



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

# Paddling Together:

First Nations Health Authority  
2025/2026 Summary Service Plan



## OUR BRAND

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) brand is based on the thunderbird, a traditional symbol of transformation and healing. The crescent around the thunderbird represents our environment, families, communities and the context in which our health is determined. The thunderbird's wings reach beyond this crescent, working within our context, but looking to break new ground in First Nations health. The thunderbird is shown looking up to signify a healthy future.

The design was created by Andrew (Enpaauk) Dexel, a Nlaka'pamuz artist well known for his prints and paintings.



**First Nations Health Authority**  
Health through wellness

### **Paddling Together Towards Health and Wellness: 2025/2026 FNHA Summary Service Plan**

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*The work represented in this plan was carried out on the unceded territories belonging to self-determining First Nations in what is now British Columbia. The First Nations Health Authority acknowledges and thanks those whose wisdom, knowledge and contributions are reflected in this plan.*

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## Paddling Together: Our Plan at a Glance

Our Plan is depicted as a canoe and is reflective of the shared journey we are on with First Nations in British Columbia (BC) as we paddle together towards the vision of healthy, self-determining and vibrant BC First Nations children, families and communities.

This journey is one of unity, resilience and strength. It keeps us connected to our history and to the people we serve. As we paddle ahead together, we continue to remember to look back at our journey and hear the wisdom of those who charted the course before us. Our 7 Directives, the foundations of the canoe, support us as we travel towards our Shared Vision, which is the skyline ahead keeping us focused. Our paddles reflect the work of the Regions in our travels.

Our journey moves in the direction set by First Nations through engagement, and is guided by the teachings from First Nations and the strengths of their knowledge, beliefs, values, practices and medicines. Our journey also supports the traditions of our matriarchs, who play an important role in bringing future generations into being and lifting up our two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual (2SLGBTQIA+) leaders working to decolonize gender and reclaim important roles they hold in many First Nations cultures.

This is a shared journey, one where First Nations are paddling with us in the front of the canoe and guiding our direction. Partners sit in the canoe with us to support our vision and tackle the waterway challenges we face. We know that our canoe journey will take time and that it needs to take in all aspects of health, including physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness. We are committed to change and we invite you into the canoe with us.

# *Shared Vision: Healthy, Self-Determining and Vibrant BC First Nations Children, Families and Communities*



# Paddling Together: FNHA Health and Wellness Plan

## Our Guideposts



**First Nations  
Perspective  
on Health  
and Wellness**



**Quality**



**Culture and  
Decolonization**



**Urban and  
Away-From-Home**



**Innovation**

## GOAL 1



**Drive transformation  
through the BC First Nations  
Health Governance Structure  
and partnerships**

**1.1** Collaborate with the First Nations Health Council and the First Nations Health Directors Association to advance our shared vision and strengthen BC First Nations health governance and partnerships.

**1.2** Operate through excellence, strengthening regional decision-making and bringing services closer to home.

**1.3** Champion health and wellness with partners to advance social determinants of health.

## GOAL 2



**Enhance access to quality  
health and wellness  
services**

**2.1** Advance timely and equitable access to culturally safe, team-based primary care.

**2.2** Champion the BC First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness with First Nations.

**2.3** Transform FNHA programs and services in areas such as First Nations Health Benefits, health emergency management and Urban and Away-From-Home.



## GOAL 3



**Enhance culturally safe mental health and wellness approaches**

**3.1** Develop and implement a healing-from-trauma approach, focused on the root causes of trauma, including residential school legacies.

**3.2** Enhance access to a continuum of mental health and wellness approaches, emphasizing cultural healing and prevention.

**3.3** Implement harm reduction strategies for substance use and the toxic drug crisis.

## GOAL 4



**Advance First Nations approaches to addressing anti-Indigenous racism in health**

**4.1** Work with partners in BC to support a racism-free health system with embedded cultural safety and humility practices.

**4.2** Champion cultural safety and humility in BC through regional innovation, First Nations-led responses and service excellence.

**4.3** Advance First Nations approaches to addressing complaints.

## GOAL 5



**Drive health and wellness innovation together with First Nations and other partners**

**5.1** Champion BC First Nations initiatives, supporting capacity building and sharing of innovative practices.

**5.2** Advance First Nations data governance principles, health research partnerships and evidence-based data.

**5.3** Leverage innovative partnerships to advance creative and health and wellness initiatives.



## Introduction and Who We Are

We are honoured to share the *Paddling Together: First Nations Health Authority Summary Service Plan* for 2025/2026 (our Plan). This marks the fourth year of our Plan and includes goals, strategies, annual operational priorities, guideposts and performance measures for our work ahead.

The Plan builds on what we have learned and heard as well as the health and wellness achievements accomplished together with First Nations in BC. These achievements include bringing services closer to home; expanding mental health and wellness and primary health-care supports; and establishing an emergency response structure.

Our Plan also considers the changing environment in which our work takes place. Currently, we are faced with political and financial instability, which presents new and dynamic challenges we must adapt to. Recent years were marked by two significant public health emergencies: the toxic drug crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic both of which continue to have far-reaching effects on the health and wellness of First Nations in BC. It has now been nine years since the Toxic Drug Crisis was declared a public health emergency in 2016. There are heightened and likely long-term challenges related to changing climate conditions, including floods, wildfires and extreme temperatures. Systemic

anti-Indigenous racism in health care is ongoing and the uncovering of unmarked graves at former residential school sites also continues to have significant impacts, amplifying the importance of addressing the root causes of trauma through healing. Our Plan seeks to further leverage and build on opportunities and developments within the broader health system, including those related to the [\*United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples\*](#) (UNDRIP), anti-Indigenous racism, the 10-Year Strategy on Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), primary health care and addressing the root causes of trauma.

In April 2023, the FNHA finalized a new ten-year funding agreement with the Government of Canada, which secured \$8.2B in dedicated funding from 2023/24-2032/33 to advance our work at the community level, the regional level and within our central service functions.

*Our Plan* is built on the groundwork that has been accomplished so far and draws on the strengths of our partnerships with First Nations in BC and others to chart a journey forward, one that considers flexible, innovative and responsive approaches to our environment while advancing and transforming programs and services that support First Nations in BC.





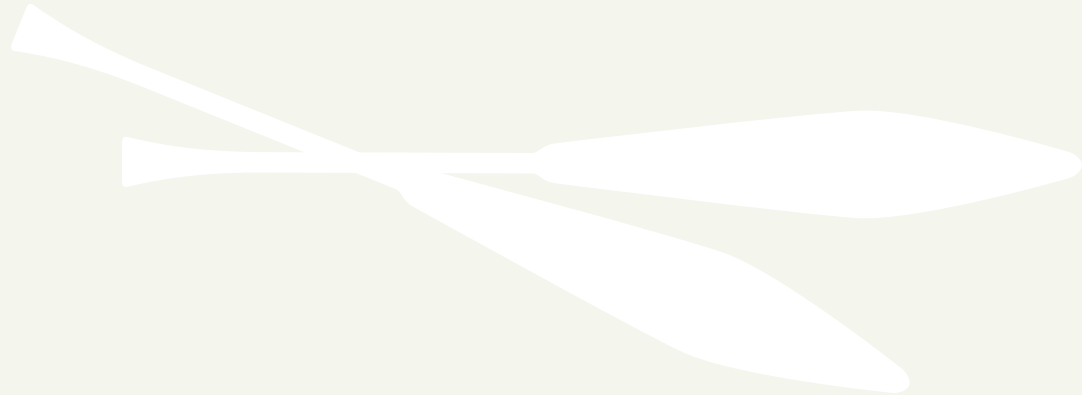
## Who We Are

The FNHA is a health and wellness partner to over 200 diverse First Nations communities and their citizens across BC. We are working to transform and reform the way health care is delivered to First Nations. The FNHA is one component of the health governance structure established by BC First Nations to strategically advance First Nations health and wellness perspectives, interests and priorities.

