
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
Ministry of Health
First Nations Leadership Council

B.C. LAUNCHES FIRST-EVER FIRST NATIONS HEALTH PLAN

VANCOUVER – The provincial government and the First Nations Leadership Council released a plan today that contains concrete actions to improve the health status of First Nations in British Columbia.

“Last year we committed to close the health gaps between First Nations and non-First Nations over the next decade,” said Premier Gordon Campbell. “We know that First Nations people live an average of seven years less than other British Columbians and that their risks of developing health conditions like diabetes are also greater. The First Nations Health Plan sets into action this government’s commitments in the Transformative Change Accord to close the health gap between First Nations and other British Columbians. The first step was to get this plan in place.”

The First Nations Health Plan: Supporting the Health and Wellness of First Nations in British Columbia ensures First Nations will be integral partners in the design and delivery of health initiatives to close those gaps.

“Through this plan, we have committed to support the work of our people and communities to develop solutions to address this health gap,” said Grand Chief Edward John of the First Nations Summit. “First Nations and regional health authorities will work collaboratively to develop and implement programs that will address adult mental health, substance abuse, youth suicide, maternal health and programs to help manage chronic health conditions that First Nations face, such as diabetes and hepatitis.”

Highlights of the First Nations Health Plan: Supporting the Health and Wellness of First Nations in British Columbia include:

- An Aboriginal physician, appointed by the Provincial Health Officer, to advise on Aboriginal health issues;
- A First Nations / Aboriginal specific ActNow BC program;
- An Aboriginal Mental Health and Addictions Plan that includes healing circles, cultural camps and counselling programs that build community capacity;
- Improved access to primary health care services in Aboriginal health and healing centres;
- Primary health services and patient self-management programs to help manage chronic health conditions such as diabetes and Hepatitis C.
- A new health centre in Lytton to improve acute care and community health services and better meet the needs of First Nations and other area residents.

“These priorities were jointly developed by the First Nations Leadership Council and British Columbia in the spirit of the New Relationship and the Transformative Change Accord,” said Health Minister George Abbott. “They reflect the collaboration and commitment to close the health gaps between First Nations and other British Columbians. We hope to also encourage discussion in this important area in our Conversation on Health, so that we can obtain feedback from everyone to make the best use of our health system to benefit First Nations people.”

The First Nations Leadership Council is composed of executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

The First Nations Health Plan is available on the following web sites: www.gov.bc.ca/health, www.fns.bc.ca, www.ubcic.bc.ca and www.bcafn.ca.

1 backgrounder(s) attached. 1 factsheet(s) attached.

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