



For Immediate Release  
October 1, 2014

First Nations Health Authority  
BC Ministry of Health  
Health Canada

## **One year anniversary of historic BC First Nations Health Services transfer**

**COAST SALISH TERRITORY (Vancouver, BC)** - The First Nations Health Authority, British Columbia Ministry of Health, and Health Canada are pleased to mark the one-year anniversary of the historic transfer of health services for BC First Nations previously administered and delivered by Health Canada to the new First Nations Health Authority on October 1. The First Nations Health Authority is the health and wellness partner to First Nations in BC and supports community-based health service delivery for 203 communities in the Province through 135 Health Centres. Services focus primarily on health promotion and disease prevention in areas such as Children, Youth and Maternal Health; e-Health Technology; Environmental Health and Research; First Nations Health Benefits; Health Infrastructure and more.

A first for Canada, the partnership among First Nations communities in BC through the First Nations Health Authority, First Nations Health Council, First Nations Health Directors Association, and tripartite partners signifies a new way of working in First Nations health and brings decision-making closer to home and into the hands of First Nations. Over the past year the partners have successfully collaborated on five regional primary care projects, extended telehealth services now to 38 communities, and reduced service times for the delivery of Health Benefits, among others. Along with each Regional Health Authority in BC and the Provincial Health Services Authority, the FNHA has developed key partnerships other provincial bodies like the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, Dental Surgeons of BC, and Pharmacists, as well as the Doctors of BC and Universities across the Province.

This transfer of health services was more than ten years in the making. It was initiated by previous leaders in agreements that outlined a new path forward that enabled First Nations communities to own their health and wellness decisions, and design and deliver their own health services in partnership with Provincial, Federal, and B.C. health authority partners. The partners acknowledge this historic one-year anniversary and look forward to continuing our diligent work together to achieve the vision of healthy, self-determining, and vibrant BC First Nations children, families, and communities.

### **Partner Quotes:**

Lydia Hwitsum, First Nations Health Authority Board of Directors Chair—

“On the one year anniversary of transfer we are pleased about our work to improve services and wait times across benefit areas, foster new collaborative relationships with key service partners, and make initial transformative changes to health services for First Nations people in BC. In one year we have created the foundation for First Nations communities to have greater self-determination over their health outcomes with the ability to design, deliver, and measure what health and wellness means to them.”

Honourable Rona Ambrose, Federal Minister of Health—

“The First Nations Health Authority is clearly demonstrating the value of empowering First Nations with the administration of their health programs and services. Even one year after the historic transfer, it is evident that



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness



the FNHA's wellness approach and connection to communities is generating positive change. Health Canada is proud to be a partner and is an enthusiastic supporter of this transformative change process."

Honourable Terry Lake, British Columbia Health Minister—

"When we achieved this historic milestone one year ago, we knew this was a first for B.C. and a model for all Canadians. Now, one year out, the First Nations Health Authority has taken great strides in improving health for First Nations communities, through partnerships and together, we are focused on providing high quality care to First Nations particularly in rural and remote communities. I congratulate them on their first year, and look forward to many more."

Grand Chief Doug Kelly, First Nations Health Council Chair—

"Today we celebrate the successes of First Nations decision-making and proactive partnerships. After the hard work of many we are now in a place where First Nations people can take ownership of the decisions that impact their health and wellness. Working together with our health partners we are able to collaborate on new projects and initiatives that improve the health and wellbeing of First Nations peoples in BC."

Honourable John Rustad, British Columbia Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation—

"One year ago today, for the first time in Canada, First Nations in B.C. assumed control over the administration of health services to their communities. Ensuring First Nations have a leadership role enables stronger monitoring of health outcomes and provides significant health benefits to First Nations' communities throughout British Columbia."

### **Background Documents and Key Agreements:**

News Release: [Tripartite Partners Signify New Path Forward with Historic Transfer of Health Services for BC First Nations - Oct. 21, 2013](#)

[British Columbia Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance](#) (2011).

[Tripartite First Nations Health Plan](#) (2007),

[Transformative Change Accord: First Nations Health Plan](#) (2006)

[Transformative Change Accord](#) (2005)

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