



First Nations
Health Council

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH COUNCIL

Executive Summary of Proposed Social Determinants of Health Strategy

BACKGROUND

The FNHC is engaging First Nations across BC on the social determinants of health – the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age, and the broader set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.

The FNHC has called upon BC First Nations to work together to develop a ten-year strategy to address the social determinants of health. Through this process, there is an opportunity to develop a long-term roadmap that sets priorities for investment, partnership and policy change.

This executive summary has been prepared to brief First Nations on this discussion.

WHAT WE HAVE HEARD

Since 2015, the FNHC has talked to First Nations about the social determinants of health through Sub-Regional and Regional Caucuses. This has included discussions with federal and provincial partners that fund or deliver services to First Nations. Through these discussions, the FNHC has heard a number of common challenges with the way Canada and BC fund community services:

- Funding is inequitable, unpredictable and not based on the actual needs of communities
- Programs are developed in silos and do not provide flexibility to work holistically
- Planning has improved but Nations need sustainable funding for implementation

- Proposal-based processes creates competition and can be challenging for smaller communities
- Reporting on programs is based on external priorities and requirements and not based on the information needs of communities
- Require funding to address capacity challenges in communities, including resources for training, infrastructure, recruitment and retention, pay equity, and governance development

To address the social determinants of health, Nations must have the funding, flexibility, capacity and authority to make decisions about the health, wellbeing and safety of their children, families and communities. This can be challenging to do within the current framework for community services.

[Please see Regional Summary Report](#)

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH STRATEGY

The FNHC has put forward proposals to start addressing the social determinants of health.

For the **short-term**, the FNHC has proposed immediate investment in mental health and wellness. The FNHC is advocating for a long-term funding commitment from Canada and BC to create a flexible funding envelope that BC First Nations can use for community-based mental health and wellness services.

[Please See Mental Health and Wellness Backgrounder](#)

Social Determinants of Health Strategy Cont.

For the **long-term**, the FNHC has proposed options for planning, funding and reporting on community services. By 2028, it is envisioned that:

- First Nations have **sufficient, flexible and sustainable funding** for health and wellness services. A growing number of First Nations now receive federal funding through a Social Transfer Payment that consolidates all available funding for programs and provides full flexibility to address actual needs.
- First Nations are **reconstituting, healing and rebuilding their Nations** supported by new resources. A growing number of Nations are incorporating traditional social and family roles, language and law into their governance.
- First Nations are **redesigning services to reflect their perspective on health and wellness**. A growing number of Nations are implementing Wholistic Health and Wellness Plans.
- First Nations are **full and equal partners in decision about their health and wellness**. Canada and BC is building relationships directly with Nations.
- First Nations have the **same access to services** as other residents of BC. First Nation children, youth and families are able to access a system of responsive, high quality, culturally safe and increasingly integrated services.

By 2028, it is envisioned that outcomes are improving such that:

- **The number of avoidable hospitalizations has declined** as the use of primary care services has increased in each region
- **More children and youth say they have a secure cultural identity and positive self-image** as more Nations incorporate their language and culture into community services
- **The number of First Nation children in care has declined** as access to prevention and family support services has increased in each region
- **More children and youth say they have a strong connection to their community** and positive relationships with peers and adults with the majority of them taking part in community events and ceremony

It is possible to achieve this vision. The work on the social determinants of health is about exploring new approaches to planning and funding that would allow communities to design and deliver services in ways that work for them. It is about investing in plans – not programs.

Please see [Discussion Paper on Ten-Year Determinants of Health Strategy](#)

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

We as BC First Nations have a historic opportunity to advance a new relationship with the Government of Canada and the Province of BC. The Province of BC has committed to build a new relationship and take action to advance reconciliation with First Nations.

Canada has committed to build a renewed Nation-to-Nation relationship with First Nations based on recognition, respect and partnership. The Prime Minister of Canada has committed to develop new legislation for the recognition and implementation of Indigenous rights. For the first time, the federal budget commits \$101.5 million over 5 years to support groups who want to pursue a path of reconstituting and rebuilding their Nations.

It is important to note that this work belongs to each Nation. Each Nation is on its own journey toward self-governance. The decision to pursue Nation rebuilding and a renewed Nation-to-Nation relationship with Canada is a decision that each Nation will make when they are ready. The FNHC is not a Nation and is therefore without prejudice to First Nations interests related to self-government. The FNHC is advocating for more resources to support Nations to achieve their vision of change.

Please see [Federal and Provincial Budget Backgrounder](#)

ROLE OF THE FIRST NATIONS HEALTH COUNCIL

When BC First Nations endorsed Consensus Paper 2011 and Resolution 2011-01, Chiefs called upon the FNHC to continue as a province-wide political and advocacy body with the mandate to:

- Provide political leadership for the implementation of the health plans
- Support First Nations to achieve their health and wellness priorities
- Build partnerships to make progress on the social determinants of health
- Ensure communication, transparency, cost-effectiveness and accountability of the FNHC to First Nations

In the health transfer process, the FNHC were **builders** of the health governance structure. In this process, the FNHC are **facilitators** of change. Nations are the (re)builders. The role of the FNHC is to advocate for changes that advance the health and wellness priorities of First Nations.