Informed through regional processes, the FNHA works alongside its governance partners – the First Nations Health Council (FNHC) and the First Nations Health Directors Association (FNHDA) – to achieve our Shared Vision of ***“Healthy, Self-Determining and Vibrant BC First Nations Children, Families and Communities”*** and to pursue strong health partnerships and integration with federal and provincial governments.

It is befitting that our vision includes reference to self-determination, as health and wellness and self-determination go hand in hand. It is vital to the achievement of our goals that First Nations continue to drive decision-making over the design and delivery of health systems, programs and services.

Our work is grounded in the ***First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness*** – an approach that defines the FNHA as a health and wellness organization that is different from other health authorities and organizations. In accordance with our values and 7 Directives, we pursue excellence in the delivery of our mandate.









A woman with long dark hair, wearing a tall woven straw hat and a white knitted vest with black geometric patterns, stands in a forest. She has her hands on her hips and is looking upwards with a smile. The background is a dense forest of green trees.

**FNHA, FNHC, FNHDA  
SHARED VISION:**

*Healthy, Self-determining  
and Vibrant BC First Nations  
Children, Families and  
Communities*

# FNHA MISSION

The FNHA supports BC First Nations individuals, families and communities to achieve and enjoy the highest level of health and wellness by: working with them on their health and wellness journeys; honouring traditions and cultures; and championing First Nations health and wellness within the FNHA and with all of our partners.

The work of the FNHA and its partners is guided by the **7 Directives** provided by BC First Nations Chiefs and Leaders:

1. Community-Driven, Nation-Based
2. Increase First Nations Decision-Making and Control
3. Improve Services
4. Foster Meaningful Collaboration and Partnership
5. Develop Human and Economic Capacity
6. Be Without Prejudice to First Nations Interests
7. Function at a High Operational Standard

**Shared Principles** guide the Tripartite work amongst the FNHA, FNHC, FNHDA and federal and provincial partners:

- Lead with culture
- Honour those who paved the way
- Maintain unity and discipline
- Create strong relationships
- Engage at the appropriate level
- Respect each other's process

# Shared Values

The FNHA, FNHC and FNHDA conduct our efforts with one another in accordance with our **Shared Values**:

## Respect

We believe that maintaining respectful relationships is fundamental to the achievement of our Shared Vision. Respectful relationships are built upon the recognition that we all have something to contribute as individuals, and participants in the First Nations health governance structure. Therefore, we commit to treating each other with dignity and generosity, being responsive to one another and acknowledging that each entity has their own respective processes and practices. We are also committed to respectful interactions with First Nations, Tripartite partners and other collaborators.

## Discipline

We have the historic opportunity to achieve transformative change in First Nations health and wellness, and an obligation to make the most of this opportunity. This will require discipline amongst us, including through: loyalty to one another and our Shared Vision; upholding and supporting our roles, responsibilities, decisions and processes; maintaining and nurturing unity and a united front; integrity and reliability in fulfilling our commitments, and accountability to one another for these commitments and contributions; and, solutions-oriented and active participation.

## Relationships

We believe that effective working relationships with First Nations, Tripartite partners and with one another are the foundation for achieving our vision and implementing our health plans and agreements. We commit to fostering effective working relationships and camaraderie underpinned by: trust; honesty; understanding; teamwork; and mutual support. We also acknowledge that humour and laughter are both good medicine, and a good way to build relationships.



## Culture

We are here because of those that came before us, and to work on behalf of First Nations. We draw upon the diverse and unique cultures, ceremonies, customs and teachings of First Nations for strength, wisdom and guidance. We uphold traditional and wholistic approaches to health and self-care and strive to achieve a balance in our mental, spiritual, emotional and physical wellness.

## Excellence

We are humbled and honoured to have been asked by First Nations to work on their behalf to improve health and wellness, and have a moral and personal responsibility to strive for excellence. Excellence means that our outcomes are sustainable, that our processes are professional and transparent, and that we commit to learn continuously – through capacity development opportunities, from each other and from new, different and innovative models worldwide.

## Fairness

We work to improve the health and wellness of all First Nations in BC. Our decision making reflects the best interests of all First Nations, and leads to just and equitable treatment amongst all First Nations communities and First Nations organizations across all regions of BC. We are committed to make room for everyone, and are inclusive in our communications, information-sharing and discussions.

## Honouring Those Who Paddled Before

Our history is an important part of our journey. Through the Health Partnership Accord, our leadership encouraged us to reflect on and honour those who have paddled before us – to honour the wisdom of those who brought us to where we are today. For this reason, we focus not just on where we are going, but also on where we have been.

Since time immemorial, healthy, self-determining and vibrant First Nations, individuals, families and communities thrived throughout what is now known as BC. Guided by their teachings and traditions, Nations have planned and provided for the health and wellness of their families and communities. A common thread across the diverse First Nations cultures in BC is a wholistic perspective on health and wellness, reflecting the interconnectedness of the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual facets of life.

Many attempts were undertaken, including through policies and direct acts of colonialism and racism, to disrupt the health and well-being of First Nations people. Despite these attempts, First Nations people remained resilient and strong, and the establishment of the FNHA is an expression of that strength, self-determination and resistance to colonialism.

The FNHA respects First Nations self-determination, which serves as an important focal point for health and wellness for many First Nations people and is a determinant of health. First Nations leadership have fought for many years to pave the way for health system transformation.



## First Nations Health Governance Structure in BC

In 2005, First Nations in BC and federal and provincial governments committed to a shared agenda through the Transformative Change Accord to establish a new relationship based on mutual respect and recognition and develop plans to bridge the differences in socio-economic outcomes between First Nations and other British Columbians, including in the area of health.

This work culminated in a series of agreements between First Nations leaders and the federal and provincial governments to confirm the First Nations Health Governance Structure and the creation of the FNHA, FNHC and FNHDA. It was also through this process that the 7 Directives were established by BC First Nations.

