

Northern First Nations Health Partnership Committee Communique

January 9, 2014

*Hadi** and well wishes for the new year! On January 9, 2014, the Northern First Nations Health Partnership Committee (NFNHPC) held its first meeting of the year. Since the last meeting in September, 2013, much work has been accomplished. On October 22-24, 2014 the *draft Northern First Nations Health and Wellness Plan* was presented to the Northern Chiefs at the Gathering Wisdom for a Shared Journey VI forum in Vancouver, BC and was agreed to “in Principle”. The Chiefs requested that a final round of consultation be undertaken with northern First Nations communities. The consultation was completed in December, 2013. Comments and advice from the people were gathered, responded to and included in the *Health and Wellness Plan*. This revised *Plan* was presented to, and unanimously approved by, the Northern First Nations Health Partnership Committee and will now be presented to the Northern Chief’s at their Regional Caucus in March 2014.

The *draft Northern First Nations Health and Wellness Plan* was also endorsed by the Northern Health Board of Directors at their October 24, 2013 Board Meeting.

There are 12 goals listed in the *Health and Wellness Plan*. While attention will be given to all throughout the year, four will be given specific priority in 2014. The priority goals are: cultural competency, primary health care, public and population health, and mental wellness and substance use. Communication between the Aboriginal Health Improvement Committees (AHICs) and HUB coordinators is also viewed as important operationally. The Partnership Committee also reviewed the associated implementation work plans for these priorities. Now the work can begin in earnest. Watch for release of the *Northern First Nations Health and Wellness Plan* and updates of the work as it unfolds in the months to come.

This meeting was also a time of acknowledgement. Nicole Cross was recognized in her new role as Northern Regional Director, First Nations Health Authority. Congratulations Nicole!



At the request of the Northern First Nations Health Partnership Committee in September, 2013 a draft *Aboriginal Health: What to do with questions, concerns and complaints* was developed. This document is intended to provide people with information if they have questions or wish to express a concern or complaint about their interactions with the health care service system. The Committee approved the draft with some minor changes to be done. Watch for this document in the next few months.

Rounding out our meeting was a Learning Opportunity, now a standing item on our agenda. This activity is alternated between the partners and is intended to provide members with further opportunities to learn about the organizations and systems they are interacting with. Tammy Watson, committee member, remarked, “*these are opportunities to learn together in a great, supportive environment. We are going in the right direction.*” This meeting’s learning focused on the activities of the Aboriginal Health team within Northern Health.

Each meeting moves us closer to our goals. Carefully crafted plans, directed by the First Nations of northern BC, are near completion, priorities are set and actions identified. Therese Hagan (NW Technical Representative: Health Director) summed up the day stating, “*I am pleased with the work that happens between meetings. There is always forward movement and a commitment to making change.*”

*As part of our Communique, we are trying to include northern First Nations languages. We are beginning with a Carrier greeting which means, “Hello!”