

**Nlaka'pamux Nation and Interior Health Sign New Agreement on Health Partnership**

**Nlaka'pamux Territory - Merritt, BC** - The Nlaka'pamux Nation and Interior Health are signifying a new health partnership that focuses on improved health programs and service delivery for Nlaka'pamux Nation members and all First Nations and Aboriginal people in the area.

The Letter of Understanding (LOU) is the fifth of seven agreements underway by Interior Health to strike new relationships with First Nations in the Interior region who make up 6.3% of the region's population and 23% of the provincial First Nations population. The agreement identifies concrete actions in the areas of service delivery, communication, and joint planning through meaningful participation and collaboration.

It outlines a cooperative approach to improving the health status of individuals, families and communities through the design, delivery and evaluation of health programs and services, working towards more culturally appropriate health services with the integration of First Nations cultural and spiritual practices.

The Nlaka'pamux Nation is committed to developing health and wellness opportunities for all their members and this LOU recognizes the role Chiefs and Health Directors have in improving the health of Nation members in all Nlaka'pamux communities. This LOU is one of many steps Nlaka'pamux Nation members and other First Nations throughout BC are taking to continue their journey towards better physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Nlaka'pamux Nation members welcome the partnerships being developed to reduce the barriers for their community and all First Nations and Aboriginal people when they need to access health services.

**Chief David Walkem - Cook's Ferry Band** – *“This LOU with our partner Interior Health is an important beginning in transforming our local health care services to be more culturally relevant and will ultimately lead to healthier and more vibrant First Nations Children, Families and Communities.”*

**Jim Adams - Health Director, Scw'exmx Community Health Services** – *“Scw'exmx Community Health is excited to have our excellent relationship with IHA confirmed through the LOU. We are looking forward to expanding our conversations with IHA to encompass new and innovative ways to raise the level of wellness for our members and expect this MOU to open doors for other Nlaka'pamux Nation members to do the same.”*

**Ko'waintco Michel – Nation Representative & First Nations Health Council Interior Member** – *“I see the LOU as the first step in improving communication between the Nlaka'pamux Nation communities and Interior Health Authority. Specifically the LOU will allow our on and off reserve members to learn more about what services are available to them.”*

**Norman Embree - Board Chairman, Interior Health** – *“It's a great day when we can stand together with First Nations and sign an agreement that increases our ability to make best health service decisions together.”*

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