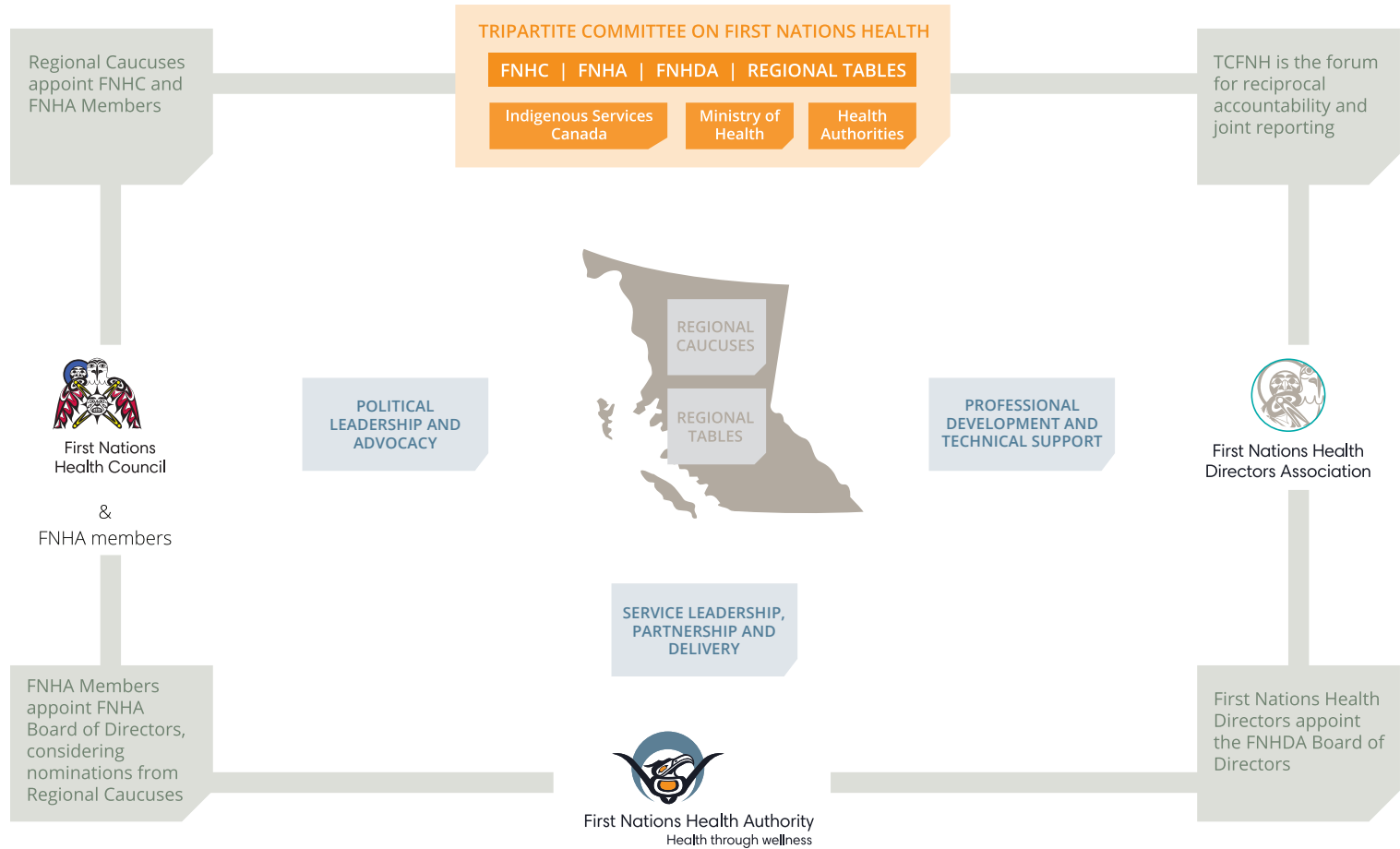
The 7 Directives, together with the agreements, serve as the foundation for our work and contain important commitments related to our relationships, including reciprocal accountability. They guide how we approach service delivery, engage with First Nations people and work with our health governance partners to strategically advance health and wellness perspectives, interests and priorities.

We raise our hands to First Nations and the work that they have done throughout the years since transfer within their communities, families and Nations and together at regional tables. The FNHA is honoured to be a partner in health system transformation.





## First Nations Health Governance Structure in BC



## Our Approach to Planning

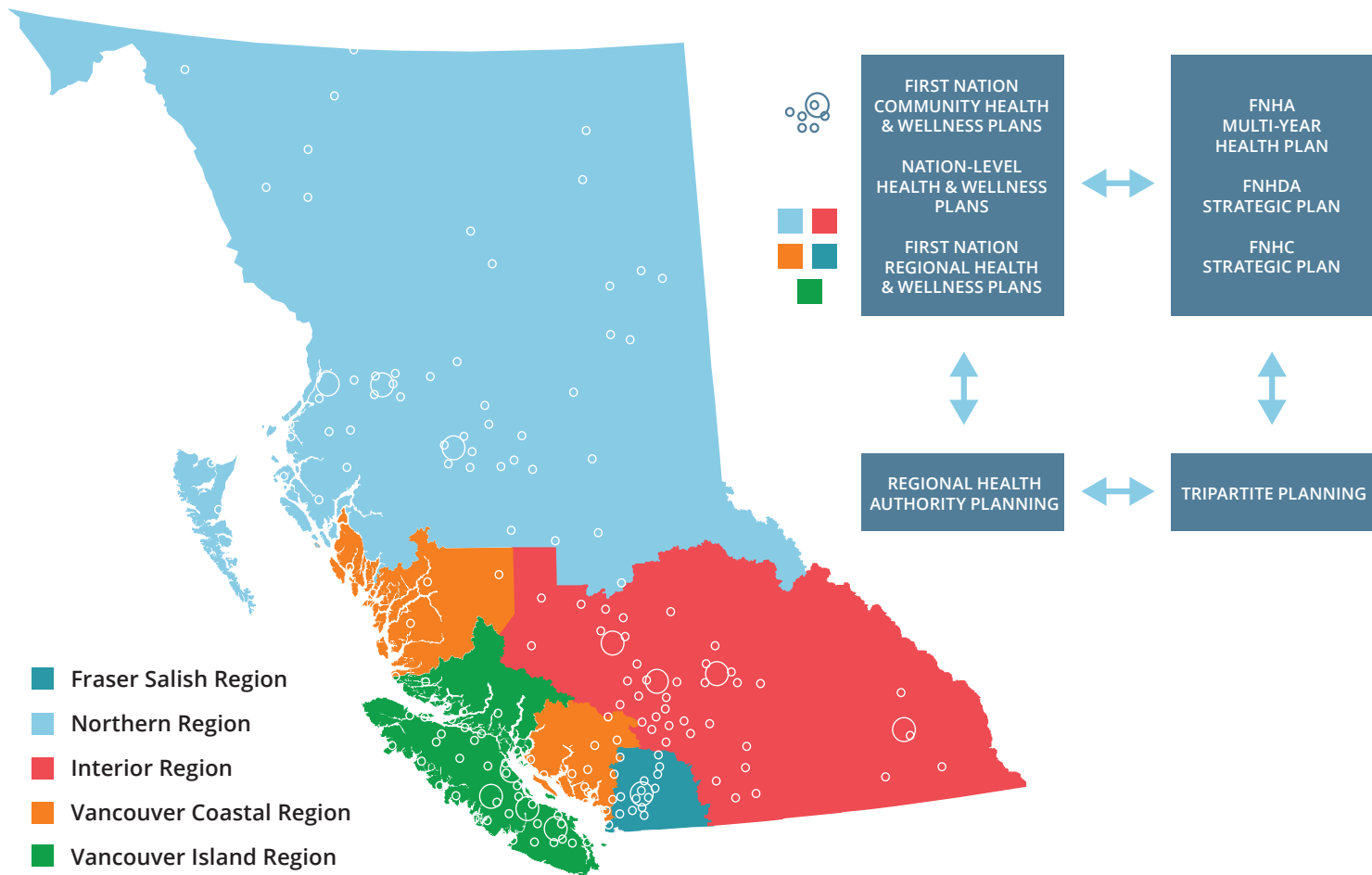
The FNHA uses an ecosystem-based, ground-up approach to planning that begins with the priorities, goals and perspectives expressed by First Nations in BC.

