

# CONFIDENTIAL VIRTUAL CARE FOR SUBSTANCE USE: A CANADIAN FIRST FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS IN FRASER HEALTH REGION

*Ground-breaking project led by ALAViDA in collaboration with Fraser Health Authority, the Digital Technology Supercluster, and health care unions*



VANCOUVER, BC, CANADA, February 9,

2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [ALAViDA](#), Canada's first virtual care provider focused on the science of substance use management, announced today the expansion of a ground-breaking initiative to support the well-being of health care workers in the Fraser Health region. The ALAViDA TRAIL, initially delivered to 5,500 health workers across three sites, will expand to include all employees of the Fraser Health region, totaling 32,000 health care workers.



The COVID-19 pandemic has placed an enormous burden on dedicated frontline health care professionals"

*Sue Paish, CEO of the Digital Technology Supercluster*

The program is a collaboration of the [Digital Technology Supercluster](#) with the Fraser Health Authority, the BC Government and Service Employees' Union, the Hospital Employees Union, the BC Nurses' Union, the Health Sciences Association of British Columbia, Pacific Blue Cross

and the Healthcare Benefit Trust.

This innovative one-stop-shop approach delivers confidential resources directly to health care workers struggling with substance use via their digital devices. Workers can access a blend of virtual and real-world resources like behavioural coaches, therapists and physicians who work as a team to deliver personalized evidence-based programs. For example, a nurse who wishes to improve impulse control and strengthen decision making might engage virtually with an ALAViDA therapist for a short course of cognitive behavioural therapy, supported by online journaling, tracking of consumption, coaching and may even access medications through ALAViDA doctors.

The digital treatment program is powered by an AI companion that engages with each participant, building trust and sharing information about proven strategies to reduce the harms

associated with excessive use of drugs and alcohol. Workers interact with the platform using their smartphone from 15 to 90 days, depending on their individual care needs.

"Internet-based cognitive behavioural therapy combined with digital support tools and medication-mediated treatment as appropriate are a proven approach that enables earlier intervention and provides ongoing support for individuals facing substance use challenges," says Dr. Diane Rothon Co-Founder and Medical Director, ALAViDA. "In light of the unprecedented stress caused by COVID-19, there is urgency to increasing access to our program."

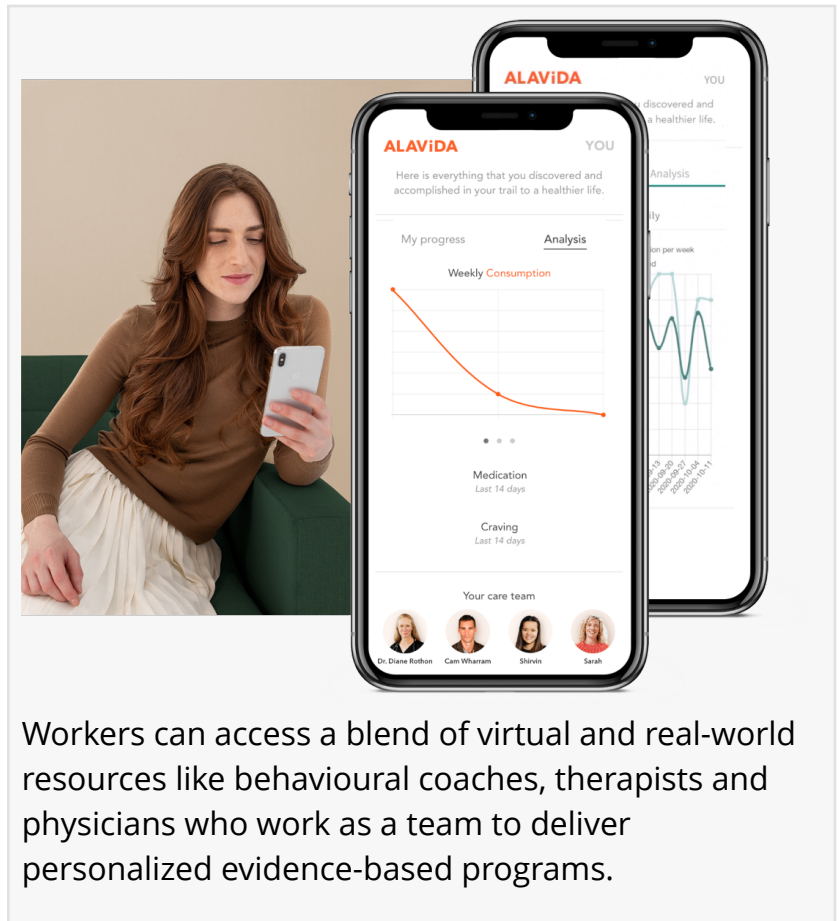
Today's announcement comes amid a surge in substance use during the COVID-19 pandemic. Front-line health care workers in British Columbia have seen a [75 per cent rise in overdose calls and a 22 per cent increase in overdose fatalities](#) .

