Aboriginal Health

Year In Review
2007 – 2008
Opening Messages

I want to offer assurance of the growing commitment at a high level in British Columbia to improve the health of Aboriginal people. Fraser Health is deeply committed to working with Aboriginal communities toward our shared vision of “Healthy Self, Healthy Families, Healthy Communities and Healthy Nation.”

Fraser Health’s Executive Team and Board of Directors are aware of and fully support the Aboriginal Health Plan. They expect to see further integration of Aboriginal health into how we serve Aboriginal people and their communities. Also worth highlighting is the Aboriginal representation by Deanie Kolybabi on Fraser Health’s Board of Directors.

I would also like to recognize the positive relationships developed with First Nations communities through the leadership of Diane Miller, Executive Director Health Promotion and Prevention and Leslie Schroeder, Aboriginal Project Director. In addition, the dedication and enthusiasm of Aboriginal health care providers have contributed to many significant changes.

This past year has certainly seen significant progress. Thank you for entrusting me as a leader with Fraser Health. The Board of Directors and our Executive Team are committed to serve.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nigel Murray
President and Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to a review of the past year’s accomplishments in Aboriginal Health.

September 2008 marks the first year in implementation of the Aboriginal Health Plan (2007-2010). The enclosed highlights many important achievements in Aboriginal health. Our progress is a result of ongoing collaboration between Fraser Health’s leaders, and Aboriginal community partners. Our successes can be attributed to the collective wisdom, leadership and commitment of individuals contributing to the Aboriginal Health Plan and the ongoing Aboriginal Health Improvement Committees facilitated by our Community Engagement Coordinators.

In addition, Adaptation funding has allowed for initiatives like community capacity building and the expansion of Fraser Health’s Aboriginal Health Team. Fraser Health is working with the Board of Directors, senior leadership and staff to continually build our understanding of Aboriginal people. To date more than 700 employees have participated in cultural awareness sessions learning the traditions, theories, terminology and practices of Aboriginal culture.

Fraser Health’s Aboriginal Health Plan is closely aligned with the 2005 Transformative Change Accord through our focus on engaging Aboriginal communities, building Fraser Health capacity and implementing many community initiatives. Fraser Health has made concrete gains in relation to these goals. Our progress is a result of strong relationships, enhanced involvement and accountability of executive leaders, and the expansion of the Aboriginal Health Team from three to twelve members.

I wish to recognize and thank each participant involved in this process for their commitment to the implementation of the Aboriginal Health Plan.

Sincerely,

Diane Miller
Executive Director, Health Promotion and Prevention
Aboriginal Health Plan 2007 - 2010

The Vision
Healthy Self, Healthy Families, Healthy Communities and Healthy Nation

The Mission
▲ Inuit, Métis and First Nations (regardless of Status) partner with Fraser Health Authority and other service agents to meet primary health care and wellness needs and together build on cultural strengths enhancing communities of care

The Values
▲ Guided by traditional healing and spirituality
▲ An inclusive partner when planning, implementing and delivering services
▲ Build better relationships that support the capacity of the Aboriginal service providers to deliver service

The Guiding Principles
▲ Respect that Aboriginal culture, language and traditions are important to Aboriginal healing
▲ Aboriginal well being and healing needs to be determined by Aboriginal people
▲ Fraser Health is moving forward in full partnership with Aboriginal communities

“I find the Aboriginal Health Improvement Committee meetings to be extremely beneficial for networking as well as to help identify the gaps in services specific to the needs of Aboriginal people.”
Debra A. Branham, Coordinator, Xolhemet Transition House Chilliwack
Responding To…

Transformative Change Accord

In November 2005, the Province of British Columbia, the First Nations Leadership Council, and the Government of Canada signed an agreement titled the Transformative Change Accord. The Accord recognizes the need to strengthen relationships on a government-to-government basis and establishes the parties’ commitment to achieve three goals:

▲ Close the gaps between First Nations and other British Columbians in the areas of education, health, housing and economic opportunities over the next 10 years

▲ Reconcile Aboriginal rights and title with those of the Crown

▲ Establish a new relationship based on mutual respect and recognition

The Transformative Change Accord recognizes areas of action to help close health gaps over the next ten years, including:

▲ Establish mental health programs to address substance abuse and youth suicide

▲ Integrate Act Now B.C. strategy with First Nations health programs to reduce incidences of preventable diseases like diabetes

▲ Increase the number of trained First Nations health care professionals

Aboriginal Health Plan — September 2007


The Technical Advisory Group’s hard work, collaboration and research had a single purpose: to identify how Fraser Health can better serve the health needs of Aboriginal residents. This effort has led to a much greater understanding and recognition of where health services in Fraser Health must be adapted or expanded to better serve these needs.
Where Are We Now

Vision Achievement

Achieving our vision of “Healthy Self, Healthy Families, Healthy Communities and Healthy Nation” involves commitment from all levels. Since the first Aboriginal Health Improvement Committee meeting held in September 2007, Fraser Health, in partnership with the Aboriginal communities, has taken significant steps in accomplishing the strategic priorities set out in the Aboriginal Health Plan 2007 – 2010.