In this approach, community or Nation Health and Wellness Plans inform Regional Health and Wellness Plans, which in turn inform FNHA plans. Available resources are aligned with identified priorities by way of a multi-year financial strategy.

This method of planning respects community-based, Nation-driven processes and helps to ensure that activities at these different levels support and are complementary to one another. This approach also works to ground the activities in the 7 Directives, our operating principles and other guiding elements.

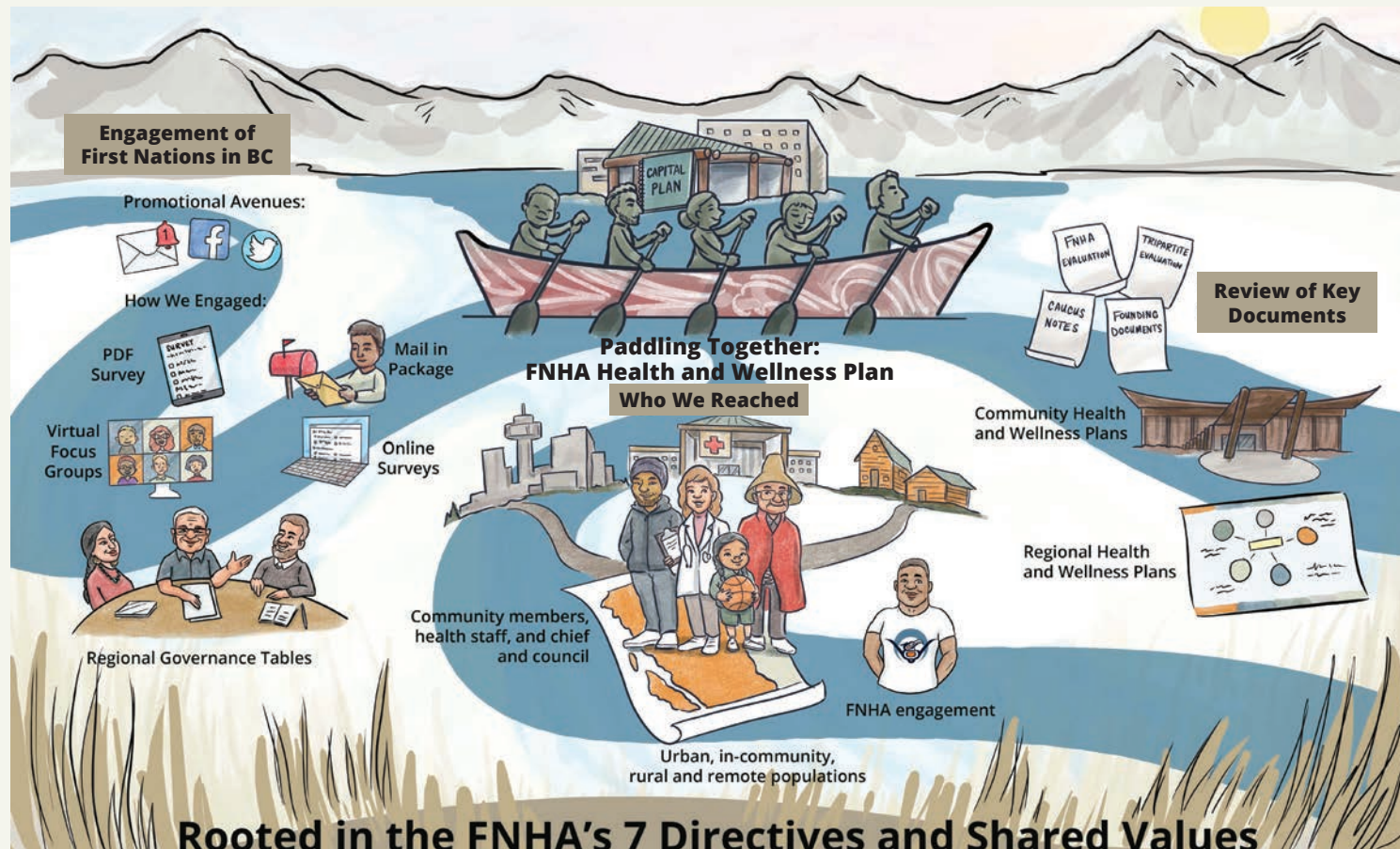






# Pathways Informing Our Plan

Our health and wellness journey moves in the direction set by First Nations through engagement. We therefore purposefully cast a wide net to guide priority-setting and stay grounded in *Directive 1: Community-Driven, Nation-Based*. Our process involved several concurrent approaches and is guided by First Nations in BC through various pathways.



## Listening to First Nations

We aligned our priorities with what First Nations told us through a multi-pronged engagement approach. These engagements, held in 2020 and 2021, included open provincial sessions and on-request regional and sub-regional sessions with community members, Chiefs and leaders and health staff, as well as mail-in and online surveys. The FNHA communicated engagement opportunities through various FNHA channels, regional teams and communication pathways, presentations at regional tables and Caucus sessions, and FNHC and FNHDA pathways. In addition to engagements, we reviewed community and regional health and wellness plans to gather information on community priorities.

## Learning from our Story

To reflect on and learn from our journey so far, our Plan considered the findings from key evaluations, such as the [\*Evaluation of the British Columbia Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance \(2019\)\*](#) and the [\*Evaluation of the First Nations Health Authority \(2020\)\*](#). These evaluations capture the stories of change related to the work of the Tripartite partnership. They are important markers and reflection points for the FNHA. They are also part of FNHA's ongoing commitment to monitoring, evaluating and reporting on our progress.

## Informing our Plan

Our Plan is also informed by data on the health and wellness of First Nations living in BC. A key source is the 2021 [\*First Nations Population Health and Wellness Agenda\*](#) and the 2024 first interim update, which provides data on 22 indicators of First Nations wholistic health and wellness to measure progress against. Another important source is [\*Sacred and Strong: Upholding our Matriarchal Roles \(2021\)\*](#), which contains data, stories and teachings about the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health and well-being of BC First Nations women at every phase of life.

## Refreshing our Plan

As we move forward, we continue to listen to communities, reflect and learn from past lessons and new evidence. Every year, we look to the plans, reports and engagement data coming forward from communities, Nations and Regions to check that our goals and strategies remain aligned with the priorities of First Nations in BC.

This refresh of Paddling Together was informed by a comprehensive environmental scan that drew on a diversity of sources, including a review of community and regional health and wellness plans, evaluation findings and engagement feedback. The scan also included a review of research on new and emerging trends impacting health and wellness services, health outcomes, and the FNHA's operating environment.

## Our Plan for 2025/2026

Our Plan articulates the FNHA's goals, outcome statements, strategies and a set of operational priorities for 2025/2026. As we embark on the fourth year of the FNHA's Multi-Year Health Plan (2022/23-2026/27), we are staying true to our course overall with no major changes to main components of our Plan; our guideposts, goals, strategies and performance measures. These priorities, along with culture, are also at the forefront of ongoing funding discussions with partners.

