



Community Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Accreditation is Quality Improvement!

Accreditation is an on-going quality improvement process. A collaborative approach for health organizations to celebrate what is working, identify what is not working and implement new ways to achieve organizational and service excellence.

It provides a road map for improving the care and safety of your community health services, and is a team commitment to review your plans, processes and practices for better health and wellness outcomes.



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

1. What is health services accreditation?

Accreditation is a voluntary and peer process guided by a recognized accrediting body. An independent third party assessment and review that defines, measures, improves and reports on the quality, efficiency and practice of health service development and delivery. A process that:

- Examines everyday activities against standards of excellence
- Provides direction to identify and address areas for improvement
- Recognizes emerging service needs and priorities
- Reinforces current successes and validates what is working
- Addresses issues on a systems level not on a program or individual level
- Ensures that attention is given to service and work place safety
- Reduces risks and liabilities and increases accountabilities
- Strengthens relationships with staff, community and other service partners

2. How is accreditation linked to Quality Improvement (QI)?

Pursuing and achieving accreditation is one step in continuous quality improvement and

can serve as one outcome measure of quality improvement along with other measures such as: health planning, program evaluation and risk management. It is an opportunity to assess services, identify areas for improvement and target efforts for effective change management. All improvement initiatives further learning and foster an organizational culture of quality, safety and service excellence.

3. What have First Nations communities shared about the benefits of pursuing health services accreditation?

- Enables leadership to develop a 'roadmap' for safety and quality improvement
- Builds a team approach for identifying goals and meeting results
- Encourages valuable ideas and actions to come forward as leading practices
- Strengthens an organization's structure, stability and systems
- Builds better relationships with other health systems and health partners so that services received are more consistent, relevant, timely and effective
- Provides public recognition and increased credibility of services
- Enhances an organization's commitment to community health and wellness



4. Is accreditation the same as certification, licensing or evaluation?

No, these are different processes with different requirements and outcomes. Accreditation is not a performance measurement of services (evaluation), a professional designation of your staff (certification) or maintenance of regulatory requirements (licensing). It is a process guided by certified accrediting bodies to assess and improve the quality and safety of health services against internationally supported standards of best/wise practice and excellence.

5. What is the accreditation process, timelines and key definitions?

Each accreditation process may differ, however there are several components that are essentially common to all accreditation programs.

Accreditation - an on-going quality improvement process that organizations use to assess the quality and safety of their services against a set of pre-determined standards.

Accrediting Body - a recognized and certified organization that provides accreditation status.

Self-Assessment - a review that identifies organization-wide strengths and areas for improvement.

Standards - best practices that organizations must strive to attain against an international set of criteria, guidelines and measures.

Client and Staff Safety - as defined by an accrediting body's standard to ensure the highest level of safety and care when giving and receiving client centred services.

Surveyors - peer reviewers who assess and complete the organization based survey.

Survey/Peer Review - experienced peer surveyors are deployed to similar service type organizations to review

processes, procedures, plans and operations to ensure compliance with assigned accreditation standards as well as provide suggestions to improve overall service quality.

Awards - recognition by an accrediting body that the required safety and quality standards have been met and/or maintained by a service delivery organization. To be recognized as providing high level quality care and being accredited using the same standards as those in similar health services settings across the country, can be a meaningful motivator that often leads to improved relationships within and outside of the workplace.

Quality Improvement Plans - Accreditation assists organizations to identify and prioritize areas for improvement.

Continuous Quality Improvement - a coordinated approach to continuing cycles of measurement, analysis and improvement; an opportunity to assess, monitor and implement identified and needed improvement projects for better system and process performance as well as people development.

Performance Measures - identified indicators that track potential improvements, and ensure improvements are effective and meeting desired outcomes.

