

HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

Accord

*capturing the vision of the Parties for a better,
more responsive and integrated health system
for First Nations in British Columbia*

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On October 13, 2011, the *British Columbia Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance* was signed by the Government of Canada, the Government of British Columbia, and BC First Nations as represented by the First Nations Health Council and the First Nations Health Society. In that Agreement, the Parties committed to:

“develop a *Health Partnership Accord* that will capture the vision of the Parties for a better, more responsive and integrated health system for First Nations in British Columbia and will build on the *Transformative Change Accord: First Nations Health Plan* (2006), the *First Nations Health Plan MOU* (2006) and the *Tripartite First Nations Health Plan* (2007). The *Health Partnership Accord* will be a non-binding document that will describe the broad and enduring relationship amongst the Parties and their political commitment to pursue their shared vision. It is intended that the Health Partnership Accord will become an evergreen document that keeps pace with changing circumstances respecting First Nations’ health and with the evolving nature of the partnership among the Parties.”

We are pleased to report that we have fulfilled this commitment, and are proud to share this Health Partnership Accord with you. Over the past year, the Partners – the Government of Canada, Government of British Columbia, and the First Nations Health Council, supported by the First Nations Health Authority – have worked diligently on this Accord. We have reflected upon our successes to date, and how these successes have been built on a foundation of partnership. We have also reflected on where we need to go, and how our partnership needs to evolve to support our shared vision.

This Accord is a central component of our new way of doing business for First Nations health in British Columbia. It is a statement of commitment to our shared vision, and describes how our evolving and enduring partnership will enable us to achieve that vision. Through this Health

Partnership Accord, we commit to continue to work together to improve the health status of First Nations in British Columbia and to build a better, more responsive and more integrated health system that will benefit all British Columbians. We make a commitment to take action in order to work together towards a future where BC First Nations people and communities are among the healthiest in the world. This Accord sets out the principles and approach by which we will nurture our broad and enduring partnership, and envisions the possibilities for our future success in health systems transformation.

The Accord reflects upon the changes each of the Partners has made, and must continue to make, in order to be a better participant in this health partnership. First Nations have established a set of seven Directives to guide all decision-making processes regarding First Nations health and wellness. First Nations have also established, and will continue to evolve, a health governance structure, including decision-making processes and institutions at provincial, regional and Nation levels. The Province of BC will continue to work collaboratively to better coordinate the planning, design, management and delivery of services: at the regional level amongst First Nations and Regional Health Authorities; and, at the provincial level through the establishment of senior-level joint forums such as Project Boards as appropriate. Health Canada has ensured senior political and public servant support to ensure a smooth transfer of First Nations and Inuit Health Branch-BC Region to First Nations control; following the transfer, Health Canada will ensure ongoing senior-level involvement and support to enable the First Nations health governance structure to succeed and flourish.

The Accord recognizes that things change over time. To be sure we stay on the right course, we commit ourselves to the principle of reciprocal accountability, and an ongoing review and renewal process. We will engage in meaningful and regular dialogue at all levels of our organizations, ever mindful of the importance of our work and its effects on First Nations individuals, families, and communities in BC.

We are most proud to be a part of this accomplishment and are committed to an ongoing shared learning journey well into the future.

SIGNED

WITNESSED



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This Health Partnership Accord adds to the rich history and spirit of partnership represented by the *Transformative Change Accord: First Nations Health Plan* (2006), the *First Nations Health Plan Memorandum of Understanding* (2006), the *Tripartite First Nations Health Plan* (2007), the *Basis for a Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance* (2010) and the *British Columbia Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance* (2011). With each of these Agreements, the partnership has grown, developed, and evolved. Over time, the Partners have recognized how to better work with one another – to make adjustments and accommodations to be better Partners.

This Health Partnership Accord describes a continuing journey. The three Partners are travelling together on a shared path, heading towards a shared goal, enabled by shared learning, and guided by a shared vision.

The intention of this Health Partnership Accord is to acknowledge and reflect upon the transformative nature and outcomes of the work we have done to date, affirm our ongoing commitment to the implementation of our agreements, and to further enable the implementation of those agreements by describing our evolving and enduring partnership.

This Health Partnership Accord outlines the shared vision of the Partners. It describes elements that support the enduring relationship between the Partners. It describes the process of renewal, by which the partnership will evolve and develop over time. It envisions the possibilities for health and wellness innovation and success, enabled by a committed, resourced, and supportive relationship.

Partners Achieve Successes

The Partners have achieved a number of successes through their tripartite partnership.

At a regional level, the partners have supported First Nations and Regional Health Authorities (Fraser, Northern, Vancouver Island, Vancouver Coastal and Interior) to develop Partnership Accords. These Accords open new doors for regional-level cooperation, planning, and innovations in health service delivery. They increase shared decision-making, support reciprocal accountability, and will result in the further development of a more integrated health system that better meets the needs and reflects the cultures of the Regions.

