



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 17, 2014

New Partnership to Improve Cancer Care for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in British Columbia

COAST SALISH TERRITORY (Vancouver, BC) - In a collaborative effort to improve cancer care for First Nations and Aboriginal peoples in BC, five organizations have announced their partnership on a new strategy to advance improvements in continuity of cancer care for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit patients in rural and remote communities.

The project will be led by the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) in close collaboration with project partners including BC Cancer Agency, Provincial Health Services Authority, Métis Nation British Columbia, and British Columbia Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres.

The aim of this project is to improve existing cancer care for Aboriginal peoples in the province and beyond; not to duplicate efforts or create parallel services. A key focus in the three-year project is to improve the continuity of cancer care in a culturally competent and safe manner for Aboriginal cancer patients, with a focus on rural and remote communities to ensure sustainable transformative change.

The first phase of data collection for the CPAC project was successfully started at the 38th Annual BC Elders Gathering in Penticton this July. Elders and other attendees openly shared their cancer care journeys with project staff, a process that has yielded key insights at the outset of the project.

With 203 First Nations communities, 34 Métis Chartered Communities and a large urban and away from home (off-reserve) Aboriginal population, BC is home to diverse Aboriginal cultures and cancer care experiences. Through regional and province-wide engagement, the project will create a better understanding of the needs and opportunities, and will address gaps identified by developing relevant resources and tools within communities, for communities.

Partner Quotes:

Joe Gallagher, CEO - First Nations Health Authority

"The FNHA is excited to be leading this important project with our four partners, and we look forward to uncovering new ways of transforming Aboriginal patient cancer care journey's into one that is culturally competent and safe. On behalf of the First Nations population, the FNHA is currently developing a holistic cancer strategy for BC First Nations from a prevention framework, where cancer prevention, screening and treatment will be the focus. The strategy will also gather baseline data on cancer as well as evaluate rates and survival."

Leslie Varley, Director, Aboriginal Health - Provincial Health Services Authority

“This partnership marks an important step towards improving the cancer journey of our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. Building on the existing relationships and networks of each of the project partners, the BC Cancer Agency will collaborate with individuals and communities across British Columbia to identify and support culturally appropriate and accessible cancer care services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.”

Dale Drown, CEO - Métis Nation British Columbia

“MNBC is pleased to be a part of the Implementation Team as we work to positively influence and improve the current cancer care system. Many of our loved ones have been deeply affected or lost to cancer, so to honour them we will work together in collaboration, to ensure culturally responsive care for all Aboriginal people and their families, throughout their cancer journey.”

Paul Lacerte, Executive Director - British Columbia Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

“The BCAAFC is excited to be a part of this important initiative and for the opportunity to collaborate with our partners in strengthening the cancer care supports for Aboriginal people in BC. We are looking forward to our work over the next three years and ensuring that cancer care services and supports are accessible and appropriate for the people in our communities.”

FNHA and the First Nations Perspective on Wellness: www.fnha.ca/wellness

CPAC Video Links:

- **Dr. Evan Adams:** <http://www.youtube.com/user/cancerview/playlists>
- **Tanya Davoren (MNBC):** http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1WUr-OYN1w&feature=share&list=PL5YLYKq0Wx8_gPVcP8DHb7Z5hqWcCsPLR&index=4
- **Warren Claremont (BCA AFC):** http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqmSlaieezk&feature=share&list=PL5YLYKq0Wx8_gPVcP8DHb7Z5hqWcCsPLR&index=5

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