We continually seek to align funding with what we hear from communities as well as evidence of the areas of greatest need, utilization and economic pressures, including inflation. Together with our First Nations Health Governance partners, we build on the successes of the past ten years and work to secure funding that allows us to continue transforming our health system and innovating in the areas of health and wellness that First Nations in BC have identified as most important.



## Goals and Strategies

Our **goals** are a statement of a strategic-level aspiration of the FNHA for the duration of our Plan. As part of our planning approach, our goals align with regional priorities identified in regional health and wellness plans. Each goal is coupled with an **outcome statement** that describes the desired changed state resulting from our course of action. **Strategies** are identified for each of our goals. They describe more specific mechanisms and processes by which the FNHA will work towards our desired outcomes as described by the outcome statements. Lastly, our Plan outlines **operational priorities** for the 2025/2026 fiscal year. These priorities are refreshed annually to reflect the evolution of our work areas and activities.

## Evaluating and Measuring our Progress

The FNHA is committed to ongoing learning and improvement and remaining responsive and accountable to First Nations in BC through performance measurement, reporting and evaluation. We continuously monitor on the progress made on our Plan's goals and strategies through an evergreen performance measurement framework and publicly report our progress in the FNHA Annual Report. Monitoring facilitates ongoing real-time quality improvement and responsiveness to the evolving needs and priorities of First Nations in BC and changes in the broader health ecosystem.

Through evaluations, we gain wisdom and identify wise and innovative practices and lessons learned, including successes and challenges. As required in our agreements, every five years, the FNHA completes and publicly shares an evaluation. The [Evaluation of the FNHA](#) measures progress against the goals and strategies outlined in our Plan. Other complementary evaluations, such as the mandated [Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance](#), are also undertaken. Mandatory evaluations as well as those related to programs and services are prioritized based on our Plan goals and strategies and key informational needs.

A number of **performance measures** are noted in strategies and outcomes under each goal, along with the direction we will use to monitor our progress. Our measures are framed from a First Nations perspective. Stories, which First Nations have used for thousands of years, figure prominently as a data source to consider the impacts of our efforts.

## Guideposts

Our Plan also includes **guideposts**, topics of focus that flow across all 5 of our goals. They reflect what we consistently heard throughout our engagements with First Nations in BC and are intended to keep us grounded and offer ongoing direction as we implement our Plan's goals and strategies.

# Our Goals and Strategies



**GOAL 1:**  
Governance and  
Partnerships



**GOAL 2:**  
Access to  
Quality Services





**GOAL 3:**  
Mental Health  
and Wellness



**GOAL 4:**  
Addressing  
Anti-Indigenous  
Racism



**GOAL 5:**  
Health and Wellness  
Innovation

# Governance and Partnerships



# GOAL 1

## Drive transformation through the BC First Nations Health Governance Structure and Partnerships

### Alignment with Regional Priorities:

| FRASER SALISH  | INTERIOR  | NORTHERN   | VANCOUVER COASTAL   | VANCOUVER ISLAND  |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Implement social determinants of health funding and engage on governance and health legislation. | Uphold Nation autonomy and self-determination by evolving and transforming governance and partnerships. | Ensure meaningful engagement with BC Health Governance Partners through collaboration and self-reflection. | Assess elections impacts, build capacity closer to home, refresh regional health governance and prioritize youth. | Empower community through established engagement and governance pathways. |

The BC First Nations Health Governance Structure was created by and for First Nations in BC to bring decision-making closer to home. Within the structure, the FNHA, FNHC, FNHDA and the Tripartite Committee on First Nations Health committed to work together based on reciprocal accountability – collaborating at all levels to achieve shared goals and living up to individual and collective commitments – to build a more integrated health system for First Nations people. Reciprocal accountability also commits us to work together as partners to develop responses, measures and strategies when faced with challenges.

For the duration of our Plan, the FNHA will continue to focus on the 7 Directives and build upon the partnerships, engagement pathways and the structures on which our collective work is based. Applying what we have learned from past engagements, we remain focused on health system transformation and decolonization for the benefit of First Nations in BC. We will advance work with

health governance partners to take action on First Nations priorities around embedding First Nations Perspectives on Health and Wellness throughout the system. We will also work to influence a broader, more holistic perspective of health and wellness that addresses the social determinants of First Nations health and wellness and recognizes the foundational importance of UNDRIP for our work and the health system.

The FNHA will continue to focus on operating through excellence in all that we do. Work under this goal will include the development and phased implementation of a sustainable plan with additional FNHA operations regionalizing and bringing services closer to home. The focus is for the FNHA regional offices to have the necessary capacity, resources and supports to respond to community needs and priorities while maintaining organizational cohesiveness.



## GOAL 1:

**Drive transformation through the BC First Nations Health Governance Structure and partnerships**

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### **Outcome:**

A transformed health system in BC reflecting First Nations priorities, supported by the First Nations Health Governance Structure.

#### **Strategy 1.1**

Collaborate with the FNHC and the FNHDA to advance our shared vision and strengthen BC First Nations health governance and partnerships.

#### **Strategy 1.2**

Operate through excellence, strengthening regional decision-making and bringing services closer to home.

#### **Strategy 1.3**

Champion health and wellness with partners to advance Social Determinants of Health.

### **2025/2026 Operational Priorities:**

- Work with health governance partners to develop and implement a FNHA-FNHC-FNHDA Joint Action Plan.
- Strengthen processes for capturing, integrating and actioning what we hear through regional/community/Nation engagement and governance processes to amplify community/Nation voices and traditional wisdom in FNHA planning and initiatives.
- Develop and implement Region-specific plans for regionalization, in alignment with Operating Principles.
- Continue implementation of the 10-Year Strategy on the Social Determinants of Health Implementation Plan and strengthen reciprocal accountability with partners.

## Measuring our Progress

### Walking Together – We are One

Progress on evaluation recommendations, as measured by:

- % recommendations addressed
- Stories of collaboration

### Closer to Home

Services brought closer to home, as measured by:

- % planned transfers of programs, services and staff implemented
- % rating of quality of health care services available in community or Nation as good or excellent

### Decolonizing Systems

FNHA partnerships advancing improvements on Social Determinants of Health, as measured by:

- Stories

# Access to Quality Services





# GOAL 2

## Enhance access to quality health and wellness services

### Alignment with Regional Priorities:

| FRASER SALISH  | INTERIOR   | NORTHERN   | VANCOUVER COASTAL  | VANCOUVER ISLAND  |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Implement the 3 regional First Nations-led Primary Care Centres. Implement regional approach to Health Equity. | Increase First Nations decision-making and invest in infrastructure and capacity closer to home. | Work with community partners to implement primary care, nursing, mental health and other health and wellness services and initiatives. | Implement 2 Primary Care Centres and Phase 2 HEM strategy, regionalize environmental public health services and refresh urban health strategy. | Collaborate with communities and Nations to deliver high-quality services, prioritizing primary care, traditional wellness and cultural safety. |

The FNHA works with First Nations in BC to improve access to quality and culturally-safe services that match the priorities of First Nations. Crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the toxic drug crisis and residential school legacies have highlighted the importance of addressing barriers to care.

