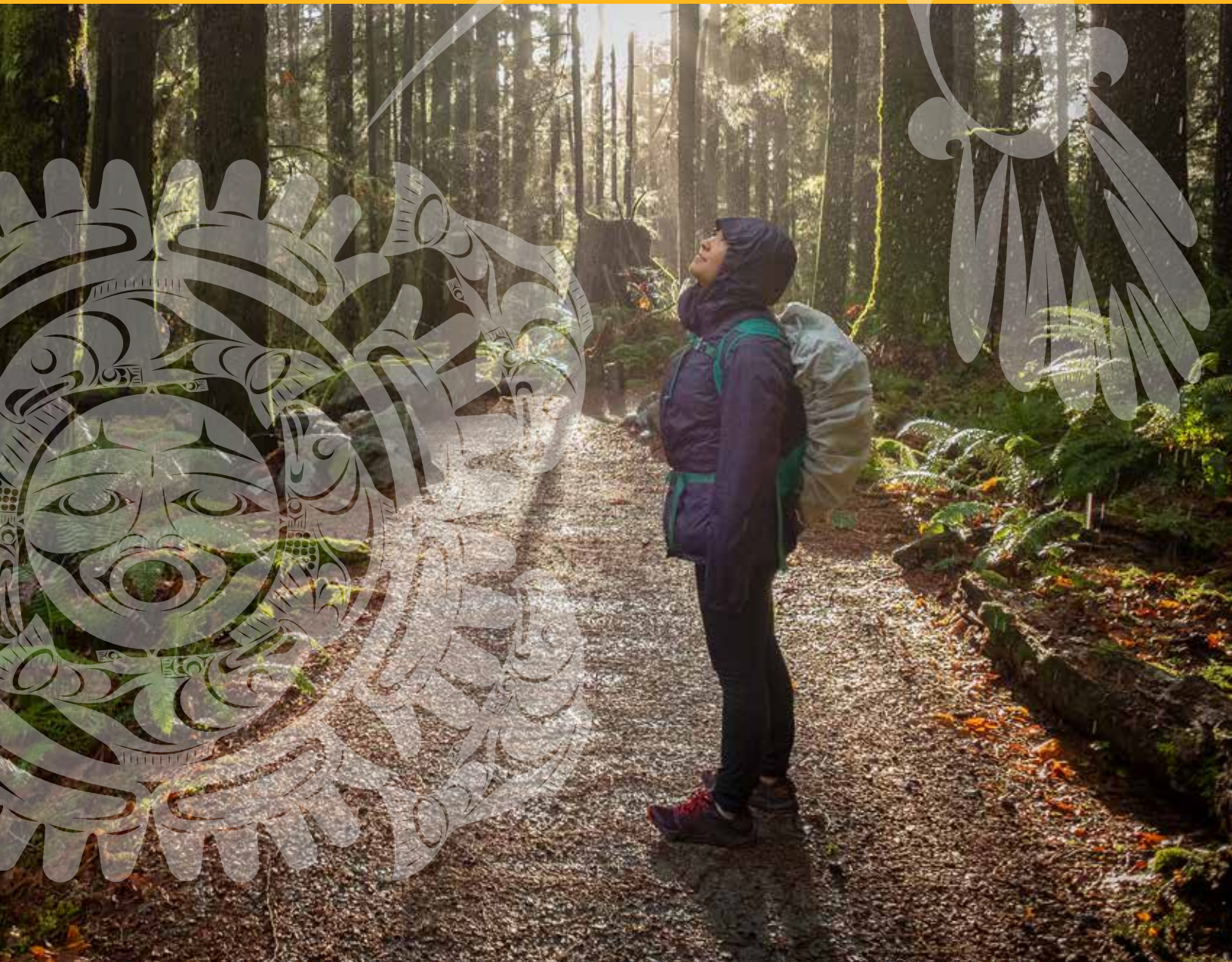


ABORIGINAL HEALTH

THE WAY FORWARD 2019-2024



We recognize Fraser Health provides care on the unceded and traditional homelands of the Coast-Salish and Nlaka'pamux Nations.



fraserhealth

Better health. Best in health care.

► INTRODUCTION

The landscape of health services for Indigenous Peoples in the Fraser Salish Region has changed significantly in the past ten years. The establishment of the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), the signing of the *Declaration of Commitment on Cultural Safety and Humility in Health Services*, and the expansion of the Aboriginal Health Program in Fraser Health have all contributed to increased opportunities to advance the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples in the region.

