

## **True North Community Engagement Area**

### **Kaska-Tlingit Communique**

**Fall 2015**



**First Nations Health Authority**  
Health through wellness

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Coordinator,**

**True North Engagement Area (Kaska-Tlingit) Community Engagement Area**

The True North Engagement Area is comprised of the three most northwestern First Nations communities in BC. These communities share many common strengths and areas of concern in the areas of health and wellness. Resiliency, spirit of community and the necessity of accessing many healthcare services in the Yukon are among these commonalities.

Mental Wellness is an area of focus for this area. Mental health assessments, navigation of services (both within BC and the Yukon, as well as between them), advocacy, and access to regular services and education are all requirements.

Patient Journey Mapping in the areas of mental wellness, substance use and primary care will take place in November, with representatives from each community, Northern Health Authority, FNHA and Yukon Health Services (as well as other involved agencies in each community). Due the patterns and necessities of service access in different areas, at least two mapping events will take place to be most respectful and thorough of the patient experience in this area. These maps will then be matched with those already completed in the Northwest to give a broad picture of the patient journey in our region.

#### **Dease River First Nation**

The Dease River First Nation in Good Hope Lake, is located approximately 112 km from the community of Watson Lake, Yukon and 137 km from Dease Lake.

The community has recently hired a new Health Worker who has been working closely with the existing Health Worker, Marilyn Miller, Chief Ruby Johnny and the members to identify areas of strengths and areas of local interest for improvement and concern. The community is focusing on mental wellness, including elder and youth wellbeing, safe transportation, traditional medicines, recruiting nurses and licensed elder care services. As there are currently no primary care services in Good Hope Lake, this is an area of priority.

Community members took part in first aid training in the Spring and were looking forward to sending two members to the Red Cross First Responder training through FNHA for the Northwest region, which is wrapping up in Terrace close to the time of the Northwest Sub-Regional Caucus.

Having members who are well trained in first aid has been a priority for DRFN as there are currently no primary care services and travel times to nearby medical care are long.

Dease River First Nation has also recently completed a Youth Hunting Camp funded by FNHA, which included young men from the community, guides and elders in a week-long living on the land. Hunting and language learning are part of the camp activities. Meat that is harvested is also provided to the community, there is empowerment and knowledge passed on to the youth and an opportunity for the entire community to come together in traditional wellness.

### **Daylu Dena Council (DDC)**

The Daylu Dena Council in Lower Post is located approximately 23 km from the Yukon community of Watson Lake. DDC, Deputy Chief Walter Carlick and Executive Director Cannan Khoza have been working together with community, leadership and health staff to prioritize and plan for improvements in Health and Wellness. Mental Wellness, healing and illness prevention training and recruitment and retention of staff are current areas of focus.

DDC has been working with FNHA's Capital Projects to upgrade and plan for dental services in Lower Post with a dentist committed to providing service regularly in the community, accessible by Dease River and neighbouring communities.

DDC continues to advocate for funding to support the destruction of the current Administration offices currently housed in the former Lower Post Residential School and to rebuild a positive space for the Nation to do its work.

### **Taku River Tlingit First Nation**

The Taku River Tlingit First Nation in Atlin is located approximately 180 km from the city of Whitehorse YT. Atlin is inaccessible by road from BC, and as such, residents must at minimum, pass through the Yukon to access healthcare services.

The Social and Health Manager, Kate Kittredge, is working with the Clan Director who holds the Social and Health portfolio, Toni Welch and Spokesperson Louise Gordon, leadership and the community to continue the process of Comprehensive Community Planning (CCP) with one area of focus on Health and Wellness. Phase 2 of this process is beginning this fall with the community CCP team working together for the next steps.

Priorities for this community include improving access to BC mental wellness services, improving the relationship between Yukon service providers and FNHA, increasing traditional ways of wellness and community as well as improving elder and youth services.

Taku River Tlingit First Nation, FNHA and NHA are currently planning a local AHIC gathering in November with a focus on increasing healthy activity in the community.

The Grades 7-9 students of the Atlin School worked with local TRTFN Master Carver, Wayne Carlick, to carve and raise a Welcome Pole at the entrance to the town of Atlin for the local Aboriginal Day Celebrations. The entire community of Atlin and the TRTFN participated, danced, sang, and were honoured to host members from nearby Tlingit communities of Carcross and Teslin.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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