

News Release

For Immediate Release

Successes Marked in New Approach to First Nations Healthcare in BC

BC Tripartite Principals meet to assess progress since October 2013 transfer of health services

May 4, 2015 Coast Salish Territory, British Columbia

The Chair of the First Nations Health Council Grand Chief Doug Kelly, Federal Health Minister the Honourable Rona Ambrose, and British Columbia Health Minister the Honourable Terry Lake met in Vancouver today to review progress on the implementation of the [BC Tripartite Agreement on First Nation Health Governance](#). This historic agreement was signed in October 2011 and led to the transfer of First Nations Health services to the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) in British Columbia in 2013.

During the meeting the First Nations Health Council and BC Ministry of Health highlighted some of the key successes of the new arrangement, including details on the progress of new primary care projects. These community-based and regional projects are enhancing available supports for primary care in numerous BC First Nations communities and when fully implemented represent a total \$15.33 million in annual expenditures. In addition, the First Nations Health Council revealed its ideas for a Wellness 2025 Strategy, to help build stronger, healthier First Nations communities.

The partners also reviewed progress on the interconnectivity and eHealth front. In the last eight months 12 new telehealth sites went live, providing enhanced supports to connect nurses and physicians practising in remote and isolated northern communities, as well as supporting educational and administrative activities. Significant ground work for the ongoing telehealth activities was laid through Health Canada's pre-transfer efforts and, coupled with the FNHA telehealth expansion project, has led to enhanced e-communications support for First Nations communities.

Quick Facts

- The [BC Tripartite Agreement on First Nation Health Governance](#) enabled a transfer of responsibilities that empowered BC First Nations while promoting a better, more responsive and integrated model of health service delivery.
- The Agreement is contributing to the development of healthier and more sustainable B.C. First Nations communities.
- With the transfer to the First Nations Health Authority, decisions on health programs and services are being made directly by the BC First Nations and First Nations health programs are being designed by First Nations and tailored to meet their needs and supporting more efficient health programs and better alignment with provincial services.
- Many Primary Care Projects are improving the access and quality of primary care services in rural and remote First Nations communities, for example establishing new interdisciplinary teams of health professionals including physicians, nurse practitioners, licensed practical nurses, and mental health clinicians.
- Other projects include a Primary Maternal, Child and Family Health Collaborative Team, Mobile Support and Complex Care teams, and a numerous Mental Wellness and Substance Use specialist services.

- Some BC First Nations communities are working together to benefit from First Nations Nurse Navigators who serve numerous communities, providing coordinated, culturally-safe discharge planning.
- Enhanced mental wellness supports to remote communities are planned through innovative activities like improved access to mental health services in communities, substance use treatment “mobile detox” units, and support for youth engagement and suicide prevention programming.

Quotes

“At Gathering Wisdom IV in May 2011, BC Chiefs voted to take the bold step and take back control of health services for their communities. In 2013 we completed transfer of health services from Health Canada to the new First Nations Health Authority. Since transfer, together with our partners we have taken many important first steps to transform health services for the better. We have marked our progress along the way, sharing our story on how working together as partners to find solutions is the path forward for better health outcomes for First Nations children, families and communities.”

Grand Chief Doug Kelly

Chair, BC First Nations Health Council

“Nearly two years ago, a new era in healthcare for First Nations was marked with the beginning of the First Nations Health Authority in British Columbia. History was made and First Nations in British Columbia were empowered to promote better health, more responsive, integrated and innovative model of health service delivery. Today’s meeting confirms that the British Columbia Tripartite agreement is contributing to the development of healthier and more sustainable First Nations communities that can serve as a positive model for other regions across Canada.”

Honourable Rona Ambrose

Minister of Health

“Since the transfer took effect in 2013, we’ve seen great progress, and witnessed the growth of the First Nations Health Authority to fully realize the depth of services they can provide for all First Nations and Aboriginal peoples of our province. Today, as full partners in wellness, we recognize these achievements and set the course ahead toward offering more innovative and patient-centered ways to provide health services.”

Honourable Terry Lake

British Columbia Health Minister

Related Products

[Together in Wellness Tripartite Committee on First Nations Health 2013-2014 Annual Report New Investments in BC First Nations Health \(Infographic\)](#)

Associated Links

News Release: [Steering the success of BC First Nations Health Transfer in BC](#) – Feb 2, 2015

News Release: [Tripartite Partners Signify New Path Forward with Historic Transfer of Health Services for BC First Nations - Oct. 21, 2013](#)

[British Columbia Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance](#) (2011)

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