As the Fraser Health Aboriginal Health Program gains a clearer understanding of our role within this landscape, it is appropriate to take stock of where we have been, our current state, and our desired direction for the next four years.

Aboriginal Health: The Way Forward, outlines our vision, mission and goals for the future. It remains consistent with Fraser Health's Aboriginal Health Plan 2007-2010 and the 2015 Fraser Salish Regional Health and Wellness Plan in terms of the ongoing commitment to the goals of improving health outcomes for Indigenous Peoples, strengthening cultural safety, and building partnerships. At the same time, the actions and initiatives we will take in pursuit of these goals reflect programmatic growth and new opportunities for innovation in how we deliver our services.

This strategic plan is based on ongoing consultation, collaboration, and partnership with local First Nations, Métis Charter Communities, the First Nations Health Authority, Métis Nation British Columbia and community agencies serving Indigenous Peoples. We look forward to strengthening these relationships as we continue our journey toward health and well-being for all people.



A Note from Carolyne Neufeld Executive Director, Aboriginal Health

The strategic plan for the Aboriginal Health Department puts into motion our activities to bring our mission statement to life. It is a living document. Each year new actions will be looked at that fit within the strategies. The actions represented here are a reflection of the countless stories and diverse voices of Indigenous Peoples and communities in the Fraser Health Region.

The role of the Aboriginal Health Department is to support the organization with resources so care providers are better able to provide culturally safe services for Indigenous individuals. It is our commitment to the people we serve to live our plan and whenever possible assist Indigenous People to access culturally safe services that meet their needs and acknowledge that they are the owners of their health. The success of this plan is rooted in partnership – between communities and organizations, between clients and providers and between Indigenous and Western worldviews. Each year it is our intent to report back to those we serve and to hear if our work is making a difference.

Sincerely,
Carolyne Neufeld
Executive Director, Aboriginal Health

► THE WAY FORWARD

Recently, we have made several strides toward Indigenous resurgence on an international, national, provincial and regional level – all of which situates us in this historic time and illuminates the way forward.

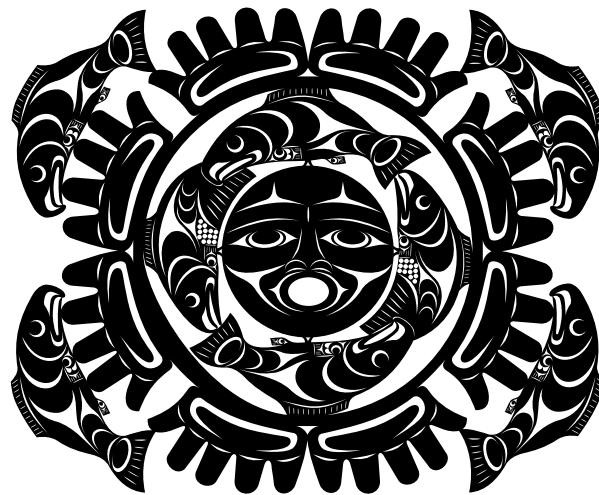
- 1.** In 2016 Canada officially signed onto the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples committing the country to reconciliation on an international level. The Declaration signified a global movement to champion Indigenous survival, dignity, and well-being. Canada's endorsement signals an important shift in its relationship with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities.
- 2.** Completed over a seven year process, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada revealed the complex and harrowing truths and impacts of the residential school system. Over 6,750 Indigenous People gave recorded statements to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The final report, released in 2015, concluded that residential schools constituted state-sanctioned genocide. The report encompasses 94 calls to action including nine specifically addressing health. These actions directs us to think more broadly about the health system's role in advancing reconciliation and fostering positive relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.
- 3.** The emergence of the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) in 2013 marked the first province-wide health authority of its kind in Canada. The FNHA is responsible for planning, management, service delivery and funding of health programs, in partnership with First Nations communities in B.C. Guided by the vision of embedding cultural safety and humility into health-service delivery, the FNHA works to reform the way health care is delivered to B.C. First Nations through direct services, provincial partnership collaboration and health systems innovation. Having just celebrated their five-year anniversary in 2018, their success illustrates the momentum toward ensuring decisions about First Nations health are made by and for First Nations People.
- 4.** In July 2015 all B.C. Health Authority CEOs signed the Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility in Health Services. This commitment mandates all health professionals across B.C. to advance cultural safety and humility and ensure the co-development of health strategies with all partners – including Elders, families, and Indigenous communities. Fraser Health embracing this declaration sets the stage for this strategic plan and ensures we foster and move forward in an spirit of culture safety and humility.

