



Northlands College



SIAS

SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF
APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Agreement extends nursing program to three First Nations communities

Technology enhances access for students

June 18, 2007 – Northlands College, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation Health Services Inc. and SIAS today signed a memorandum of understanding that will see delivery of SIAS's Practical Nursing program to the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation communities of Pelican Narrows, Deschambault Lake and Southend.

"Northlands College is excited to be part of this innovative partnership project," says Bill McLaughlin, CEO of Northlands College. "Technology provides a medium to significantly expand access to education and training, both in terms of options and location. Health care training is a critical need in northern Saskatchewan. This particular project will test the efficacy of distance education technology in training practical nurses for a major health care provider by delivering the program in three northern remote communities simultaneously."

"With the shortage of health professionals across the country, we have felt the increasing challenge to recruit and retain nurses to work in our northern communities," says Arnette Weber-Beeds, Executive Director of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation Health Services Inc. "The signing of this MOU is a major step towards addressing our nursing crisis and in realizing our vision of supporting community members in pursuing health careers and working within the PBCN communities."

"This agreement aligns with all four of SIAS's key priorities," says Dr. Bob McCulloch, president and CEO of SIAS. "It enhances access for students, increases recruitment of Aboriginal students, incorporates technology in the learning environment, and helps us respond to the needs of business, industry and the labour market, particularly the need for more health care professionals."

Courses will begin for 15 students in September 2007. With the use of online technology, students will engage in education in their own community and benefit from the support of their family and friends. In addition to online courses and nursing labs, students will participate in clinical experiences in accredited facilities.

The Practical Nursing program is a two-year certificate program that prepares students to provide professional nursing care independently or as a member of a multidisciplinary health care team. Students receive education that focuses on care of the individual across the lifespan, within the context of family and community. The program prepares graduates to practise in a variety of settings including acute care, maternal/child, pediatrics, long-term care, continuing care, public health and community agencies.

Northlands College provides a full range of programs and services for adult learners throughout the northern half of the province. With its administration centre in Air Ronge, it operates program centres in Buffalo Narrows, La Ronge and Creighton, and provides classes in most of the north's 40 communities.

Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation is one of the two largest bands in the province with a population of approximately 8,400 members who live within eight communities that stretch from Prince Albert to the northeastern parts of the province.

SIAST is Saskatchewan's primary public institution for post-secondary technical education and skills training, recognized nationally and internationally for its expertise and innovation. Nearly 12,000 students are registered in SIAST programs, which touch every sector of the economy; additionally, the organization draws more than 28,000 individual course registrations. More than 2,300 students participate annually in nursing programs at SIAST across the province.

-30-

For more information, contact:

Bill McLaughlin
Northlands College
Telephone (306) 425-4273

Arnette Weber-Beeds
Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation Health Services Inc.
Telephone (306) 953-4425
Cellular (306) 961-1574

Janet Miller
SIAST Communications
Telephone (306) 798-0306
Cellular (306) 527-4306