
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
Ministry of Health
First Nations Leadership Council

PREMIER ANNOUNCES \$9.5M FOR FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

VANCOUVER – The Province has appointed Dr. Evan Adams as its first-ever Aboriginal Health Physician Advisor and is also providing \$9.5 million to the First Nations Leadership Council to improve First Nations health, Premier Gordon Campbell announced today at the opening of the First Nations Health Forum.

“Last year, we promised concrete actions and this year we are delivering on our commitment to work towards closing the health gap between First Nations and non-First Nations,” said Campbell. “In addition to a multi-million dollar investment in First Nations health, I know that Dr. Adams’ willingness to take on this new and challenging role will make an important impact as we work together to build a brighter, healthier future in First Nations communities.”

The First Nations Health Plan released in November 2006 set into action government’s commitments in the Transformative Change Accord to close the health gap between First Nations and other British Columbians.

“We welcome the government’s commitment to the 29 action items contained in the First Nations Health Plan,” said Grand Chief Edward John, First Nations Summit and First Nations Leadership Council. “Our long-term success in closing the health gaps will require sustained political will, resourcing, and collaboration among all parties involved. The appointment of Dr. Adams and the investment by the Province provide a good start in helping us to achieve our goals.”

Both announcements build on the bilateral First Nations Health Plan and the memorandum of understanding signed in November 2006 between the government of British Columbia, the First Nations Leadership Council and the Government of Canada. The tripartite agreement is part of the Province’s commitment to closing the health gap between First Nations and other British Columbians by 2015 and leading Canada in partnership with First Nations.

“Today, our government is taking a serious step in bringing the health of First Nations people to a first-rate level, but there are still some serious challenges that lie ahead of us,” said Health Minister George Abbott. “We intend to meet those challenges head-on and by 2015, we expect to see progress made in key areas such as life expectancy, mortality, youth suicide, infant mortality, prevalence of diabetes, childhood obesity, and practising, certified First Nations Health Care Professionals.”

First Nations people live an average of seven years less than other British Columbians and their risks of developing health conditions like diabetes, pneumonia, or HIV/AIDS or experiencing injuries caused by motor vehicle accidents are also greater.

The First Nations Health Forum runs April 10-11, and brings together key partners to discuss and understand the First Nations Health Plan. Approximately 300 people are attending the forum, including First Nations Health Directors, First Nations leaders, Health Authority CEOs, Aboriginal organizations and provincial and federal government representatives.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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