



VANCOUVER COASTAL REGION
First Nations Health Authority

Acting Regional Director Communique: Urban Aboriginal Health Strategy

The following communique is intended to provide you with a high-level summary of the Urban Aboriginal Health Strategy (UAHS).

Uy'skweyul (Good day) Vancouver Coastal (VC) Leadership,

It is an honour for our Regional Team to continue to take direction from our regional Caucus leadership to support and advance our shared vision and regional commitments. The *Regional Health and Wellness Plan* provides our overarching regional directions, one of which was to complete an *Urban Aboriginal Health Strategy* to ensure optimal health and wellness services for our 'away-from-home' (off-reserve) community members, sisters and brothers. I am proud to present the draft UAHS to you today for your review, feedback, and possible endorsement.

Background on the Urban Aboriginal Health Strategy

In May, 2012, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) signed a Partnership Accord with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and First Nations Health Council (FNHC) representatives for the region. One of the commitments in this Accord was the joint development of an *Urban Aboriginal Health Strategy* (UAHS). The development of an UAHS also became an important priority outlined in our *Regional Health and Wellness Plan* for Vancouver Coastal Region. The UAHS commitment has been moved forward by the Aboriginal Health Steering Committee (AHSC) since 2012, who established a Partnership Working Group to ensure adequate research, engagement, and development of the UAHS commitment.

Key objectives from the Regional Health and Wellness Plan advancing urban aboriginal work include:

- 1.3.1: Ensure host First Nations (Tsleil'Waututh, Musqueam, and Squamish) have a governance role and voice in the governance process
- 1.3.2: Implement an engagement process to support the development and implementation of a strategy or the urban center
- 1.3.3: Implement an engagement process for regional areas outside of Vancouver

The journey to develop an UAHS began with a review on the already completed extensive engagement with regional First Nations and the urban Aboriginal community on health-related issues in the Vancouver area since the 1980's. Themes emerged and were engaged on through the discussion document: *Towards an Urban Vancouver Aboriginal Health Strategy from 2015 to 2017*. Perspectives and feedback shared led to the following six strategies in this draft UAHS:



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- Strategy 1: Strengthen relationships in the urban community;
- Strategy 2: Strengthen access to culturally appropriate primary health care;
- Strategy 3: Strengthen access to culturally appropriate mental wellness and wellness services
- Strategy 4: Promote wellness and prevention of illness;
- Strategy 5: Information about, and access to, services; and
- Strategy 6: Improve data and information on Aboriginal health outcomes.

An update on the draft strategy was provided at the Spring, 2018 Sub-Regional Gatherings across all three sub-regional families. Today, we would like to welcome this opportunity to share the draft UAHS to our Regional Caucus. We extend an invitation for your review, and welcome any further feedback. Your feedback and recommendations will be incorporated into the draft, and following a subsequent review and validation process will unfold. At that point, the AHSC, accountable for this deliverable, will be shared the draft UAHS for final approval. Our hope is the UAHS will contribute toward a more coordinated, holistic integrated and culturally safe and relevant health care system for our community members living away-from-home.

Please share any further recommendations and feedback to the Regional Team:

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We thank you in advance for your ongoing contributions and perspectives, which inform and drive the work ahead. I look forward to continuing to pull together with you as we make progress in our shared health and wellness transformation journey.

Huy ch q'u (*Thank You*)
Naomi Williams-
Acting Regional Director