At a provincial level, a key success was the tripartite response to the H1N1 epidemic in 2009. The partners worked to raise awareness, and ensure that First Nations communities were educated about the H1N1 influenza virus and what to do if symptoms were detected. Communities were provided access to personal protective equipment and linked with provincial and federal public health staff. The partners worked with other agencies to develop an Action Plan specifically for remote communities. As a result of this collaboration, BC First Nations communities had much lower rates of H1N1 infection than did First Nations people in other provinces.

SHARED VISION

The Partners have a shared vision; this vision represents the place to which we are travelling on this shared journey. The vision is a future where BC First Nations people and communities are among the healthiest in the world. We envision healthy and vibrant BC First Nations children, families, and communities playing an active role in decision-making regarding their personal and collective wellness. We see healthy First Nations people living in healthy communities, drawing upon the richness of their traditions of health and well-being. In this vision, First Nations people and communities have access to high quality health services that are responsive to their needs, and address their realities. These services are part of a broader wellness system – a system that does not treat illness in isolation. These services are delivered in a manner that respects the diversity, cultures, languages, and contributions of BC First Nations.

SHARED COMMITMENT

The Partners know that achieving this vision depends upon us taking action together on shared commitments. As described in previous agreements, the Partners agree to work together to eliminate disparities and inequalities in the health status between First Nations in British Columbia and other British Columbians, and to build a better, more integrated health system that will benefit all people in BC.

The Partners agree to create and support, on an ongoing basis, a new health governance structure to manage and deliver health services for First Nations. This will enable First Nations in British Columbia to participate fully in the design and delivery of these services. Decision-making will be brought closer to home through recognizing and involving First Nations decision-making and service delivery processes,

Partners See Possibilities

The Partners are committed to implementing ongoing innovations, and envision a number of possibilities for health systems transformation, including:

- *Wellness System* – the incorporation of indigenous models of wellness into the health system and a shift in focus from sickness to wellness.
- *Health Planning* – better coordination in health planning and resources from community, sub-regional, regional, and provincial levels, to create better linkages between all levels.
- *Health Services* – the implementation of a high quality, integrated system of community-based public health, primary care, home and community care that is accessible to all and linked to culturally-competent secondary and tertiary care.
- *E-health* – a province-wide e-health system in First Nations communities is fully integrated with the provincial e-health network, and data sharing and health outcome monitoring is more accurate and effective than ever before.
- *Economic Innovation* – opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures, including shared services, are supported. Revenue-generating opportunities are pursued for reinvestment into services. Procurement systems are improved, services and facilities shared and aligned, and joint purchasing power maximized.
- *Cultural Competency* – the workforce that serves First Nations peoples is culturally competent, through an increased number of First Nations health professionals, cultural competency training, the availability of Aboriginal Patient Navigators, and the delivery of culturally-appropriate programs and services by all providers.

structures, and institutions at provincial, regional and local levels; in particular, the Partners will nurture the partnerships between First Nations in the regions and provincial Regional Health Authorities.

The Partners commit to better coordination in service planning, design, management and delivery of health services for First Nations. We agree to work collaboratively to prevent duplication of efforts and fill service gaps so that all residents of British Columbia have access to needed health services. We will avoid the creation of separate and parallel First Nation and non-First Nation health systems, instead focusing on removing jurisdictional impediments and supporting collaboration, common sense approaches, and shared services. The result will be a more integrated health system with stronger linkages among all of those involved. It will ensure that First Nations in all regions of British Columbia will have equitable access to quality health services.

The Partners will approach this work from a broad wellness perspective, believing that in order to address the health and wellness of First Nations people and communities, it is important to work towards addressing the related and underlying contributors that build healthy communities.

The Partners firmly believe that this new way of working together will improve the quality, accessibility, delivery, effectiveness, efficiency, and cultural appropriateness of health and wellness programs and services for First Nations. The Partners believe that this will be a better health system because it will reflect the cultures and perspectives of BC First Nations, it will incorporate their models of wellness, and it will more efficiently utilize and draw upon the contributions and services of the Partners. The Partners believe that this will be a better approach because it will encourage all those involved to consider the importance of the broader determinants of health.

