

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Renewed Partnership Accord signals commitment to improving health and wellness for Vancouver Island First Nations

COAST SALISH TERRITORY (Nanaimo) – In a ceremony today, a number of health partners have signed a renewed commitment to partnerships for better health and wellness services and outcomes for First Nations families, children and communities on Vancouver Island.

Chiefs, Elders and community members from Nations across the Island joined representatives from First Nations Health Authority, Island Health and First Nations Health Directors to celebrate the signing of the renewed *Vancouver Island Partnership Accord*.

“From the historic creation of the First Nations Health Authority, to the landmark partnership accords, we have seen great progress come out of our shared goals for the health of Aboriginal and First Nations peoples in B.C.,” said Health Minister Terry Lake. “We are learning so much together about providing culturally safe, respectful care in the health system.”

The first Vancouver Island Partnership Accord was signed by the parties in 2012 to strengthen partnerships and shared decision-making towards a shared goal of improving health outcomes and creating a more integrated, culturally appropriate, safe and effective health system for Indigenous peoples on Vancouver Island.

The renewal builds upon lessons learned over the past four years through engagement with Vancouver Island First Nations about all aspects of health and wellness. It represents the ongoing growth, evolution and strengthening of the partnerships, shared purposes and collaborative processes.

“This Accord illustrates just how far we have come as partners. Island First Nations, supported by the First Nations Health Authority, are now involved in the design and delivery of culturally safe programs and services for their members and the broader Indigenous community,” said Joe Gallagher, CEO, First Nations Health Authority. “We look forward to continuing to strengthen our relationships and health services in support of healthy, self-determining and vibrant BC First Nations children, families and communities.”

“When we are responsive to the values of Indigenous Peoples in a way that is inclusive, innovative and culturally safe, we allow care barriers to come down,” said Dr. Brendan Carr, President and CEO, Island Health. “This partnership represents our commitment to removing barriers by listening to the needs of community members and delivering health care that is welcoming and respectful at all times.”

The signing ceremony included a retrospective presentation highlighting achievements stemming from the partnership accord over the past year. In addition, partners acknowledged

Wickaninnish Cliff Atleo Sr.'s significant contributions towards improving the health and well-being of First Nations people through his work on the First Nations Health Council.

For more information, visit www.viha.ca/aboriginal_health and www.fnha.ca/about/regions/vancouver-island.

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Attachment (1): Partnership Accord

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