



First Nations  
Health Council

# FIRST NATIONS HEALTH COUNCIL

## Mental Health and Wellness Proposal

### PURPOSE

Building on the promising progress in health, the FNHC is proposing a partnership with Canada and BC focused on improving mental health and wellness systems and services for First Nation children, youth and families in BC.

The FNHC is advocating for a long-term funding commitment from Canada and BC to create a flexible funding envelope that BC First Nations can use for community-based mental health and wellness services.

### BACKGROUND

Since 2015, the FNHC has been engaging First Nations on the social determinants of health — the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age, and the wider set of forces shaping the conditions of daily life. Through these engagements, mental health and wellness emerged as the top priority for action across all regions.

In many cases, untreated trauma, mental health and substance use are the root causes and risk factors that contribute to the current situation in the child welfare and criminal justice systems, higher occurrences of family violence, lower levels of education attainment, and higher rates of chronic disease, depression and substance use disorders. The current crisis in the child welfare and criminal justice systems perpetuates pain and trauma for children, youth and families.

To improve health, education and socio-economic outcomes, First Nations must develop strategies and solutions that interrupt the intergenerational transmission of trauma. This will require actions and approaches aimed at healing and the rebuilding of families and communities.

A strong, shared focus on mental health and wellness by all partners can be the foundation for a government-wide approach to prevention and mental health promotion.

### NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The Province of BC has created a new Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. There are currently ten provincial Ministries responsible for mental health and substance use services in BC. The result, as First Nations have described, is a system that makes it difficult for families to access timely, culturally safe and trauma-informed services. The new Ministry is developing a provincial strategy to improve the coordination of mental health care in BC.

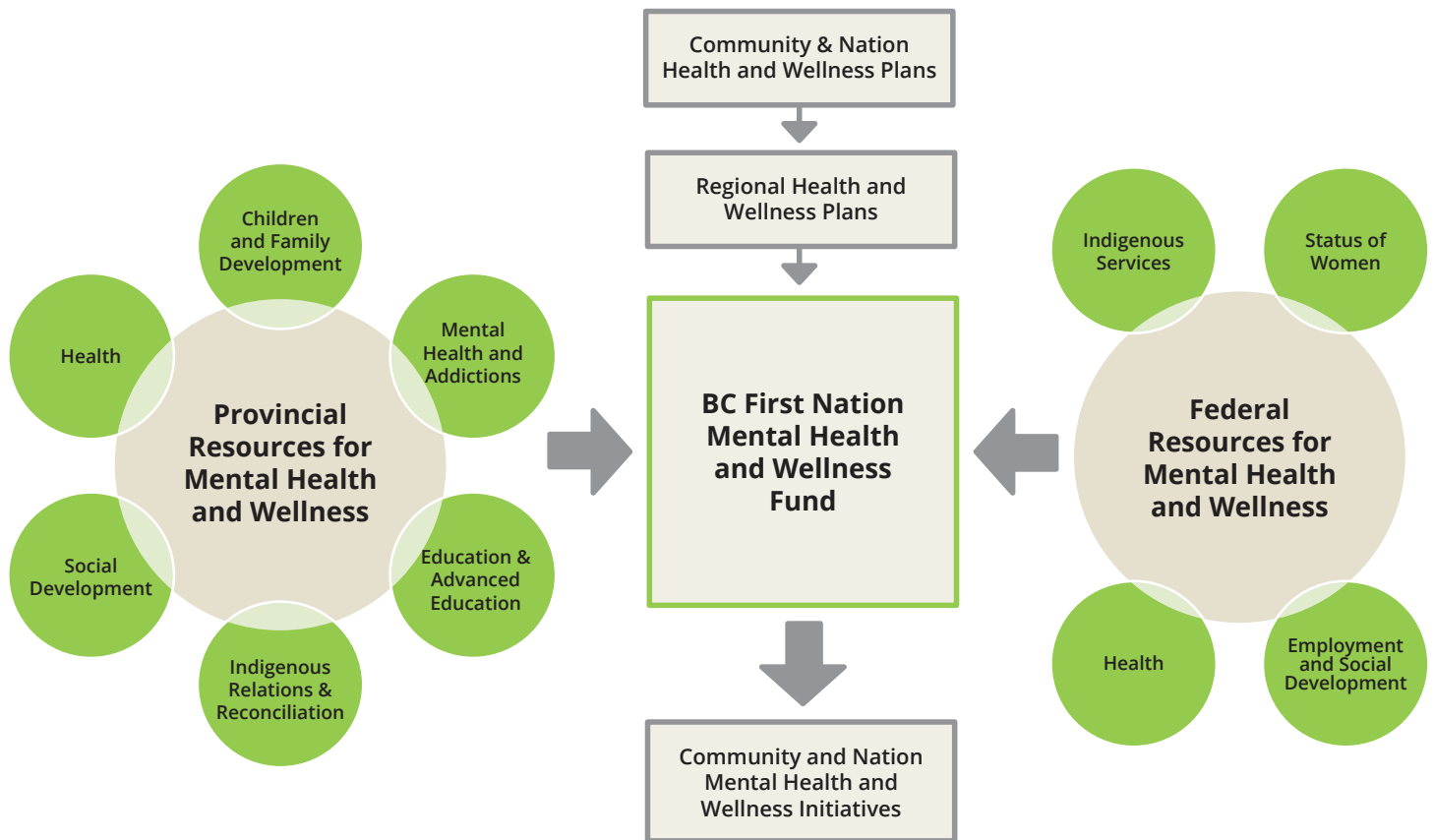
### PROPOSING A PARTNERSHIP MODEL

Working in partnership with Canada and BC, there is an opportunity to improve the mental health and wellness system that currently serves First Nation children, youth and families in BC.

