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## Communique | Indian Residential School Support Program November 12, 2013

On October 1, 2013 the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) accepted responsibility for the design, management and delivery of Health Canada funded health programs and services for First Nations in province of British Columbia. To date, this transition has been remarkably successful and a tribute to the effort and dedication of many service delivery organizations.

However, not all federal health programs were included in this initiative; one of these exceptions is the Indian Residential School (IRS) Resolution Health Support Program (RHSP). Given the legal obligations of the Government of Canada to Indian Residential School survivors and their families as outlined in the *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement*, the Parties did not transfer this program in the same manner as other programs.

The FNHA has entered into a service arrangement to deliver the IRS RHSP on behalf of the Government of Canada. In accordance with this service arrangement, the RHSP will continue to be delivered in British Columbia as part of a national program with the same program terms and conditions that exist in other parts of the country. The Government of Canada is committed to providing these mental health services for the duration of the IRS Settlement Agreement and in 2012 announced an investment of an additional Canada wide investment of \$238.9 million until March 31, 2016. The BC portion of this investment will be allocated in February 2014. In addition, Canada and the First Nations Health Council created a separate MOU enabling BC First Nations through the FNHC, to raise recommendations for improvement for the RHSP.

For IRS RHSP's service delivery organizations who provide RHSP emotional and cultural support services, the FNHA will be working directly with you to manage and negotiate these agreements. The FNHA is planning for discussions to be held this December with existing and new contribution agreement holders about funding arrangements for IRS RHSP health support services for the coming fiscal year. In the meantime, should you have any questions about the RHSP or availability of other mental health and addictions services supported by the FNHA please contact Mariel Hong at [Mariel.Hong@fnha.ca](mailto:Mariel.Hong@fnha.ca) or 604-666-3751.

New and existing RHSP clients should see little change in how they access or use the Program. The IRS RHSP phone number (1-877-477-0775) will remain the primary point of contact to access services in BC. Former IRS students and their families can also access the 24 hours a day, 7 days a week National IRS Crisis Line at 1-866-925-4419.