

# Northern First Nations Health Partnership Committee Communique

March 6, 2015

Nit!!<sup>1</sup> The Northern First Nations Health Partnership Committee (NFNHPC) held its most recent meeting on March 6, 2015. Since the September 2014 meeting, working groups have been strategizing how the NFNHPC can move forward with the direction provided by Northern First Nations citizens. Many positive initiatives and partnerships are underway in the North with some highlights outlined below.

## **Primary Health Care Working Group**

The Nurse Practitioner program is bringing primary care closer to citizens by providing medical services in community, and will be structured under a centralized system for consistency across the North. A strategy for providing services to the Elder population is also well underway, including residential care and end of life protocols. At the other end of the spectrum in Maternal Child Health, joint midwife/doula training is planned and will roll out as soon as practical. A new subcommittee of the Primary Care working group has been established to focus on Telehealth and is providing direction for health services delivered remotely to community. Their first meeting is taking place in the beginning of April. Telehealth Expansion is well underway with the communities in "Wave One" expected to be fully operational by the end of this year. Telehealth is the use of communication technologies, such as videoconferencing, to deliver health, and educational services from a distance to promote better health outcomes. This includes everything from using a telephone, to Electronic Community Medical Record-keeping, to video diagnostics via real-time interaction with medical professionals.

## **Mental Wellness and Substance Use Working Group**

The Mental Wellness and Substance Use Working Group is concentrating their efforts on ensuring the Mobile Support Teams have a viable strategy to include the IRS and Community First Responders as partners in providing services.

## **Population and Public Health Working Group**

A draft work plan is in development which includes Pandemic Planning, Crisis management, Men's Health, Health and Wellness Screening and Grant programs. At the All Native Basketball Tournament, the Health Screening Training for community health representatives was very well received by all in attendance. Environmental Health Working Group is a new sub-committee of the Population Health working group which is providing direction for environmental health services currently delivered to communities.

## **Cultural Competency Working Group**

The Cultural Competency Working Group is engaged to ensure maximum exposure to the Indigenous Cultural Competency course for Northern Health staff – health professionals within Northern Health have been filling seats faster than any other region in BC which is a great success. The course needs to be further adapted to the local cultures in the North, so the working group is considering developing a toolkit to develop curriculum for the North.

The NFNHPC has a new implementation framework for funding distributed by the Joint Project Board – a multi-year initiative funded by the Ministry of Health, and supported by NFNHPC. The framework covers how the NFNHPC ensures that communities receive health services in a responsible, efficient and professional manner with community partners.

## **Northern Health Strategic Planning**

For the next five years, a greater emphasis will be placed on population health, people development, integrated services, access to facilities and a rural health strategy, merging with the NFNHWP concepts and overall objectives. Consultant Garry Ockenden will be starting to engage community, staff and partners as early as April with a report to the Board of Directors due in October.

The day ended with a renewed spirit of partnership, not just with words, but a true feeling of equality in moving forward to help direct resources to ensure positive outcomes for Northern First Nations Citizens. The next Northern First Nations Health Partnership Committee meeting will take place on May 12, 2015.

For more information and to read previous NFNHPC Communiqués, please visit:

<http://www.fnha.ca/about/regions/north>

<http://www.northernhealth.ca/YourHealth/AboriginalHealth/NorthernFirstNationsHealthPartnershipCommittee.aspx>

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<sup>i</sup> Nisga'a greeting which means for "Hello" pronounced (approximately) "Nit"

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