

Health Directors Form Association

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COAST SALISH TERRITORY/WEST VANCOUVER



BC First Nations Health Directors have voted overwhelmingly in favour of the development of a First Nations Health Directors Association. 91 health directors cast their ballots November 5th at the Gathering Wisdom Forum, 79 in favour of the Association and 12 opposed.

Kim Brooks, Health Director Squamish Nation, and member of the First Nations Health Directors Subcommittee comments: "We are very excited about the formation of the First Nations Health Directors Association. The First Nation Health Directors Association represents a collective of the best First Nations health technical advisors in the province. This collective of experience and knowledge can provide analysis, advice and recommendations related to health planning, service delivery, measurable outcomes and much more. I look forward to the contributions that we can, as a group, make toward health governance discussions."

A BC First Nations Health Directors Association is one of four governance components identified in the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan. The Association will support and standardize training and competencies for Health Directors; establish a code of ethics; share information, resources and technology; serve as a recruitment agency; share information with leadership; and provide for a collective voice while working together to develop new relationships with Provincial and Federal Government.

"This Health Directors Association is a long time coming; a lot of hard work went into its formation. The biggest benefit of this Association for me as a health director is the ability to collaborate and cooperate with other health directors. I believe that collectively that we have tremendous knowledge, and together we are going to some amazing things for the communities in BC." **Aileen Prince**, *Health Directors Subcommittee Member and elected representative for Northern Region.*

The Associations structure was developed through dialogue at the First Nations Health Directors forum held in October 2008, and refined through a survey administered to Health Directors over the past several months.

Following the vote on November 5, a 13 member board of directors was appointed with directors from each of the five regions North (3 seats), Interior (3), Vancouver Island (3), Vancouver Coastal (2), and Fraser (2). The new board consists of FRASER: Laurette Bloomquist (Sliammon), Allison Twiss (Lil'wat); VANCOUVER ISLAND: TBD (Coast Salish), TBD (Kwakwaka'wakw), TBD (Nuu-chah-nulth); FRASER: Virginia Peters (Chehalis) and Jeanine Lynxleg (Sto:lo), INTERIOR: Patrick Lulua (Xeni Gwet'in), Jim Adams (Scw'exmx), Jackie McPherson (Osoyoos) and NORTH: Aileen Prince (Nak'azdli), Hertha Holland (Gitxsan), TBD (Treaty 8).

"Looking across Canada, BC is the first province out of the gate to develop a First Nations Health Directors Association. It is quite powerful, I have already received calls of congratulations from several provinces, and we need to remember that what is going on here in BC is being closely watched by all of Canada. With respect to the process, I feel it was a very qualified process, both the survey and final poll showed strong support for the Association's development. For those of us who have been involved in providing First Nations health services for decades, this association long overdue." **Laurette Bloomquist**, *Health Directors Subcommittee Member and elected representative for Vancouver Coastal Region.*

The First Nations Health Society is the business arm of the First Nations Health Council. The First Nations Health Council was created in 2007 to provide leadership in the implementation of the Tripartite First Nation Health Plan. The 10-year Health Plan was created to improve the health and wellbeing of First Nations, and to close the gaps in health outcomes between First Nations and other British Columbians.

For more information about the Health Council please visit: www.fnhc.ca

Contact

Davis McKenzie
Communications Coordinator
First Nations Health Council
dmckenzie@fnhc.ca
604.913.2080