Strategic Priorities

Driven by carefully-articulated values and guiding principles, the planning Committee recommended the following strategic priorities be addressed as a means towards achieving our vision:

▲ Improving health outcomes for Aboriginal people
▲ Improving access to culturally-appropriate services
▲ Strengthening relationships and community capacity-building

“There seems to be a renewed sense of hope in the Aboriginal community and an incredible opportunity to build trust and relationship where distrust and suspicion existed before.”

Brian Muth, Community Engagement Coordinator (East)
Aboriginal Health
Aboriginal Health Steering Committee

Fraser Health acknowledges the past year’s work achieved by members of the Aboriginal Health Steering Committee (AHSC). This Committee was formed in October 2007 and includes representatives from Fraser Health’s service areas. The AHSC assists with the development of the goals and deliverables of the Fraser Health Aboriginal Health Plan. Providing direction and support to the Project Director of Aboriginal Health, the AHSC utilizes the Fraser Health Aboriginal Health Plan, the Transformative Change Accord, Provincial Government Letter of Expectations, and the First Nations Health Plan. In addition to the evaluation framework and Strategic Plan for Mental Health & Addictions (currently under development).

Learning About Culture

In 2007-2008, eleven Aboriginal cultural awareness training sessions were provided to 787 Health Promotion and Prevention and Mental Health and Addictions staff. Two workshops have been offered to offer insight and understanding of the effects of Indian Residential School. Sixty participants attended these workshops.

Fraser Health recognizes the need to improve cultural awareness and sensitivity among health care providers. The lack of effective communication between Aboriginal people and service providers can contribute to misunderstandings, which in turn can lead to limited responses to health-related messages and services, and less than optimal health care outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Staff reflections on cultural awareness training:

▲ “I feel that cultural awareness is very important and have found the experience to be most informative and helpful.”

▲ “I found this to be very enlightening, and it was good to hear it from the people themselves and to hear the effect it has had over generations. I also did learn a lot about the culture as well. I enjoyed the day very much!”

▲ “It was a great learning opportunity for work purposes, but as well a great learning experience to carry into all aspects of my life. I think First Nations culture and history is something that most probably don’t know enough about, and is not taught enough in school. Thanks for the beautiful experience...It really inspired me to learn more about the culture/history.”

Human Resources

A Human Resource role was created to assist with recruitment of Aboriginal people in Fraser Health.

Aboriginal Health’s Involvement

Aboriginal Health has been incorporated into several Fraser Health strategic plans including Health Promotion and Prevention, Mental Health and Addictions, HIV/AIDS and Perinatal Depression Strategy.
About Us

Fraser Health is committed to supporting the vision and guiding principles of the Aboriginal Health Plan. Beginning with the hiring of an Aboriginal Health Project Director in November 2007, the Aboriginal Health Team has steadily grown.

**Aboriginal Project Director**
Leslie Schroeder, Project Director, provides leadership within Fraser Health by planning, supporting and guiding the implementation of initiatives related to Aboriginal health services. Leslie assists Fraser Health in achieving the Aboriginal Health Plan and provincial target outcomes for Aboriginal health.

**Community Engagement Coordinators**
Three Community Engagement Coordinators assist in the planning and development of health programs to improve access and utilization of services for Aboriginal people in Fraser Health.

**Healthy Living Coordinator**
Provides information and support to Aboriginal communities who are interested in beginning healthy living programs.

**Medical Health Officer**
The Medical Health Officer lead provides public health and physician consultation and support on issues of Aboriginal Health. The lead also provides support to the Project Director and Aboriginal Health leads on identifying key statistical health indicators and provides objectives on the means of which to handle these.

“Knowing that the [Aboriginal Health] Team is growing and active, is a sign that our voices are being heard and action is taking place.”
Inez Jasper, Community Health Nurse
Stó:lō Nation Health Services
Aboriginal Health Team

Aboriginal Health Liaisons
Facilitates connections between Aboriginal clients and health service providers to enhance access to Fraser Health services in a culturally appropriate manner.

Aboriginal Mental Health and Addictions Liaisons
Supports Aboriginal people by ensuring linkages between clients, hospitals, community Mental Health and Addictions treatment services and health and social service providers, and ensures that clients are respected in a culturally sensitive manner.