5. In June 2019 Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) and Fraser Health signed a Letter of Understanding, outlining a commitment to collaboratively ensure Métis voices are honoured in our health care system. MNBC develops and enhances culturally relevant social and economic programs and services for Métis Chartered Communities, and is ever-growing and thriving. Fraser Health's partnership with MNBC serves as a unique opportunity to provide culturally safer services for Métis individuals, families and communities across the Fraser Region.

6. In January 2020, Fraser Health signed the Fraser Partnership Accord thereby renewing its commitment to partnering with the First Nations Regional Caucus and First Nations Health Authority. The purpose of the Accord is to improve health outcomes for First Nations people residing in the Fraser Region through shared decision-making.

These milestones encourage Fraser Health to reflect on our responsibility in this era of reconciliation. Decolonizing our health system is not one end-goal, but a lifelong process that calls upon our humility and courage to participate in a good way. Reconciliation is inseparable from the actions we take as a health authority, and the way we stand in solidarity with Indigenous communities.

Systemic challenges are deep. But far deeper are the knowledges, resiliency and fortitude of Indigenous communities.



PURPOSE

The overarching purpose of Fraser Health's Aboriginal Health Plan 2019-2024 is to articulate a clear, strategic direction to improve health and wellness outcomes for Indigenous individuals, families and communities in the Fraser Salish Region. This document provides an overview of the Fraser Health Aboriginal Health Program's four-year strategic direction.

VISION

Healthy Self, Healthy Families, Healthy Communities and Healthy Nations.

MISSION

Our mission is to build capacity and support opportunities for improved health and wellness outcomes for Indigenous Peoples.

This is accomplished by championing Indigenous Peoples' understanding of healthy living, improving access to patient-centered and culturally safe health care services and partnering to ensure shared decision making.

VALUES

- > **Respect:** We acknowledge the unique history, culture and traditions of Indigenous Peoples; we listen, learn and plan together.
- > **Trust:** We develop trust through authentic relationships.
- > **Partnership:** We are an inclusive partner supporting shared decision making when designing, implementing and delivering services.
- > **Innovation:** We are committed to being a leader.
- > **Accountability:** We demonstrate integrity by being accountable. We keep our word.

▶ FRASER HEALTH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES: A HEALTH PROFILE

Indigenous Peoples make up 3.7 per cent of the population in the Fraser Health Region, with 58 per cent identifying as First Nations, 41.4 per cent identifying as Métis and 0.6 per cent identifying as Inuit. As we plan our health programs and services for Indigenous Peoples in the Fraser Salish Region, it is helpful to consider the current health status of local Indigenous Peoples; however, there are challenges to creating such a health profile. While there is reliable data available for the status First Nations population through the First Nations Health Authority, less is known about the health status of Métis, Inuit and non-status First Nations in the Fraser Salish Region. As a result, the health profile offered below relies mainly on information about status First Nation Peoples.

There are known inequities in health status and health service utilization between First Nations and other residents of B.C. While these inequities have been known for many years, recent data show that the inequities persist and, in some cases, have increased in the last decade (FNHA 2018a). In particular, increased inequity has been observed in attachment to a single general practitioner

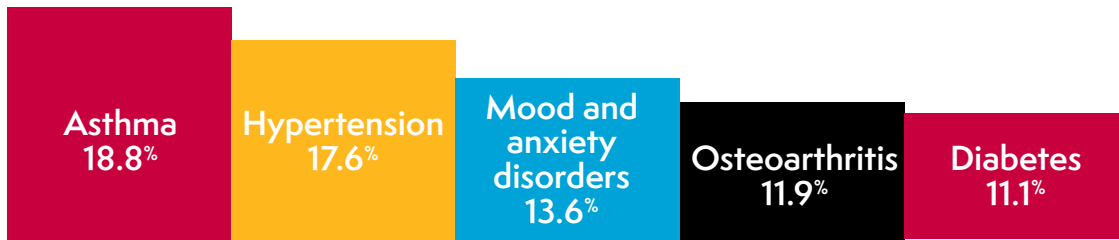
practice and use of Emergency Department services, as well as in rates of asthma, dialysis and epilepsy. First Nations are also being disproportionately affected by the opioid overdose emergency.

