

First Nations Health Directors Association



September 30th, 2010

To First Nations Health Directors,

The First Nations Health Directors Association (FNHDA) is one of four governance pillars outlined in the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan:

- First Nations Health Governing Body (First Nations Health Authority)
- Provincial Committee on First Nations Health
- First Nations Health Council
- First Nations Health Directors Association

The purpose of the First Nations Health Directors Association is to build a better health system from the ground up. Collectively, BC First Nations Health Directors have a wealth of information, capacity, and solutions to the population health issues in our communities. An association for First Nations Health Directors will advance health planning and service delivery on behalf of First Nations in British Columbia, including but not limited to the following key roles:

- providing advice and assistance respecting First Nations governance with the aim of assisting in shaping health policy and legislation;
- supporting First Nations Health Directors in the development and implementation of health programs;
- creating a foundation for networking, knowledge, information sharing and communication;
- providing opportunities for First Nations Health Directors to engage in professional development and mutual support initiatives;
- supporting the implementation of the “Transformative Change Accord: First Nations Health Plan” and the “Tripartite First Nations Health Plan”

As one of four governance pillars, our Association is part of a rapidly changing structure. In May 2010 a new regionally representative First Nations Health Council was appointed. A new First Nations Governing Body has been in development since October 2008, and on July 26th, 2010, the *British Columbia Tripartite First Nations Health Plan: Basis for a Framework Agreement on Health Governance* (the Basis Agreement) was initialed by BC, Canada and the First Nations Health Council. This agreement provides a foundation for the negotiation of a legal agreement which would see the transfer of First Nations and Inuit Health regional operations as well as other agreed upon provincial programs and services to a new First Nations Health Authority. On April 26th 2010 the First Nations Health Directors Association was incorporated. As the four pillars are developed the roles and relationships of the FNHDA in relation to the other three pillars of a new First Nations Health Governance structure continue to evolve.

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This summer the executive of the First Nations Health Directors Association met with the First Nations Health Council, the FN Health Society Board of Directors and senior staff from the FN Health Society. The purpose of this session was to define the roles and responsibilities of each organization in relation to the implementation of the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan. The planning session served to verify the critical role that the Association will play in the development of a new First Nations Health Governance structure. As community-based health experts our collective knowledge and perspectives will provide important groundtruthing in the on-going negotiations process.

First Nations Health Directors are now poised to occupy their rightful place at decision-making tables. Grounded in the realities of our diverse communities, an association of peers is forming to lead the way in First Nations Health. Please join us and contribute to the change happening across our nations- our unified voice is a catalyst towards improving First Nations health and well-being.

Please consider the attached registration information, and contact us if you have further questions.

With Respect,

Judith Gohn
President
First Nations Health Directors Association

Laurette Bloomquist
Vice-President
First Nations Health Directors Association

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Background

The Tripartite First Nations Health Plan (2007) provides the opportunity for BC First Nations Health Directors to form a common voice and design an Association to support themselves and the communities they represent. The Association is one of four pillars of the First Nations Health Governance Structure along with the First Nations Health Council, Provincial Committee on First Nations Health, and First Nations Health Governing Body.

In June 2008, the Health Council put out a general call to establish a planning committee for the 2008 Health Directors Forum. A committee was established representing health directors from a mix of rural, remote, transferred and integrated First Nations. The committee consisted of: Aileen Prince (Nak'azdli), Lauren Brown (Skidegate), Kim Brooks (Squamish), Laura Jameson (Little Shuswap), Carolyn Neufeld (Seabird Island), Louisa Willie (Heiltsuk), Shelley Henderson (KDC), Laurette Bloomquist (Sliammon), and Leyla Johnny (Tl'etinqox-T'in). The committee held a number of meetings over the summer and set the direction for the 2008 forum.

The Health Directors Forum was attended by over 100 BC First Nations health directors. At the Forum, Health Directors discussed the key structural components of a new FNHDA including Potential Models, Type of Organization, Membership, and the Role of Association. Based on the feedback gathered at the forum a survey was issued to all First Nations Health Directors. The survey served to further refine the proposed model for the Association.

In order to validate the data collected through the forum and the survey, the First Nations Health Directors Sub-committee presented and put to a vote the proposed model during the 2009 Gathering Wisdom Forum. On November 5th, 2009 ninety-one (91) health directors cast their ballots, 79 in favor of the Association and 12 opposed.

Following the vote a 13 member board of directors was appointed with directors from each of the five regions in British Columbia including: the North (3 seats), Interior (3), Vancouver Island (3), Vancouver Coastal (2), and Fraser (2) regions. The following individuals make up the current Board of Directors:

VANCOUVER COASTAL: Laurette Bloomquist (Sliammon), Allison Twiss (Lil'wat); VANCOUVER ISLAND: Judith Gohn (Cowichan Tribes), Georgia Cook (Namgis), Nora Martin (Tla-o-qui-aht); FRASER: Virginia Peters (Chehalis) and Jeanine Lynxleg (Sto:lo), INTERIOR: Patrick Lulua (Xeni Gwet'in), Jackie McPherson (Osoyoos) and (1) Vacant seat and NORTH: Hertha Holland (Gitxsan), Doreen L'Hirondelle and (1) Vacant seat.

For more information about the First Nations Health Directors Association, please go to: http://www.fnhc.ca/index.php/community_engagement/health_directors_association/