Clinical Nurse Educator
The Clinical Nurse Educator works with the Aboriginal Health Team to deliver education activities to staff by teaching, facilitating groups, mentoring and conducting presentations, demonstrations and lectures.

Human Resources Consultant
Facilitates recruitment and retention for Aboriginal Health initiatives.

Aboriginal Health Nurse Practitioner
The Nurse Practitioner provides culturally safe, quality primary health care from a holistic perspective. She enhances access to health care services for urban Aboriginal clients currently unserved or underserved by existing services.

“...The discussion Dee Mitchell, (Mental Health Liaison), facilitated helped learners to discover how health determinants impact Aboriginal people, their quality of life, and ability for capacity building stimulating further reflective thought. Knowledge was gained about the traditional health practices that cannot be ignored in terms of helping First Nations communities build their capacity as a way of empowering them to achieve health, maintain health promotion and disease prevention.”

Dr. Gamini Randeni, Psychiatric Nursing, Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Aboriginal Health Service Year in Review 2007/2008

Improving Health Outcomes for the Aboriginal Population

Aboriginal Health Improvement Committees

With the support of the Aboriginal Health Steering Committee, Fraser Health has established three Aboriginal Health Improvement Committees (AHIC) that each meet bi-monthly in Aboriginal communities throughout the entire Region. These Committees facilitate networking and communication amongst representatives from Fraser Health, the Aboriginal communities, and service organizations, to increase knowledge, social awareness and understanding of all Fraser Health programs and services. The AHICs provide guidance and recommendations to the implementation and evaluation of the Aboriginal Health Plan.

One of the most significant achievements for the AHICs is that Fraser Health staff have been out and about in the communities holding these meetings. Our commitment is to meet where the people we serve live or receive health services. The host communities assist with the planning of meetings, arrange for meeting space, and organize catering from their own community members. Fraser Health staff are invited into the Aboriginal communities, sometimes for the first time, and bring other service providers and agencies who also may not have been to that community until the AHIC meeting. There are many opportunities to learn a little more about each host community and a respected Elder or Council member and singers always welcome the participants.

For this, we would like to thank the following host communities for opening their doors to us this last year:

1. Stó:lō Nation Health Services (January & May)
2. Seabird Island First Nation (March)
3. Chehalis First Nation (May)
4. Cheam First Nation (July)
5. Tsawwassen First Nation (January)
6. Kwantlen First Nation (April & May)
7. Kla-how-eya Aboriginal Centre (July)
8. North Fraser Métis Association (February)
9. Katzie First Nation (April)
10. Spirit of the Children (June)

“I am optimistic that with the new Aboriginal Health Project Director and her growing team of caring and experienced health providers, the lack of adequate access to health care services, as well as the lack of service partnerships in order to properly improve many of the major health issues and conditions of Aboriginal people, will begin to change. I already see this happening with the Aboriginal Health Improvement Committees which bring Aboriginal health providers together to network and brainstorm solutions to problems identified by the community members themselves.”

Wenona Victor, PhD Candidate, Consultant, Aboriginal Health
Aboriginal Health Improvement Committee

Terms of Reference

Committee members are drawn from

- Community-based organizations with an interest in the health of Aboriginal people
- Collectives of communities, such as tribal councils or inter-tribal health organizations
- Health service providers who work with or assist Aboriginal clients
- Other representatives that the Committee deems appropriate

Fraser Health members

- Director responsible for Aboriginal Health
- Aboriginal Liaisons
- Aboriginal Health leads
- Administrative support
- Other representatives by virtue of their position, and/or associated portfolio responsibilities

Individual team members are responsible to those communities and organizations on whose behalf they participate; the AHIC as a whole is accountable to the communities it serves and the Fraser Health Project Director is responsible for Aboriginal Health.

Meetings are scheduled bi-monthly for each region/circle on a rotating basis and these meetings rotate among member communities, as agreed upon by the AHIC. In 2007 – 2008, twelve AHIC meetings were held in ten different Aboriginal communities, the first in September 2007.

“I found the AHIC meeting filled with a diverse group of professional agencies was wonderful. This diverse group also allowed for an incredible opportunity to network and establish relationships with agencies and individuals that I would have otherwise had no opportunity to work with.”

Candice Quesnel, Program Manager, Durrant Transition House
Atira Women’s Resources Society
Improving Health Outcomes for the Aboriginal Population

Primary Health Clinic at Kla-how-eya

In December 2007, Fraser Health employed a Nurse Practitioner to begin preparation to open a Primary Health Clinic within Kla-how-eya Aboriginal Centre in Surrey.