There are some areas of improvement and reduced inequity (FNHA 2018a). Across B.C., there have been reductions in the difference in rates of diabetes, osteoarthritis, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and chronic kidney disease between First Nations and other residents. Within the Fraser Salish Region, we know that there is significant strength among local Indigenous Peoples to support their own health and well-being, and the health system is increasingly endorsing and incorporating a more holistic model of healing. The opening of new Indigenous Primary Health and Wellness Home Clinic services is expected to improve access to physician services among Indigenous Peoples in the Fraser Salish Region, and the addition of Elders in Residence to the team of Spiritual Care providers is expected to improve cultural safety within existing health services.



PHYSICAL HEALTH STATUS (FNHA 2018B)

In 2014/15, the five chronic disease conditions with the highest prevalence among First Nations individuals in the region were:



Of the top ten chronic disease conditions, First Nations Peoples experience significantly higher disease rates than other residents for seven conditions: asthma, mood and anxiety disorders, osteoarthritis, diabetes, COPD, chronic kidney disease and angina.

Of the top ten conditions, First Nations prevalence rates in the Fraser Salish Region were significantly lower than other residents for one condition: hypertension.

MENTAL HEALTH STATUS (FNHA 2018A)

Across B.C., First Nations in all age groups were more likely to be hospitalized for mental health reasons compared to other residents.

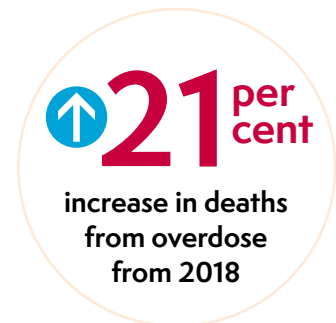
- > Among those First Nations aged 18–49 years who were hospitalized for mental illness in 2014/15, 18 per cent were readmitted within 30 days – a higher rate than what was seen in 2008/09.



SUBSTANCE USE (FNHA 2019)

In 2018, 193 First Nations men and women died of an overdose in B.C. (12.8 per cent of all overdose deaths). This represents a 21 per cent increase from 2017, when there were 159 First Nations deaths.

- > The rate of overdose deaths among First Nations People is 4.2 times the rate observed among other residents. This represents an increase from 2017 when the rate was 3.4 times that of other residents .



First Nations women are disproportionately affected by the opioid overdose crisis.

- > In 2018, First Nations women experienced 46 per cent of overdose events and 39 per cent of overdose deaths among all First Nations. Among other residents, women experienced 27 per cent of overdose events and 17 per cent of overdose deaths.



HEALTH SERVICES UTILIZATION (FNHA 2018B)

Rate of attachment with a single general practitioner was significantly lower among First Nations in the Fraser Salish Region compared with other residents (67.6 per cent vs. 77.6 per cent), although the difference in attachment varied by sub-region:

- ▼ > **East/North-East:** 65.5 per cent of First Nations vs. 74.0 per cent of other residents
- ▼ > **North:** 70.8 per cent of First Nations vs. 78.8 per cent of other residents
- ▼ > **South:** 74.6 per cent of First Nations vs. 77.8 per cent of other residents

First Nations in the region who were not attached to a physician had significantly higher emergency department user rates compared with First Nations who were attached to a physician (49.4 per cent vs. 31.3 per cent).

- ▲ > **Mental health physician service rates** were higher among First Nations in the Fraser Salish Region compared to other residents (15.8 per cent vs. 12.5 per cent).
- ▲ > **Mental health hospital service rates** were higher among First Nations in the Fraser Salish Region compared to other residents (0.7 per cent vs. 0.3 per cent).
- ▲ > **Substance use physician service rates** were three to four times higher for First Nations in the Fraser Salish Region compared to other residents.
- ▲ > **Substance use hospital service rates** were four to six times higher for First Nations in the Fraser Salish Region compared to other residents.



► STRATEGY 1

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH AND WELLNESS BY INCREASING ACCESS TO SERVICES.