For the duration of our Plan, the FNHA will continue to work for equitable access to quality services as directed by First Nations in BC. This means enhancing access to programs and services funded and delivered by the FNHA, including primary care parental/caregiver and child health, traditional wellness, Elder wellness, youth wellness and health promotion. It involves working with our partners to improve the quality of care provided to First Nations in the health system.

It also means working with our partners to advance First Nations-led primary health-care projects and nursing services and virtual options to bring services closer to home. This work will include amplifying a wholistic view of health, healing and wellness across the continuum of care—from prevention and health promotion to aftercare, and championing these perspectives with our partners.



## GOAL 2:

### Enhance access to quality health and wellness services

#### Outcome:

Access to culturally-safe health and wellness and primary care that reflect First Nations perspectives of wellness.

#### Strategy 2.1

Advance timely and equitable access to culturally-safe, team-based primary care.

#### Strategy 2.2

Champion the BC First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness with First Nations.


#### Strategy 2.3

Transform FNHA programs and services in areas such as First Nations Health Benefits, health emergency management and urban and away-from-home.

### 2025/2026 Operational Priorities:

- Continue the implementation, operations and evaluation of the 15 First Nations-led Primary Health Care Centres, including strategies for sustainability and community ownership.
- Optimize virtual primary care services in alignment with in-person services.
- Advance evidence-based, safe and patient-centered care across FNHA-operated Health Centers and Nursing Stations, First Nations Health Service Organizations Centers and Virtual and Primary Care (Healthcare System).
- Promote awareness and culturally grounded health literacy on First Nations health and wellness priorities as identified in the Interim Population Health and Wellness Agenda Report and other relevant surveillance data.

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- 
- Implement initiatives to enhance sustainability of the First Nations Health Benefits Program and address gaps identified by First Nations in BC.
  - Support First Nations communities in adapting to a changing climate including preparedness for, response to and recovery from climate related emergencies, food security and protection of those at risk of climate-related health outcomes.

## Measuring our Progress

### Pathways to Access

First Nations clients' satisfaction with accessibility and cultural safety of FNHA primary care services

### Health Through Wellness

FNHA initiatives and programs that effectively incorporate First Nations perspectives on health and wellness, as measured by:

- Community feedback
- Stories

### Pathways to Access

Clients' satisfaction with transformed FNHA programs and services

# Mental Health and Wellness



# GOAL 3

## Enhance culturally safe mental health and wellness approaches

### Alignment with Regional Priorities:

| FRASER SALISH  | INTERIOR   | NORTHERN   | VANCOUVER COASTAL  | VANCOUVER ISLAND   |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Develop and strengthen programs and services for a regional mental wellness and substance use continuum of care. | Ensure access to and sustainable investments in Nation determined Mental Health and Traditional Wellness approaches. | Advance full integration of the Cultural Safety and Humility Framework across the Region and work towards level two toxic drug response. | Develop the youth mental health and wellness strategy, expand rapid treatment access, implement healing from trauma project and advance treatment and wellness centre. | Strengthen capacity and enhance services and programs within communities to advance improvement in mental health and wellness, and respond effectively to the toxic drug crisis. |

First Nations in BC continue to prioritize mental health and wellness. This includes approaches that support healing from the impacts of trauma, colonialism, and anti-Indigenous racism, the root causes of many challenges faced by First Nations people, by integrating culture and connection to the land.

The FNHA has invested heavily in improving the quality of local mental health and wellness services to meet community needs. With government partners, the FNHA has also invested significantly in First Nations-operated treatment centres, with more work to come. The FNHA will continue to prioritize support for wholistic, First Nations-led mental health and wellness initiatives. This includes prevention approaches that address the systemic

root causes of trauma and promote healing through reconciliation and Nation rebuilding.

Support for First Nations people to access a comprehensive continuum of mental health and wellness approaches will continue, including reaching urban and away-from-home populations and those in correctional facilities, and considering the diverse experiences of women, youth and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals. We will work to increase access to a culturally-safe continuum of mental health and wellness services and supports that focus on healing, prevention and harm-reduction using both First Nations and Western perspectives and approaches.





## GOAL 3:

**Enhance culturally safe mental health and wellness approaches**

### **Outcome:**

Healing from root causes of trauma through improved culturally-safe mental health, harm reduction and substance use approaches.

#### **Strategy 3.1**

Develop and implement a healing-from-trauma approach focused on the root causes of trauma, including residential school legacies.

#### **Strategy 3.2**

Enhance access to a continuum of mental health and wellness approaches, emphasizing cultural healing and prevention.

#### **Strategy 3.3**

Implement harm reduction strategies for substance use and the toxic drug crisis.

### **2025/2026 Operational Priorities:**

- Advance implementation of a network of Healing Houses and Modalities in each Region that integrates trauma-specific services and traditional wellness.
- Improve access to services and supports for mental health and wellness in community through the implementation of First Nations Treatment Centers, enhanced training, resources and partnerships.
- Strengthen capacity of addictions workers in community to take a First Nations harm reduction approach to all forms of substance use through training, connection and supports.

## Measuring our Progress

### Healing Journeys

Integration of healing from trauma approaches, as measured by:

- Stories from programs, services, organizations and clients

### Two-Eyed Seeing

Enhanced access to mental wellness and healing supports, as measured by:

- % of new/expanded mental health and wellness programs and services supported by the FNHA
- % of clients reporting satisfaction with mental health and wellness services

### Healing Journeys

Increased supports for healing and substance use, as measured by:

- % reduction of First Nations toxic drug overdose incidents and deaths in BC
- Stories of healing and the impacts of harm reduction approaches

# Addressing Anti-Indigenous Racism



# GOAL 4

## Advance First Nations approaches to addressing anti-Indigenous racism in health

### Alignment with Regional Priorities:

| FRASER SALISH                          | INTERIOR  | NORTHERN  | VANCOUVER COASTAL  | VANCOUVER ISLAND   |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| Transform the Complaints System/Model. | Improve the quality and safety of care by fostering a collaborative Nation-led approach through reciprocity and accountability of partners. | Lead with culture and hold health systems partners accountable to providing health services free of anti-Indigenous racism. | Support anti-racism in health services and improve the Compliments & Complaints Pathway with partners. | Continue to build trust and increase visibility with communities to ensure awareness and accessibility of the regional compliments and complaints pathway. |

Achieving health equity and eliminating anti-Indigenous racism in the health system are areas of focus for the FNHA and its First Nations Health Governance Partners. Our work is grounded in the evergreen FNHA-FNHC-FNHDA Anti-Racism, Cultural Safety & Humility Framework and Action Plan, which focuses on regional innovation, First Nations-led responses and enhancing service excellence.

The FNHA, FNHC and FNHDA cannot alone transform the health system into one that is culturally safe. Collaborative approaches and a commitment to transformative change are required to support a health system free of racism and discrimination, one where First Nations can access care that positively affirms their cultures, rights and identities.

A focus on First Nations-led approaches means commitment and accountability to upholding cultural safety and humility approaches and standards that resonate with First Nations. This includes culturally-safe experiences and accessible avenues for First Nations people to provide feedback on their experiences in health care. Recognizing that addressing anti-Indigenous racism is a long and complex journey, our work towards this goal is intended to help eliminate barriers and transform the health system.



