

Date: Friday, September 12, 2008

2008 – 2011 VCH Aboriginal Health and Wellness Plan

Background:

- In March 2005, the Province of BC and First Nations agreed to a *New Relationship* guided by principles of trust, recognition, and respect for First Nations Rights and Title. The *New Relationship* commits to greater collaboration to close the gap in the quality of life between the Aboriginal population and other BC residents.
- In November 2005, the Province of BC, the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), and the Government of Canada signed the *Transformative Change Accord* (TCA), which identified general actions to close the gaps in education, health, housing, and economic opportunities over the next ten years.
- The 10-year *Transformative Change Accord: First Nations Health Plan* (FNHP), released in November 2006 by the FNLC and the Province of BC, identifies **29 action items** within the following **4 key areas** to close the gaps in health status between First Nations people and other British Columbians:
 - (1) Governance, relationships and Accountability
 - (2) Health Promotion/Disease and Injury Prevention
 - (3) Health Services
 - (4) Performance Tracking

Joint accountability, between the FNLC and the Province of BC, for the outcomes of this plan are assessed using the following **7 performance indicators**: (1) life expectancy at birth; (2) Mortality rates (deaths due to all causes); (3) Youth Suicide rates; (4) Infant mortality rates; (5) Diabetes rates; (6) Childhood obesity; and (7) Increasing the number of Aboriginal Health Care professionals.

- In April 2007, and May, 2008, The FNLC, BC and Canada jointly hosted two First Nations Health Forums: *Gathering of Wisdom for a Shared Journey* to engage leadership and health providers at all levels in dialogue on how to pursue the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan and to identify priorities areas for action.
- VCH has hosted several community engagement sessions in support of the development of the *2008–2011 Aboriginal Health and Wellness Plan* (AHWP), including:
 - (1) March, 2007, Conversation on Aboriginal Health
 - (2) Winter, 2008, three Community Roundtables (co-hosted with the First Nations Leadership Council)
 - (3) January/February, 2008, VCH Aboriginal Health Implementation Forum (co-hosted with the First Nations Leadership Council)
- VCH has completed the *2008–2011 Aboriginal Health and Wellness Plan* (AHWP). The plan was guided and informed by the aforementioned agreements and community engagement activities and is closely aligned with the 29 action items and 4 key areas contained within the *Transformative Change Accord: First Nations Health Plan* (FNHP)

Key Messages:

1. **The 2008 – 2011 VCH Aboriginal Health and Wellness Plan is in the implementation stage:**
 - Ratified by the VCH SET and Board, July, 2008
 - Internal (e.g., HSDA's) and external partners (e.g., Aboriginal Communities, Ministry of Children and Family, First Nations Inuit Health) actively engaged in partnership opportunities.
2. **Strategies contained within the 2008 – 2011 VCH Aboriginal Health and Wellness Plan are aligned with the *Transformative Change Accord: First Nations Health Plan* (FNHP) as clearly demonstrated on pages 9 and 10 of the VCH Aboriginal Health and Wellness Plan.**
3. **Success will be measured by developing evaluation and surveillance tools in concert with VCH tripartite partners, Aboriginal communities and internal staff including: Dr. Paul Martiquet, MHO and Dr. Jat Sandhu, Regional Director of Public Health Surveillance.**

Strategic Priorities for the 2008 – 2011 VCH Aboriginal Health and Wellness Plan Status Report

June 10, 2008 to September 18, 2008

1. Access to Health Care Services

Actively work with our partners to address outstanding jurisdictional issues, Aboriginal Health service delivery silos and to overcome other long standing barriers to health care delivery, such as geographic location and isolation.

- Actively participated in Central Coast Community meetings to explore opportunities for collaboration in order to address access gaps;
- Aboriginal Patient Navigator program operationalized.

2. Cultural Competency and Inclusion

Increase cultural competency and responsiveness of Health Authority staff to Aboriginal clients' health care needs and to support the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives and lived experiences within the organization.

- Working collaboratively with Aboriginal Services Division and the Provincial Aboriginal Leads Table to complete a Provincial Aboriginal Cultural Competency Framework;
- Undertaking a regional CCT best practice environmental scan.

3. Management and Accountability

Plan and Implement modifications to the governance structure of the VCH Aboriginal Health portfolio such that Aboriginal people participate in leadership roles as stewards of their health and wellness journeys.

- Aboriginal Health Community Advisory Committee (ACHAC) meetings held regularly to explore options this issue in further detail.
- AHSI has resumed administrative authority for Aboriginal Health Initiatives Program (AHIP) and the AHTF (Aboriginal Health Transition Fund – Adaptations).
- Plan to identify targeted Aboriginal funding in order to determine best practice evidence based model to administer them, including a comprehensive evaluation framework.

4. Aboriginal Health Data

Collaborate with Aboriginal populations and other partners to research and develop an Aboriginal Health and Wellness information collection approach to assist in monitoring progress in achieving the goals of the 2008 – 2011 VCH Aboriginal Health and Wellness Plan.

- Tripartite data sharing agreement in progress.
- Initiating discussions with internal Population Health Staff and Employee Engagement Staff on data gathering approaches.

5. Mental Health and Addictions

Improve and better coordinate mental health and addictions services for Aboriginal Clients and communities.

- Working in collaboration with the Ministry of Children and families and HSDAs to enhance and build local capacity in the area of Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental Health;

- Actively participating in the Provincial Mental Health reference group to develop an overarching Aboriginal Mental Health and Addiction framework.

6. Primary Health Care Services

Increase access to maternity care, enhance chronic disease management and prevention programs and services, improve coordination of and management of co-morbidities, care for frail elders and enhance end of life care.

- Aboriginal Health Strategic Initiatives will co-host a morning session for rural and remote physicians serving the Central Coast, Sunshine Coast, and the Sea to Sky Corridor on September 30;
- Actively working with Aboriginal communities to align the VCH Health Plan with community health plans.
- Visited communities of Bella Bella, Bella Coola, N'Quatqua, Mount Curie, Samahquam, Skatin, Douglas, Sechelt and Sliammon.
- September ACHAC meeting held in Sliammon.

7. Health Education and Human Resources

Increase employment and career opportunities for Aboriginal people at all levels of the organization.

- Aboriginal Recruitment and Advisor Leader hired;
- A VCH *Aboriginal Employee Circle* initiated with the objective of determining the baseline number of Aboriginal Employee's currently employed within VCH, and to advise on Aboriginal recruitment and retention policies and procedures.

8. Elder Care

Develop and improve Home and Community as well as Residential Care services for Aboriginal elders throughout the region. Ensure these services are offered in a culturally appropriate manner.

- Two on Reserve assisted living pilot project proposals completed and submitted to the Federal Treasury Board (in collaboration with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs) on behalf of Sliammon and Squamish First Nations
- Active discussions currently underway with the United Church Health Services and First Nation representatives related to enhancing long term care and home and community care services on behalf of the four and Central Coast First Nations.

9. Public Health

Research, develop and implement a model of Aboriginal public health consistent with the dynamic health requirements of Aboriginal people and based upon a population health approach.

- Aboriginal Health Strategic Initiatives co-hosting a morning Plenary with Population Health on the topic of 'Effects of Colonization on Aboriginal Health Status,'
- Preliminary discussions with PHSA to develop a Health Family Strategy.