

Nelson Fentanyl Task Force Regional Work- ANKORS AGM 2025
April 1st, 2024, to March 31st, 2025

Nelson Fentanyl Task Force
Castlegar Fentanyl Opioid Working Group
Grand Forks Community Action Team



Talking with Premier Eby about Nelson and the amazing local response in the Kootenays in April 2025.

Nelson Fentanyl Task Force
Rural Inclusion in Community

I am grateful to live on the unceded, traditional territory of the Ktunaxa, Syilx, and Sinixt First Nations people. I honor the ancestors, and all Metis people, and Inuit people in this area. Thank you to all PWLE in who share their stories at meetings, again and again, to bring light to injustice in healthcare.

Nelson Fentanyl Task Force (NFTF) was founded in 2016 and is one of the first provincial community action teams in BC. I work with the provincial community action team groups in Nelson, Castlegar, and Grand Forks. We have 400 members on our lists. Our focus is to reduce stigma and improve education about substance use in our region. We work to centre the needs of People with Lived Experience of Substance Use (PWLE) or peers. We advocate to reduce cracks in the public healthcare system, based on local feedback from peers and service workers and community members. We work on a local grassroots level to improve access to low-barrier public healthcare and to advocate for peer-informed and peer-involved service delivery through ANKORS.

Our grassroots NFTF members were involved in supporting the establishment of the ANKORS Overdose Prevention Site in 2017, when ANKORS won the provincial Innovation Grant. Over the years, NFTF has been involved in educational anti-stigma work throughout the region, in collaboration with REDUN and HOPE peer networks.

Regular Meetings:

We have ongoing meetings for Nelson, Castlegar, and Grand Forks communities. We work to create space for the peer voice to be valued in meetings about healthcare, housing, and human rights. We focus on advocacy, service delivery at ANKORS, sharing new services, and establishing supportive relationships across agencies and groups. This year we are meeting every two months. Our meetings provide a space of community collaboration on critical issues involved in serving the community, especially our most marginalized peer populations.

Media:

NFTF makes ongoing media submissions and educates over email. We work to make sure people can find out about educational events. We encourage media attendance at public events. We advise the media about any Drug Alerts.

Collaboration and Advocacy:

This year I had the opportunity to attend the High Ground Event in Vancouver, put on by the Centre for Civic Governance. I brought City Councillor Leslie Payne from Nelson. I talked about the rural toxic drug crisis and the critical Overdose Prevention Site at ANKORS. Attendees at the event included Mayors, Councillors, labour groups, and educators from across British Columbia.

This year I had the opportunity to talk directly with Premier Eby, to share a bit about Nelson work. Ongoing I work to advise and advocate with healthcare and government around funding needs for ANKORS services. Our groups collaborate with REDUN and HOPE groups, municipal leaders, MLAs and MPs, and Interior Health staff, including population health and our medical health officers. We work to elevate and amplify the voice of local PWLE, and other service

providers, and to address their concerns around rural public health care and respond to their needs.

Attended the Housing Summit with Selkirk College in Nelson this year.

Education

NFTF supported in consulting and providing support for the recent large educational and anti-stigma event in Nelson with Guy Felicella and Cory Ranger. This was part of the Community Prosperity grant stream. I provided Elder Support for this event. There was also a panel of community experts.

Support for Grand Forks Education Tables and Castlegar Education tables in Fall of 2024 with plans to continue as possible this year.

We worked this year with meetings and NFTF Bulletins to educate group members about important issues related to the drug poisoning crisis, as well as important local services. We work to ensure our groups have the most current data from the BC Coroner's office and First Nations Health Authority. We share forward IH Drug Alerts to all group members and local news media as soon as they are released. We increased the size of our groups with new members.

International Overdose Awareness Day

Nelson and Grand Forks

August 2024

In Nelson, in August 2024, we had a great IOAD event with about 80 attendees at Cottonwood Park. We had info tables, media coverage, Elder support, REDUN poetry, our MLA and others. We made connections and supported each other and other community members coping with loss of loved ones. As always, this is a collaborative event with our amazing community action team member representatives. Great coverage as always by the [Nelson Star is here.](#)

In Grand Forks the CAT group had a successful IOAD day in 2024, with support from a local Metis Elder, the local Doukhobor community, the HOPE group, and local agencies involved in the Grand Forks CAT group. This year youth and peers were involved to share personal stories.

ANKORS had an info table in Castlegar as well to support their MSTH IOAD event in 2024. CFOWG group has done booths there since 2019 to mark the day, in collaboration with other groups. A peer event happened at the shelter with support from ANKORS.

CAT Network Annual Event

I will attend the provincial CAT event, in June 2025, in Vancouver representing for our local region. This year I will bring two youth substance counsellors from Freedom Quest.

I am able to network with other CAT groups through the province and learn more about advocacy and political work to further harm reduction efforts and the response to the drug poisoning crisis.

Ongoing I attend monthly provincial CAT meetings, so I attend to connect and collaborate with Community Action Initiative, and representatives from the Ministry of Health.

Housing Advocacy and Grand Forks Work

This year we have started a new group with special reps in Grand Forks to address important issues and housing and public health and welfare. We are fortunate to have the support of our Deputy Medical Health Officer for this work. Recently, we have created a housing advocacy letter and we will continue work to push for more housing here. Ongoing, there are booths in Grand Forks, to share resources.

Additional ANKORS work:

Knowledge Translation and Grant Submissions:

In addition to my work with the Community Action Teams, I work with ANKORS to help to file reports and grant submissions for ANKORS programs. This includes the helping to arrange grant meetings, writing grants, filing reports, doing interviews, and consulting on grants.