

First, a building reserve fund in the amount of \$327,757 will be created to help with short- and long-term building maintenance requirements for IPG's First Avenue office building. IPG will also work with the City of Prince George to examine the feasibility of tying the building into the forthcoming Community District Energy System.

Second, IPG has earmarked \$100,000 for use by the Prince George Regional Performing Arts Centre Society in the next (procurement) phase of its business case development. To the greatest extent possible, these funds are to be leveraged and capitalized. Capitalized proceeds are to be returned to IPG for further use in downtown development initiatives.

Third, IPG has created a \$50,000 fund to create a marketing prospectus for the downtown. Following completion of the prospectus, orderly and expeditions marketing will take place.

IPG is pleased that the sale of the former ACS Call Centre building to Terasen has triggered a \$4 million renovation to that building along with 100 plus well-paid jobs for our downtown. In addition, the deal has enabled IPG to pay back all of its outstanding real estate loans, and to make further tangible contributions to downtown renewal.

### Prosperity Mine Development

The Prosperity Gold-Copper Project near Williams Lake is expected to contribute approximately \$340 million annually to provincial GDP. The project will also create about 700 construction jobs and around 500 full-time jobs over the life of the project. Estimates place the economic impact of the mine to be \$400 million in provincial revenue, and \$43 million to local and regional governments over the project's life. This is a significant economic catalyst project for not only Williams Lake, but also Prince George as a growing supply and service centre for the mining sector.

The decision on whether the project proceeds is now in the hands of the Federal Cabinet following review processes at both the provincial and federal levels. Earlier this year the Provincial Government gave approval to the project and issued an environmental assessment (EA) certificate after consideration of environmental and economic impacts. The provincial EA certificate contains 103 commitments the proponent must implement throughout various stages of the project including those for fish and fish habitat compensation, monitoring of water management to ensure no discharge from mine site, development of a wildlife habitat compensation plan that includes the Ministry of Environment, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and

First Nations, and implementing archaeological resource management measures to mitigate impact on culturally sensitive areas.

The Provincial decision was made prior to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Authority's Federal Review Panel this spring which focused its conclusions on the environmental impacts from the project, and did not include comment on economic impacts. Both the CEAA and the Province of BC reviews recognize adverse environmental impacts from the loss of Fish Lake, and both provided recommendations for mitigation of this loss should the project go ahead.

As with other major economic development catalysts in Northern and Central British Columbia, Initiatives Prince George supports the Prosperity Project proceeding to development, subject to the proponent meeting or exceeding standards recommended in the review process. Initiatives Prince George also continues to advocate for harmonized review processes which give clearer direction to communities, companies and First Nations for mining project evaluation and development. For Prince George, the mine will offer prospective procurement and employment opportunities if it proceeds to development stage.