



COMMUNIQUE TO FIRST NATIONS

January 26th, 2012

The purpose of this communique is to provide an update to First Nations on the implementation of Resolution 2011-01, and particularly amendments to the Constitution and bylaws of the First Nations Health Society, and recent developments with respect to its Board of Directors.

Creation of the *interim* First Nations Health Authority

At the Gathering Wisdom for a Shared Journey IV forum, First Nations endorsed *Resolution 2011-01, the Consensus Paper: BC First Nations Perspectives on a New Health Governance Arrangement*, and the *British Columbia Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance*. Specifically, the Consensus Paper states:

“Following approval of this consensus paper and the signing of the Framework Agreement, the FNHC will direct the First Nations Health Society to take steps to amend its bylaws to become the interim FNHA and begin the early steps in implementing the new health governance arrangement”

As per this direction, on December 20, 2011, the members of the First Nations Health Society (FNHS) passed by consensus a resolution to amend the bylaws of the FNHS and transform it to the *interim* First Nations Health Authority (*i*FNHA). As per the direction of BC First Nations, the *i*FNHA will undertake the early steps in implementing the new health governance arrangement. The new *i*FNHA will carry on with the efforts of the FNHS in implementing the Transformative Change Accord: First Nations Health Plan and the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan, acting as the business arm for the First Nations Health Council (FNHC), collaborating with the Government of Canada and provincial health authorities to coordinate delivery of health services to First Nations, and providing financial control and operating budgets. The formal name change from the FNHS into the *i*FNHA is a procedural adjustment symbolic of the continual positive transformation that continues to take place within BC First Nations health governance. Upcoming Regional Caucus sessions scheduled throughout the province with BC First Nations leadership will focus on the development of a permanent First Nations Health Authority that will be responsible also for the design and delivery of First Nations health programs.

A reminder about our governance structure:

The *interim* First Nations Health Authority (formerly First Nations Health Society) is a non-profit Society under the BC Society Act. The members of the Society are the members of the First Nations Health Council, who are appointed directly by First Nations leaders in BC. To uphold the required separation of business and politics, the members of the Society appoint the Society's Board of Directors to oversee financial, operational, and service delivery matters.

Board Appointment

In mid-January, 2012, Ms. Marilyn Rook tendered her resignation from the Board of Directors of the *i*FNHA (formerly the FNHS). Marilyn is an experienced health professional who has contributed significantly to the development of the FNHS and for that she has our thanks.

On January 23, 2012, the members of the *i*FNHA (also members of the FNHC) held a meeting to fill the vacancy on the Board. We are pleased to announce the appointment of Lydia Hwitsum to the *i*FNHA Board of Directors. Lydia is a member of Cowichan Tribes. She graduated from University of Victoria's Law School in 1997, has a Certificate in the Administration of Aboriginal Government, a Diploma in Public Sector Management at the University of Victoria, and has training in Conflict Resolution. Lydia has held a number of prominent leadership positions, including Chief of Cowichan Tribes, Task Group member of



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the First Nations Summit, BC Region elected representative on the Assembly of First Nations National Women's Council, and former Chair of the First Nations Health Council. She also has served on a number of Boards, including at the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, the Land Title and Survey Authority, and the Tele'ethw Aboriginal Capital Corporation.

We have the utmost confidence in Lydia, and are extremely pleased that she has accepted the challenge of serving on the iFNHA Board of Directors.

Board Recruitment

The three-year term of the iFNHA Board of Directors expires on March 31, 2012. We have accomplished much in the past three years, which would not have been possible without the dedication of the members of the Board.

We are entering into a significant stage of transition, in which we will establish the processes and agreements necessary to transfer the resources, records, facilities, assets, and people from First Nations and Inuit Health-BC Region to First Nations control. This requires a high level of expertise, and stable and consistent leadership. To achieve these interests, the iFNHA members have re-appointed the following Board members for another three-year term commencing on April 1, 2012 and expiring on March 31, 2015: Lydia Hwitsum (Chair); Pierre Leduc (Vice-Chair); John Scherebnyj (Secretary-Treasurer). Pierre and John have served as the Chair and Secretary-Treasurer of the Board for the past three years and will ensure the consistency of Board corporate memory throughout the transition period.

Enclosed with this communique is an open recruitment notice to populate the remaining seats on the iFNHA Board of Directors. We encourage all interested and eligible individuals to apply. The iFNHA members will carefully evaluate all applications against the eligibility and competency requirements, and make appointments to the Board effective April 1, 2012.

Thank you for taking the time to review this communique. The work we have embarked upon is historic, and will make BC a healthy, strong, more vibrant place for all First Nation children, families and communities.

Related Documents:

- *Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance*
<http://www.fnhc.ca/pdf/framework-accord-cadre-eng1.pdf>
- *Resolution 2011-01 and Consensus Paper: British Columbia First Nations Perspectives on a New Health Governance Arrangement* http://www.fnhc.ca/pdf/FNHC_Consensus_Paper_-_WEB.pdf