## GOAL 4:

**Advance First Nations approaches to addressing anti-Indigenous racism in health**

### **Outcome:**

Culturally safe health care experiences where First Nations in BC feel heard, valued and seen.

#### **Strategy 4.1**

Work with partners in BC to support a racism-free health system with embedded cultural safety and humility practices.

#### **Strategy 4.2**

Champion cultural safety and humility in BC through regional innovation, First Nations-led responses and service excellence.

#### **Strategy 4.3**

Advance First Nations approaches to addressing complaints.

### **2025/2026 Operational Priorities:**

- Continue to promote the adoption of the BC Cultural Safety and Humility Standard and walk alongside our partners in taking action to address racism against First Nations peoples.
- Champion and action the FNHA BC Cultural Safety and Humility Standard self-assessment recommendations.
- Continue work with Regional Health Authority partners to establish and advance Region-specific pathways (blueprints) for culturally safe feedback and accountability.



## Measuring our Progress

### Cultural Safety and Humility

Progress on anti-racism, cultural safety and humility as measured by:

- Stories of FNHA-related work and accountability among health system partners
- % regional anti-racism and cultural safety initiatives on target

### Being heard, valued and seen

- # of new complaints models embedding First Nations feedback pathways

# Health and Wellness Innovation



# GOAL 5

## Drive health and wellness innovation together with First Nations and other partners

### Alignment with Regional Priorities

| FRASER SALISH  | INTERIOR   | NORTHERN  | VANCOUVER COASTAL  | VANCOUVER ISLAND   |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Implement the renewed Fraser Partnership Accord; Refresh of the Fraser Salish Regional Health and Wellness Plan. | Develop a regionalization approach that respects First Nations governance and leads to true transformation of health services. | Develop and implement new initiatives in primary care and mental health while engaging with First Nations community to drive self-determined innovations. | Support the implementation of the social determinants of health funding and reporting.<br><br>Develop Regional Summary Service Plan. | Utilize the review and update of the Regional Health and Wellness Plan to further regionalization and embed a cultural family-based approach to the delivery of programs and services. |

First Nations in BC continue to model and champion health and wellness innovation within their own communities and across Nations. As a health and wellness partner, the FNHA will continue to lift this work up. Our work will include collaborating with partners to access sustainable funding for innovative program and service delivery models. It will also entail the creation of a new First Nations Health Foundation to diversify our sources of funding and harness philanthropy dollars in support of the FNHA's mandate.

Over the duration of our Plan, we will learn from and amplify the creative direction and health and wellness priorities of First Nations in BC. This will include supporting training and access to

relevant health and wellness data, and focusing on partnerships that have impact in areas important to First Nations in BC. We will follow the wisdom of First Nations on how best to share innovations and new approaches, celebrating the health and wellness initiatives happening in communities and Nations.

Work towards this goal is intended to further embed First Nations data governance principles such as ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP®) into the health system, offering First Nations better access to – and greater control over – health and wellness data. Innovative partnerships with post-secondary institutions and other system partners will also be a focus.



## GOAL 5:

**Drive health and wellness innovation together with First Nations and other partners**

### **Outcome:**

Innovative community-driven, Nation-based wellness initiatives are supported and amplified throughout the health system.

#### **Strategy 5.1**

Champion BC First Nations initiatives, supporting capacity-building and the sharing of innovative practices.

#### **Strategy 5.2**

Advance First Nations data governance principles, health research partnerships and evidence-based data.

#### **Strategy 5.3**

Leverage innovative partnerships to advance creative health and wellness initiatives.

### **2025/2026 Operational Priorities:**

- Develop and implement a comprehensive health human resource strategy enhancing recruitment and retention to increase the number and capacity of First Nations staff at the FNHA, in community and across the health sector.
- Continue to advance the FNHA Data Strategy Pillar Priorities.
- Continue to advance the FNHA Digital Health Strategy Pillar Priorities.
- Advance community awareness and participation in research, ethics and First Nations Health and Wellness innovation, and operationalize First Nations principles of OCAP with all data initiatives.
- Continue work with government partners to strengthen commitments toward prioritizing First Nations-led health and wellness innovation with a focus on increasing access to culturally safe primary care services.

## Measuring our Progress

### Community-driven, Nation-based

Increased First Nations health and wellness initiatives, as measured by:

- % of FNHA wellness initiatives on target
- Stories

### First Nations decision-making and control

- % of initiatives generating new First Nations-specific data for decision-making

### Lifting one another up

Increase in partnership initiatives, as measured by:

- # of new partnership initiatives
- Stories of innovative partnerships



# Guideposts



**First Nations  
Perspective on  
Health and Wellness**



**Quality**



**Culture and  
Decolonization**



**Urban and  
Away-from-Home**



**Innovation**



## First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness

The [\*First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness\*](#) depicts a shared understanding of a holistic view of health and well-being. This view understands health and wellness journeys as being owned by the individual and influenced by families, communities, environments and other social determinants of health. It is intended to serve as a starting point for discussion by First Nations communities regarding their concepts of wellness for themselves and the FNHA.

## First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness

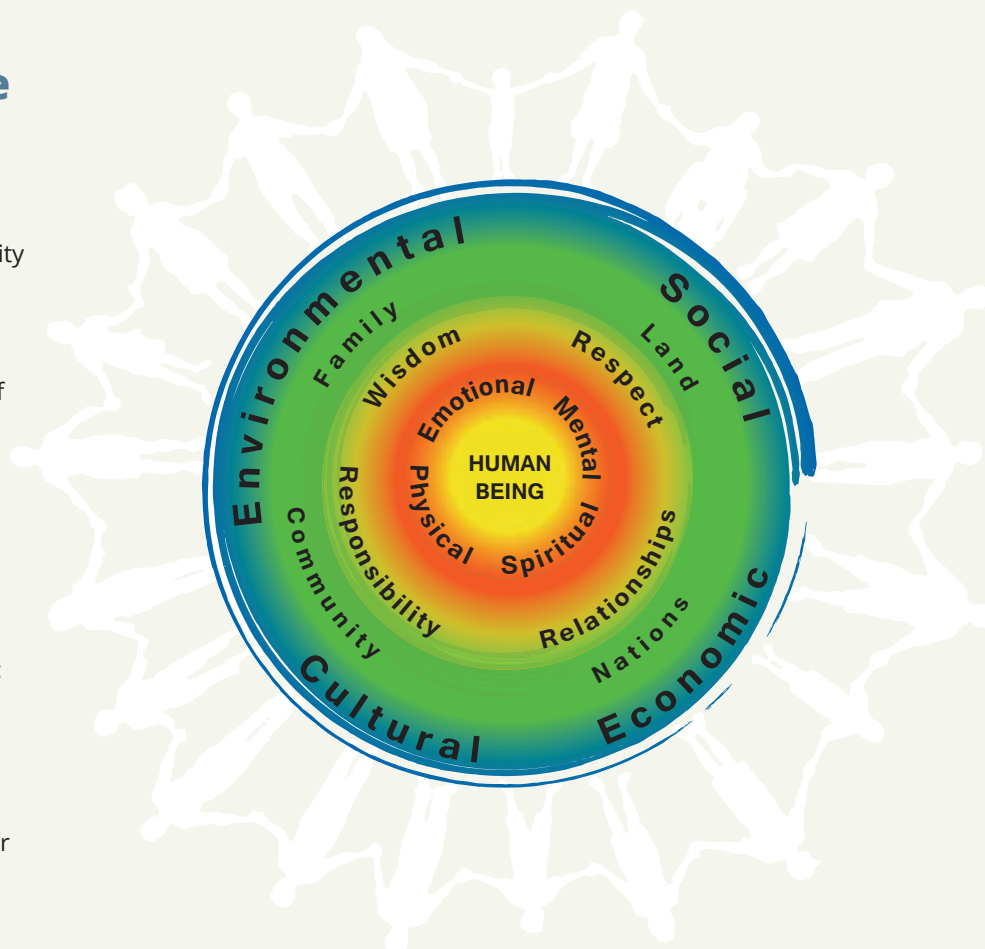
**The Centre Circle** represents the individual. Wellness starts with each of us taking responsibility for our own health and wellness.