The FNHC is proposing a new partnership model for mental health and wellness with Canada and BC. This includes:

- Secure a long-term funding commitment from Canada and BC for mental health and wellness.
- Create a pool of funds that First Nation communities in BC can use to plan, design and deliver a continuum of community-based mental health and wellness services with a focus on prevention, community capacity building, early identification and intervention, and service coordination for children, youth and families.
- Support an ongoing process of engagement and planning with First Nations to ensure new investments in mental health and wellness align with the priorities of First Nations.
- Create new partnerships at regional and provincial levels to facilitate cross-government collaboration on mental health and wellness.

The diagram below illustrates the proposed partnership model:

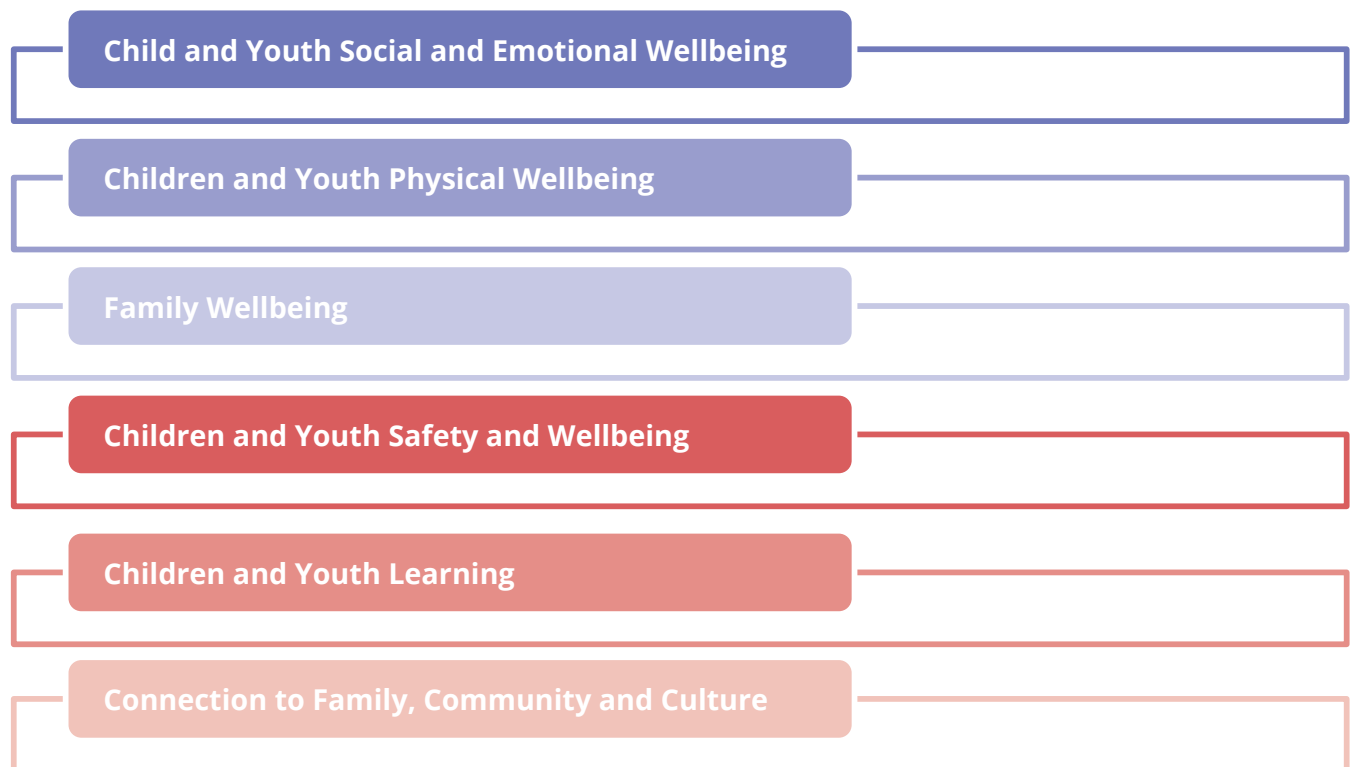


## INVESTING IN OUTCOMES

A key focus of this proposal is providing First Nation communities the flexibility to design and deliver mental health and wellness services in ways that work for them. First Nations have been clear that funding needs to be flexible, predictable and focused on outcomes. To work wholistically, it is important to knock down silos, remove unnecessary rules, and significantly simplify the process to receive and report on funding.

In establishing a new flexible funding envelope, the FNHC is proposing that funding focus on key outcomes determined by the community — not the terms and conditions of a funding agreement.

The diagram below proposes possible outcomes:



## DISCUSSION

It is important to note that no decisions have been made on this proposal. This document is intended to spark discussion with Chiefs, Leaders and Health Leads on a new approach for funding mental health and wellness services.