6. How do you know if you are ready to pursue accreditation?

Your leadership, staff and organization:

- Is committed to continuous quality improvement over the long term
- Has adequate infrastructure to support quality and safety improvements such as supportive leadership, human resource capacity, policies/procedures, demonstrated financial stability, etc.
- Is aware of the effort and investment required to achieve and further organizational change
- Is interested in being a learning and growing organization



7. What are some potential outcomes for being accredited?

Accreditation can increase the credibility of health services provided by First Nations by establishing that the health services they provide are comparable to, or better than those available to other Canadians living in similar geographic locations. As an ongoing quality management process, accreditation can further organizational and health service leadership, strength, sustainability and growth. This process demonstrates to community members and partners that the organization is committed to continuous quality improvement and a higher standard of safety and service excellence.

8. What is the FNHA Community Accreditation and Quality Improvement (CAQI) Program?

This program works directly with interested BC First Nations to support health services accreditation and quality improvement (QI) efforts by:

- Promoting awareness, understanding and benefits of accreditation and QI to BC First Nations health and addiction recovery services
- Providing on-going funding and support to program participants who are working towards or maintaining their accreditation status
- Working in partnership with participating health and addiction recovery leads to meet related FNHA requirements and arrangements
- Linking accreditation and quality improvement to related health service priorities, practices and processes; such as, leadership development, comprehensive community health planning and evaluation
- Providing on-going advice, support, consultation and resources as related to accreditation and continuous quality improvement

9. How does the program support FNHA's Seven Directives?

In striving for excellence through continuous quality improvement, FNHA's commitment to supporting community based accreditation is guided by FNHA's Seven Directives.

10. Who does the program partner with?

Accreditation is a process based on collaborative partnership that involves the organization seeking accreditation, the chosen accrediting body and FNHA. Program participants also join the First Nations Quality Improvement and Safety Network.

11. Who is eligible for CAQI program funding?

The FNHA acknowledges the benefits of health services accreditation and has been supporting organizations actively engaged in accreditation activities. Upon approval of the accreditation readiness assessment by the FNHA Program Lead and available FNHA funding, organizations are able to apply. The program aligns with FNHA and Regional policies, plans and programs to support organizations that newly engage in the accreditation process as well as organizations who are maintaining their accreditation status.

An applying community/organization must meet the following criteria in order to receive FNHA funding support for accreditation and quality improvement efforts:

- BC First Nation/Tribal Council/Health Society
- Established and on-going funding arrangement with FNHA for health programs and services
- Interested in the accreditation of health programs and services
- Secured commitment and support for process by leadership and health staff; e.g. Chief and Council/Board of Director Resolution
- Registered with a Canadian-based and certified accrediting body; e.g. accepted as a new client.



12. What is the First Nations Quality Improvement and Safety (QIS) Network?

The FNHA QIS Network provides a forum for BC First Nations health and treatment organization representatives to provide leadership and capacity building regarding accreditation as well as support one another in their accreditation journey and on-going quality improvement initiatives. Currently the Network is comprised of 23 health centers and 10 treatment centres in all Health Authority regions of BC. Network activities and meetings are an opportunity for CAQI program participants to work with fellow colleagues, access new learning opportunities and share wise practices and resources.

13. What are the steps for getting involved with the CAQI program?

- Consider accreditation and quality improvement of your services
- Request an FNHA presentation to health staff and/or leadership
- Assess readiness for accreditation – FNHA Readiness Assessment
- Ask questions and get answers – FNHA Program Lead, Accrediting Body and peer health organizations in the process
- Discuss and confirm FNHA funding and support for process
- Secure a Chief and Council/ Board of Director Resolution
- Research, choose and apply with an Accrediting Body
- Submit resolution and accrediting body letter of acceptance to FNHA Program Lead
- Await FNHA Program Lead's review of application for FNHA funding support
- Secure funding support and needed organizational resources
- Meet with chosen Accrediting Body and start your accreditation and quality improvement journey

14. Who do I contact about the FNHA CAQI Program?

For more information on the program and to request a presentation to health leadership and staff, contact:

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CAQI Program Lead
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