



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

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March 21, 2019

Important Health Services and Benefits Information for First Nations Clients on Vancouver Island and in Powell River

For enquiries about health benefits you may call the FNHA toll-free number at: 1-855-550-5454. Phone lines are staffed Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Effective April 1, 2019, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) will assume responsibility for administering First Nations Health Benefits (FNHB) services to First Nations communities that have been served by the Inter Tribal Health Authority (ITHA).

The FNHA is working with the providers of vision, medical supplies and equipment, and mental health services to make sure they remain ready to serve their First Nations clients. (For more information on health benefits, see below.)

What is happening to First Nations Health Benefits?

First Nations clients will continue to receive the health benefits, funding and services they are entitled to. Eligibility, rates and policies for FNHA-funded programs and services will remain the same. Only the administrator of those benefits and services is changing.

Individual clients may direct any questions to the FNHA's toll-free Health Benefits Support Line at: 1-855-550-5454. The FNHA is working directly with First Nations communities and health centres to make arrangements for other services, such as community nursing, that the ITHA had administered. Our goal is to ensure continuity of care.

Which Nations are affected by this change?

The ITHA has administered vision, medical supplies and equipment (MS&E), and mental health benefits for 31 communities. It also administered medical transportation benefits for three of those communities.

The communities affected by this change are:

- o Da'naxda'xw First Nation
- o Dzawada'enuxw First Nation (Tswataineuk/Kingcome)

- o Esquimalt First Nation
- o Gwa'Sala-Nakwaxda'xw
- o Gwawaenuk Tribe
- o Homalco First Nation
- o Klahoose First Nation
- o K'ómoks First Nation (Comox)
- o Kwakiutl First Nations
- o Kwiakah First Nation
- o Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis (Kwicksntaineuk/Gilford Island)
- o Lake Cowichan First Nation
- o Lyackson First Nation
- o Mamalilikulla- First Nation
- o Namgis First Nation
- o Nanoose First Nation (Snaw-Naw-As)
- o Oweekeno/Wuikinuxv
- o Quatsino First Nation
- o Pacheedaht First Nation
- o Penelakut Tribe
- o Qualicum First Nation
- o Scia'new First Nation (Beecher Bay)
- o Snuneymuxw First Nation
- o Songhees First Nation
- o Stz'uminus First Nation (Chemainus)

- o T'Sou-ke
- o Tla'Amin First Nation (Sliammon)
- o Tlatlasikwala First Nation
- o Tseycum First Nation
- o We Wai Kai First Nation (Cape Mudge)
- o Wei Wai Kum First Nation (Campbell River Indian Band)

How can we access First Nations Health Benefits?

Vision Care and Medical Supplies and Equipment (MS&E)

- Clients will be able to access benefits as they did previously – through their health care providers. Prior approval requests and invoices submitted by health care providers can be sent to FNHA Health Benefits.
- Clients can submit requests for reimbursement to FNHA Health Benefits.

Mental Health

- Clients seeking counselling can book an appointment with a mental health provider registered with the FNHA. The list of registered providers can be found on our [website](#) or clients can call FNHA Health Benefits for support.
- Mental health providers can submit prior approval requests to the FNHA Health Benefits.

Medical Transportation

- Members of the Dzawada'enuxw First Nation (Tswataineuk/Kingcome), Gwawaenuk Tribe, and the Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis (Kwicksntaineuk/Gilford Island) can now call the FNHA Health Benefits Plan at 1-855-550-5454 to organize travel for a medical appointment outside of their community of residence.

Why did the FNHA terminate its funding agreement with ITHA?

First and foremost, the FNHA is committed to safe and quality care and services for First Nations clients. The concerns that eventually led to the decision to terminate the ITHA agreements began to emerge almost three years ago. These concerns include complaints from more than one-third of the communities served by the ITHA about recurrent service delivery failures.

A [2016/2017 independent audit](#) identified operational concerns at the ITHA board and management level. The ITHA leadership did not accept or remedy the issues identified in the audit. The FNHA issued termination notices for its funding agreements with the ITHA effective April 1, 2019.

For clients who wish to learn more you can read the [details here](#).