Partners Evolve

Over time, the Partners have become more accountable, accommodating, and responsive to one another for the successful implementation of their shared commitments. Each Partner has done significant internal work to be a better participant in the partnership and there has been significant evolution and development on all sides of the partnership, which has contributed fundamentally to our success to date:

- First Nations have established a new First Nations health governance structure – including provincial, Regional and local institutions and processes – and a set of seven Directives to ensure that all decisions support the vision of First Nations for their health and wellness.
- Health Canada has ensured committed senior and headquarters-level involvement in the implementation of the health plans, including the creation of a BC Tripartite Initiative unit to support the transfer of FNIH to the FNHA, and providing ongoing senior representation at the Tripartite Committee on First Nations Health.
- The provincial Ministry of Health, including Health Authorities have ensured senior-level involvement in and resourcing for the Tripartite Committee on First Nations Health and have worked across Ministries in responding to health emergencies in First Nations communities. In support of integration, the Province commits to engagement of senior leadership in the Ministry with the FNHA, through mechanisms such as regular attendance at Leadership Council and Project Boards as appropriate.

BROAD AND ENDURING PARTNERSHIP

The Partners know that achieving this vision and taking action together on shared commitments must be enabled by a strong and enduring relationship that the Partners nurture and evolve over time.

This is a continuing journey. Over time, the Partners have worked in a tripartite way to develop the relationships and processes necessary to support genuine cooperation. Significant investments have been made by all Partners, and momentum has steadily increased. The Partners recognize that their ongoing success depends upon their willingness to continue to cooperate, and to mobilize their respective contributions, authorities, assets, and innovations in support of our shared commitments.

Together the Partners have overcome many difficulties and obstacles through frank, honest, and respectful dialogue and remain committed to doing so in addressing future challenges that may put their shared goals and commitments in jeopardy.

A defining characteristic of our partnership is reciprocal accountability. This means that we will work together at all levels in a collaborative manner to achieve our shared goals, living up to our individual and collective commitments. It means that each Partner is accountable to the others for its actions, and for the effective implementation and operation of their responsibilities and systems, recognizing that our work as Partners is interdependent and interconnected. It means that we strive not only to live up to one another's expectations, but strive to exceed them.

The Partners acknowledge that, in spite of our best efforts, we will make mistakes. We agree that we will continue to learn from the past, as we move forward to a new future together. We commit to resolve

Partners Are Principled

An effective partnership based on reciprocal accountability is based on deep and abiding respect and trust and supported by good communications. These and other principles support the ongoing strengthening of our working relationship, and help guide us when the work becomes difficult.

- *Lead with culture:* Understand your Partners and where they come from.
- *Honour those who paved the way:* Pay respect to, and honour the wisdom of, those that brought us to where we are today.
- *Maintain unity and discipline:* Work for the common good of all; do not criticize one another; recognize that we all have a role to play.
- *Create strong relationships* – be tough on the issues and easy on each other: Seek opportunity to create understanding and support one another's dignity.
- *Engage at the appropriate level:* Partners must have authority, skills, and knowledge to fully contribute.
- *Respect each other's process:* Seek understanding of, acknowledge and respect the validity of one another's ways of working and decision-making processes, and provide assistance to one another in navigating these processes.

conflict in a good way. The Partners will not abandon our journey together, even when we encounter obstacles along the way.

ONGOING REVIEW AND RENEWAL PROCESS

As the Partners travel together on this shared journey, guided by their shared vision, we need to check in regularly to make sure that we are on track. We need to ask ourselves a series of questions, be honest about the answers, and adjust our course accordingly.

The Partners need to ask ourselves, “Are we on track to achieving our shared vision? Has our vision changed in any way? What have we learned from working together? What is the status of our commitments and what is on our shared agenda? What could we do differently? What is each of us doing to contribute to the partnership? What can each of us do to support the others to implement our respective and shared commitments? How is our work enabling the goals and efforts of the regions with First Nations?”

To answer these questions, the Partners commit to a process of ongoing review and continuous renewal. We agree to review our respective roles and expectations of one another. The Partners agree that we will establish clear timeframes for our work and clear expectations of one another as we do this. We will undertake a broad and integrated approach to review and renewal, ensuring that the review of our health partnership is linked with the commitments, timeframes, and processes established for review and evaluation in our other agreements.

To support this process, the Partners agree to continue to engage at a senior political level, including amongst the Principals, and to engage in regular dialogue at all levels. We agree to make regular opportunities to review the shared goals and priorities, taking into account anything we have learned and any changing circumstances.

Through these mechanisms for renewal, the Partners wish to ensure that our vision remains clear, our path remains true, and our relationship remains strong.

CONCLUSION

The Partners believe that this new and innovative journey will lead to a brighter future for First Nations, and provide teachings and innovations for all. We are committed to a shared and enduring journey. We are committed to our shared vision and commitments to improving the health and wellness of BC First Nations and communities. We are committed to taking the time to learn from one another, to nurture our enduring partnership, and to accommodate and support one another. We are committed to reciprocal accountability and a process of continual renewal and reflection. We are committed to our success.



Canada


