

LIFESTYLES



Celebrating the announcement of pilot program funding are left to right: NH tobacco reduction coordinator Andrea Fagan, NH primary health care coordinator Margie Wiebe, WRC NIC counsellor Lauren Aldred, WRC collective member Mary Gradnitzer, Health Canada tobacco program officer Shirley Thompson and Long Name Society family support worker Sandra Telford. Contributed photo

WRC funded for quit smoking program

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Observer Reporter

Women wanting to quit smoking may now turn to the Women's Resource Centre for help.

WRC has received \$10,967 to deliver a pilot program targeting marginalized adult women.

The program offers one day a week smoking cessation sessions either in group or individual sessions.

"Many of the women I've come in contact with are spending all their support money from Social Services on tobacco," WRC counsellor Lauren Aldred said.

"And that's only about half a pack a day."

As well as the long-term effects of smoking, there are some very immediate effects, Aldred said.

"It leaves no money for food," she added.

Aldred recently completed training through Northern Health for Nico-

tine Intervention Counselling, putting her in a good position to deliver the pilot program.

Funding is provided by Health Canada.

Aldred said they were keen on delivering this type of tobacco cessation pilot program in Quesnel.

"Community agencies like the WRC serve a different clientele than regular medical service providers," Aldred said.

"And that's part of what excites Health Canada."

Smoking in the North is nearly double that of the provincial average and Aldred said that number is even higher in First Nations communities.

She added tobacco companies, when profiling their target female markets, are very disrespectful and demeaning in their descriptions.

"They use such words as trashy and these women watch videos all day," Aldred said.

"I work with women who smoke and I would be happy if they never gave another cent to these disrespectful companies."

"I'd rather see them spend money on food."

WRC is working collaboratively with Northern Health and North Cariboo Aboriginal Family Program Society (Long Name Society).

Long Name Society is offering child-minding for women in the program.

The nine-week program is considered the ideal time frame for supporting women in their efforts to quit smoking.

Although funding is only until the end of the fiscal year, Aldred is optimistic it will be renewed for another two years.

She is also investigating the possibility in the new year of the same program for at-risk youth.

Anyone interested in this program, contact WRC 992-8472.