



First Nations
Health Council



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 7, 2014

We encourage all First Nations to ‘check in’ with your children and youth today

COAST SALISH TERRITORY (Vancouver BC)—First Nations Health Council Chair, Grand Chief Doug Kelly and First Nations Health Authority CEO, Joe Gallagher today issued the following joint statement in recognition of Child and Youth Mental Health Day.

“We know that Aboriginal youth between the ages of 10-19 are four times more likely to attempt suicide compared to their non-Aboriginal peers and that rates of hospitalization for mental wellness and substance abuse remain significantly higher than the rest of the population.”

“We continually emphasize that the FNHC and FNHA’s work is to change the world in which we live—to create a better place for our children and grandchildren. To achieve our vision statement, *‘Healthy, Self-Determining and Vibrant BC First Nations Children, Families and Communities* every one of us needs to firstly take care of ourselves, and secondly take care of the children in our lives.”

“We must ensure our young people know they have a place, that they are well provided for and that if they are troubled we provide them with love, kindness and guidance. It’s a great day to get active with the kids and youth in your life. Hug your children; take time to talk with them about their mental health.”

“We have heard from all five regions that mental health is a priority in our communities. FNHA’s regional and provincial investment plan for 2014-2015 includes more resources for Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention and improving the organizations rapid and coordinated crisis response.”

“We recognize the need to work with partners and are encouraged that Ministry of Child and Family Development has been working directly with First Nations through the recent Mental Wellness and Substance Use Forums.”

In 2013, the FNHA released [A Path Forward: BC First Nations & Aboriginal People’s Mental Wellness and Substance Use – 10 Year Plan](#), developed by BC First Nations and Aboriginal Mental Wellness and Substance Use Strategy Council and two planning committees. The plan provides a guide for planning and action to support First Nations and Aboriginal people to achieve their unique goals related to mental wellness and substance abuse across the lifespan.

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Connect with the First Nations Health Authority: www.fnha.ca

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