

First Nations Health Initiatives

Background

On November 27, 2006, the Government of British Columbia and the First Nations Leadership Council released [*The First Nations Health Plan: Supporting the Health and Wellness of First Nations in British Columbia*](#) – B.C.'s first ever First Nations Health Plan. First Nations and the Province identified 29 priorities for action to close the gaps in health outcomes in four key areas: Governance, Relationships and Accountability; Health Promotion and Disease and Injury Prevention; Health Services; and Performance Tracking.

June 11, 2007, the Province, First Nations Leadership Council and Health Canada signed the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan (TFNHP). The TFNHP commits Health Canada to the bilateral First.

Key Facts

Action has already been taken on some of the priority areas identified in the First Nations Health Plan:

- In February 2007, the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) issued an interim update of selected health status indicators from the PHO 2001 Annual Report: The Health and Well-Being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia. This report is available [online](#). A detailed update of 2001 Provincial Health Officer's report is expected to be released in early 2008. (Action #27)
- On March 21, 2007, \$6 million in funding was announced to help improve the health of Aboriginal peoples throughout the province as part of an Aboriginal-specific ActNow BC program. (Action #7).
- The First Nations Health Forum, held April 10 –11, 2007 in Vancouver, is a major deliverable from the First Nations Health Plan (page 3). The Forum initiated the ongoing dialogue with First Nations necessary to the success of the Plan. (page 3)
- The Provincial Health Officer appointed Dr. Evan Adams as the Province's first-ever Aboriginal Health Physician Advisor. Dr. Adams will advise on Aboriginal Health issues; monitor and report on the health of Aboriginal people in B.C.; and track progress on performance measures in the First Nations Health Plan. (Action #2)
- On April 10, 2007 the Province announced funding of \$9.5 million to the First Nations Leadership Council to improve First Nations health.
- The First Nations Leadership Council has formed the First Nations Health Council to support all First Nations in achieving their health priorities, objectives and initiatives; and to provide leadership in the implementation of the First Nations Health Plan (Action #1).
- A Working Group has convened to renew the tripartite data sharing agreement between the Province; First Nations and Inuit Health, Health Canada; and First Nations.

- The First Nations Health Advisory Committee is part of a new governance structure being created to give First Nations full partnership in decisions affecting their health. The committee will involve First Nations, Ministry of Health and the health authorities in collaborative decision-making at the highest strategic health planning level and facilitate linkages between community health planning and the regional planning activities of health authorities. (Action #4).
- In the past five years over \$1 million has been invested in Aboriginal Nursing Strategies to enhance recruitment and retention of nurses in local First Nations communities. One of the goals of the First Nations Health Plan to increase the number of professional and skilled trades First Nations in health professions. (Action #25)

Conclusion

The First Nations Health Plan is a living document – responsive to feedback from First Nations peoples and communities, health care professionals, practitioners and others. Changes in health outcomes will be regularly examined, and modifications to the action plan made to ensure continuous improvement.