**The Second Circle** illustrates the importance of mental, emotional, spiritual and physical facets of a healthy, well and balanced life.

**The Third Circle** represents the overarching values that support and uphold wellness: respect, wisdom, responsibility and relationships.

**The Fourth Circle** depicts the people who surround us and the places from which we come: Nations, family, community and land—all critical components of healthy experiences.

**The Fifth Circle** depicts the social, cultural, economic and environmental determinants of our health and well-being.





## Quality

The FNHA weaves quality improvement, standards and accreditation, client experience feedback and incident management into health and wellness systems across BC to improve health outcomes for First Nations in BC. This includes working with organizations, communities and health staff to support the delivery of person-centred care in a way that incorporates First Nations perspectives. It also involves working with our community, regional and provincial partners to enhance access to quality, culturally safe health care for First Nations in BC – in tandem with addressing systemic racism in the health system.

The FNHA strives for excellence and continual improvement by building on wise practices to inform decision-making and enhance the quality of programs and services. This includes gathering First Nations feedback on our programs and services, including the option for First Nations people to provide compliments and complaints through the Quality Care and Safety Office. This work is a key step towards aligning our work with the British Columbia Cultural Safety and Humility Standard as an organization, and providing a model for other health system partners to do the same.



## Culture and Decolonization

The connection to land, language and culture are foundational to First Nations health and wellness. Culture is a source of strength and identity for First Nations people. We embrace wisdom and guidance from communities and Nations to inform a health system that reflects culture. Our goals and strategies are directly tied to the five regional health and wellness plans, which embeds First Nations priorities and perspectives in our programs, services, partnerships and operations.

First Nations people continue to face significant barriers to wellness including systemic racism and colonization. The FNHA works together with our First Nations Health Governance Partners on addressing ongoing Indigenous-specific racism and colonialism. The FNHA, FNHC and FNHDA developed an Anti-Racism, Cultural Safety and Humility Framework and Action Plan (2021) which guides ongoing work towards a health system free from Indigenous-specific racism. The FNHA is committed to the transformation of the BC health system through First Nations ways of knowing, and by becoming a world leader in cultural safety and humility and Indigenous-specific anti-racism in the workplace.





## Urban and Away-From-Home

The FNHA strives to be a health and wellness partner to all First Nations in BC, regardless of where they live or access health and wellness services. A large proportion of First Nations people in BC live in urban areas or away from home. However, systemic, institutional, clinical, geographical and individual barriers often limit their access to mainstream health services. Additionally, this demographic is frequently excluded from meaningful participation in service design and delivery.

To address these challenges, the FNHA launched the [\*Urban and Away-From-Home Health and Wellness Framework\*](#) (UAH Framework) in 2020. The UAH Framework sets the foundation for being a health and wellness partner to First Nations people in BC living in UAH settings. The UAH Framework establishes principles and strategic directions to strengthen the FNHA's support for the urban and away-from-home population.

The FNHA is actively implementing the UAH Framework, aligning it with the five goals of our Plan. This work involves embedding the urban and away-from-home context into our daily operations ensuring the FNHA Regions and departments collectively contribute to support the health and wellness of all First Nations people in BC, regardless of where they live.

## Innovation

As a partner in health and wellness, the FNHA supports innovative approaches to improving the health and wellness of First Nations individuals, communities and Nations. As the first and only province-wide health authority of its kind in Canada, established by and for First Nations, the FNHA is itself a product of First Nations innovation. Key initiatives that the FNHA has undertaken in mental health and wellness and primary health care, such as the establishment of virtual health care services and the First Nations Primary Care Initiative, reinforce the role of innovation at the FNHA, and will continue to be integral to our work, both in the short-term and in the long-term.

This model of innovation, grounded in culture and our relationships with communities and Nations, continues to shape various areas of our work and bringing services closer to home. Over the short-term, the FNHA will be looking more closely at ways to apply innovation across all of the five goals in our Plan. Our focus will be on the practical and tangible steps we can take, not only in our operations, but also in our relationships, to adjust to new contexts and strategically pursue new opportunities that are important to First Nations.



# Moving Forward

*Paddling Together Towards Health and Wellness* maps the next phase of our journey as a First Nations organization. The FNHA looks forward to the work ahead with First Nations in BC, our health governance partners and other stakeholders to advance our five goals:

1

Drive health system transformation through the BC First Nations Health Governance Structure and partnerships.

2

Enhance access to quality health and wellness services.

3

Enhance culturally safe mental health and wellness approaches.

4

Advance First Nations approaches to addressing anti-Indigenous racism in health.

5

Drive health and wellness innovation together with First Nations and other partners.

Our Plan reflects the wisdom, guidance and direction shared by First Nations in BC and we continue to be grateful for this direction. The FNHA remains steadfast and unwavering in our commitment to uphold our Shared Vision, Values and the 7 Directives that ground our work on our journey together toward healthy, self-determining and vibrant BC First Nations children, families and communities.

**Dr. Sheila Blackstock**  
FNHA Board Chair

**Monica McAlduff**  
FNHA Chief Executive Officer



# Annual Budget 2025/26

## 2025/2026 Budget

### REVENUES

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Health Canada                               | 783,887,843 |
| Province of British Columbia                | 185,725,970 |
| First Nations Information Governance Center | 1,549,035   |
| Health Authorities                          | 2,157,698   |
| Interest Income                             | 16,312,128  |
| Miscellaneous Income                        | 4,519,163   |

|                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>TOTAL REVENUES</b> | <b>994,151,838</b> |
|-----------------------|--------------------|

### EXPENSES

|                      |            |
|----------------------|------------|
| <b>OPERATIONS</b>    | 59,333,953 |
| Corporate Operations | 59,333,953 |

### GOVERNANCE AND FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| First Nations Secretariat                  | -          |
| First Nations Health Council               | 3,344,126  |
| First Nations Health Directors Association | 2,939,609  |
| First Nations Engagement                   | 10,605,584 |
|  | 16,889,319 |

### PROGRAM SERVICES

|                                |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Health Benefits                | 306,387,934   |
| Direct Community Services      | 425,046,850   |
| Health Services and Programs   | 280,161,705   |
| Regional Services and Programs | 18,230,830    |
|                                | 1,029,827,319 |

|                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b> | <b>1,106,050,592</b> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|







First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

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