1. Expand Indigenous primary care services to improve access and support attachment.
2. Design and implement chronic disease prevention and management initiatives focused on the unique unmet needs of Indigenous Peoples.
3. Improve access to health services by partnering with Indigenous service providers and supporting community-based contracted health initiatives.
4. Work with existing Indigenous partners to address community needs using innovative approaches to systems change.

► STRATEGY 2

SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN FRASER HEALTH TO DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES.

1. Equip organizational leaders to apply an Indigenous lens to policies, practices and priorities throughout Fraser Health.
2. Expand organizational understanding of the strengths and challenges experienced by Indigenous Peoples and how these influence their access to health care.
3. Promote, encourage, and support community-driven research priorities that increase the understanding of Indigenous Peoples health needs.
4. Engage communities and organizations to seamlessly incorporate Indigenous-specific approaches to health and wellness.

► STRATEGY 3

UPHOLD FRASER HEALTH'S ONGOING ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO EMBED CULTURAL SAFETY AND CULTURAL HUMILITY THROUGHOUT THE ORGANIZATION.

1. Continue the quality improvement cycle of the comprehensive 2019-2024 Fraser Salish Region cultural safety framework.
2. Develop program-specific resources to effectively and sustainably integrate cultural safety.
3. Design mixed-methods approaches to evaluate, report and continually improve Indigenous Peoples' experience of cultural safe services.
4. Expand opportunities for Fraser Health staff to build capacity in the development and delivery of culturally safe services.

► STRATEGY 4

BUILD COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS TO STRENGTHEN THE INDIGENOUS HEALTH LANDSCAPE.

1. Strengthen collaborative relationships with First Nations Health Authority, Métis Nation British Columbia, B.C. Friendship Centres and other key partners to initiative innovative and evidence-informed approaches to health and wellness care.
2. Support inter-sectoral collaboration to address the social determinants of Indigenous health.
3. Empower external partners to prioritize the health of Indigenous Peoples in their planning and service provision.
4. Engage partnerships with professional associations, regulatory and licensing bodies and post-secondary institutions.



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ABORIGINAL HEALTH: THE WAY FORWARD 2019-2024

► STRATEGY 1

Create opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to improve their health and wellness by increasing access to services.

- 1** Expand Indigenous primary care services to improve access and support attachment.
- 2** Design and implement chronic disease prevention and management initiatives focused on the unique unmet needs of Indigenous Peoples.
- 3** Improve access to health services by partnering with Indigenous service providers and supporting community-based contracted health initiatives.
- 4** Work with existing Indigenous partners to address community needs using innovative approaches to systems change.

► STRATEGY 2

Support partnerships within Fraser Health to develop sustainable programming and services.

- 1** Equip organizational leaders to apply an Indigenous lens to policies, practices and priorities throughout Fraser Health.
- 2** Expand organizational understanding of the strengths and challenges experienced by Indigenous Peoples and how these influence their access to health care.
- 3** Promote, encourage, and support community-driven research priorities that increase the understanding of Indigenous Peoples health needs.
- 4** Engage communities and organizations to seamlessly incorporate Indigenous-specific approaches to health and wellness.

► STRATEGY 3

Uphold Fraser Health's ongoing organizational commitment to embed cultural safety and cultural humility throughout the organization.

- 1** Continue the quality improvement cycle of the comprehensive 2019-2024 Fraser Salish Region cultural safety framework.
- 2** Develop program-specific resources to effectively and sustainably integrate cultural safety.
- 3** Design mixed-methods approaches to evaluate, report and continually improve Indigenous Peoples' experience of cultural safe services.
- 4** Expand opportunities for Fraser Health staff to build capacity in the development and delivery of culturally safe services.

► STRATEGY 4

Build collaborative relationships with external partners to strengthen the Indigenous health landscape.

- 1** Strengthen collaborative relationships with First Nations Health Authority, Metis Nation B.C., B.C. Friendship Centres and other key partners to initiate innovative and evidence-informed approaches to health and wellness care.
- 2** Support inter-sectoral collaboration to address the social determinants of Indigenous health.
- 3** Empower external partners to prioritize the health of Indigenous Peoples in their planning and service provision.
- 4** Engage partnerships with professional associations, regulatory and licensing bodies and post-secondary institutions.



Please tear here to create a handout of the strategies.



Notes:





Join us as we take this journey forward together.

To learn more about Aboriginal Health: The Way Forward 2019-2024,
contact Fraser Health's Aboriginal Health Program

AboriginalHealth@FraserHealth.ca



