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## **Friends of Health Sciences Award to honour two Kainai physicians for their work to curb fentanyl use**

This year's Friends of Health Sciences award recognizes two Kainai physicians who have shown exemplary leadership in mobilizing their community to respond to the fentanyl crisis. The work of Dr. Susan Christenson and Dr. Esther Tailfeathers has saved numerous lives.

Christenson and Tailfeathers have individually launched several initiatives on the Blood Reserve in response to the fentanyl crisis. Tailfeathers was instrumental in bringing Narcan kits, an antidote to fentanyl overdose, to the community and educating people on their use. Christenson took the necessary steps to get a license to prescribe suboxone, an opiate similar to methadone that reduces drug cravings and gives fentanyl addicts the best chance at recovery.

"We are very pleased to honour Dr. Tailfeathers and Dr. Christenson for their persistent efforts to better the lives of people in their community," says Dr. Chris Hosgood, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Christenson practices at the Lavern clinic and now works with nearly 70 patients who want to stop using fentanyl or other opiates. She is also an active advocate for using harm reduction strategies such as Narcan. Christenson has started yoga classes to provide her patients with a non-narcotic therapy for physical pain.

Tailfeathers practices medicine in Standoff and Cardston and provides service to Fort Chipewyan one week a month. She sounded the alarm about fentanyl use beginning in 2014 and started rallying the community and reaching out to local and national government bodies to organize the delivery of Narcan kits. Tailfeathers also empowered the community to organize the Blood Tribe United in the Healing Journey Conference.

The awards will be presented at a dinner on Thursday, Oct. 15, in the Markin Hall Atrium. Tickets are \$50 each or \$400 for a table of eight and can be purchased online at [Friends of Health Sciences Award](#).

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**Contact:**

Caroline Zentner, public affairs advisor

403-394-3975 or 403-795-5403 (cell)

[caroline.zentner@uleth.ca](mailto:caroline.zentner@uleth.ca)