"Health care workers face enormous challenges when seeking treatment, including workplace and social stigma, discipline and loss of livelihood. This emphasizes the importance of a proactive approach centered on accessibility and confidentiality, that is stigma-free with ongoing support," said Dr. Rothon.

This initiative was enabled through the strategic expertise and a financial investment from Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster.

"Working with the Digital Technology Supercluster has enabled us to accelerate the growth of our virtual health care solution for problematic substance use. They provided strategic expertise in support of our collaboration and were instrumental in bringing together the key regional stakeholders" said Elliot Stone, Co-Founder and CEO of ALAViDA. "The Digital Technology Supercluster support allowed us to take that individual tailored approach and scale it up to meet the needs of thousands of workers."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has placed an enormous burden on dedicated frontline health care professionals, said Sue Paish, CEO of the Digital Technology Supercluster. "This program is an excellent example of how organizations working together can create a digital solution to address



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a major challenge. Providing safe, secure, virtual substance use services is essential as we support those who are at the front lines in this health emergency. It's an example of the power of collaborative innovation at the heart of our Supercluster as we deliver solutions to protect the health and safety of Canadians through the development, deployment and scaling of made-in-Canada digital technologies."

## About and Media Contact

### ALAViDA

ALAViDA is Canada's first virtual care provider focused on the science of substance use management. TRAiL, our digital platform, connects members with behavioural coaches, therapists and physicians who work as a team to deliver personalized care right from your smart phone. With specialized packages for individuals, families and business, we support early intervention and help members set their own goals and achieve them – stigma-free, confidential and with 24/7 support. More than 82 per cent of members report greater control and reduced substance use in as little as six months.

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### Fraser Health Authority

Fraser Health is responsible for the delivery of hospital and community-based health services to over 1.8 million people in 20 diverse communities from Burnaby to Fraser Canyon on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples. Our team of nearly 40,000 staff, medical staff and volunteers is dedicated to serving our patients, families and communities to deliver on our vision: Better health, best in health care.

### Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster

Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster solves some of industry and society's biggest problems through Canadian-made digital technologies. We bring together private and public sector organizations of all sizes to address challenges facing Canada's health care, natural resources, manufacturing, transportation and other key sectors. Through collaborative innovation, the Supercluster helps to drive solutions better than any single organization could on its own. The Digital Technology Supercluster is led by industry leaders such as D-Wave, LifeLabs, LlamaZOO, Lululemon, MDA, Microsoft, Mosaic Forest Management, Sanctuary AI, Teck Resources Limited, TELUS, Terramera and 1Qbit. Together, we work to position Canada as a global hub for digital innovation. A full list of Members can be found [here](#).

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### Hospital Employees' Union

The Hospital Employees' Union is the oldest health care union in British Columbia – representing more than 50,000 members working in hospitals, care homes, community agencies, First Nations health centres and other settings.

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Director of Communications

#### BC Nurses' Union

BC Nurses' Union represents more than 48,000 professional nurses and allied health care workers, providing care in hospitals, long-term care facilities and in the community. We speak up and speak out for safe, quality, public health care. We value and respect diversity, and pride ourselves in providing protection, representation and services to all members.

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#### Health Sciences Association of BC

Health Sciences Association of British Columbia (HSABC) represents more than 20,000 health care and social services professionals delivering specialized care in hospitals, community health settings, child development centres, transition houses, and other community agencies across British Columbia.

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#### Pacific Blue Cross

Pacific Blue Cross is a Health Benefits Society and British Columbia's number one health benefits provider. Based in Burnaby, BC, the not-for-profit organization provides health, dental, life, disability and travel coverage for 1 in 3 British Columbians through group benefits and individual plans. As part of its mission to improve health and wellbeing for British Columbians, Pacific Blue Cross proactively supports charitable organizations across the province working to improve health outcomes. <https://www.pac.bluecross.ca/default.aspx>

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#### B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union

The B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU) is one of the largest unions in B.C. with over 80,000 members in almost every economic sector in the province. The union represents over 23,000 members working in health care from home support workers and care aides in long-term care facilities to women's clinics and mental health and addictions services.

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