The clinic will open in September 2008, with the mission:

“To innovatively provide culturally safe and easily accessible quality primary health care for medically unserved/underserved urban Aboriginal clients, and their families, across the lifespan.”

HIV/AIDS

Fraser Health is partnering with Aboriginal communities to provide additional or new HIV/AIDS programs and collaborating with Aboriginal partners to provide education and awareness programs to Aboriginal youth.

Act Now B.C.

Aboriginal leaders and health care providers are included in Fraser Health working groups and training events related to Healthy Choices in Pregnancy (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder prevention), tobacco reduction, community food security, healthy weights and physical activity.
Improving Health Outcomes for the Aboriginal Population

Chronic Disease

Fraser Health is developing partnerships with Aboriginal experts to deliver chronic disease prevention workshops and educational sessions to health providers and clinics.

Fall and Injury Prevention

Fraser Health’s Fall and Injury Prevention Program and Mobile Clinic are working with the Aboriginal Health Team to hold clinics in Aboriginal communities throughout the region.

This two part series consists of an education session and clinic held in different communities. The first session is an educational and pre-screening workshop. Participants learn the various triggers that promote falls and fall-related injuries from occurring. The pre-screening workshop helps identify individuals who may be at a high risk for a fall and invites them to a one-on-one workshop lead by a health professional team often comprised of a nurse, dietician, kinesiologist, pharmacist, physiotherapist and occupational therapist.

Inventory of Services

A consultant was hired to conduct extensive research and create an inventory of services to be used as a reference for key information regarding child and youth, dentist, dietician, doctor, elder care, land culture, mental health, nurse, water tech and spiritual care services.

“I really enjoyed the AHIC meeting. It was well-run, organized, lots of valuable information regarding addictions and various programs that we can now access.”

Dorothy Francis, Addiction Counsellor
Soowahlie Health Services & Kwantlen First Nation
Improving Access to Culturally Appropriate Services

Culturally appropriate services depend heavily on partnerships, communication and collaboration between Aboriginal communities and Fraser Health.

Primary Care
Primary Health Care services enhance access to culturally safe quality and appropriate health care services for Aboriginal clients currently unserved or underserved.

Dental
Fraser Health has increased its dental services for screening and fluoride varnish treatment for children aged five and under.

Mental Health
Personal stories shared by six young Aboriginal women from the Stó:lō Territory and their families, were captured on film for a new DVD, Aboriginal Journeys in Mental Health – ‘Surviving the Fall’. The second in its collection, this DVD was produced by Fraser Health’s Health Promotion and Prevention and Mental Health and Addictions services, Stó:lō Nation Health Services and Bear Image Productions.

These women speak to the grief and loss of miscarriage and stillbirth, and of the loneliness and isolation they experienced with Perinatal and Post-Partum Depression. They share their mental and emotional struggles, the pain, the frustrations, the sadness, and as well, to the recovery and hope gained from reaching out for help.

“I encourage all health workers to take the time to listen to the people you care for, learn about the Aboriginal history, and allow that knowledge to inform your practice.”

Kate McCulloch, Regional Clinical Nurse Educator
Health Promotion & Prevention - Aboriginal Health, Fraser Health
Improving Access to Culturally Appropriate Services

Cultural Awareness Training

The BC First Nations Health Plan identifies the need for cultural competency training for health authority staff. Consistent with this recommendation, Fraser Health’s Aboriginal Health Plan sets a goal of cultural competency training for staff.

Cultural competency training provides all levels of the organization with an understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal terminology, theories and practices. Cultural awareness helps health care providers to better inform the care they provide. In 2007 – 2008, eleven Aboriginal cultural awareness training sessions were provided to 787 Health Promotion and Prevention and Mental Health and Addictions staff.

The cultural awareness project is currently being evaluated before being offered to all Fraser Health staff in 2007 – 2008. As well alternate ways to provide cultural awareness training are being examined, a cultural awareness DVD has been produced and web-based training is being explored.

Two workshops for Mental Health and Addictions staff have been offered to provide insight and understanding of the effects of Indian Residential School. Sixty participants attended these workshops.

Cultural awareness training sessions have been held at:

- Charlie Longhouse in Chehalis
- Richard Malloway Longhouse
- Kla-how-eya Aboriginal Culture Centre

Indian Residential School Settlement and Compensation

Fraser Health offers an information sharing session on the historical perspective of the Indian Residential School Common Experience Payment, the compensation, the history, continual traumatic effects, and litigation. The session is open to Fraser Health Mental Health and Addictions staff, including support staff and provides frontline workers with an understanding and history of the Indian Residential School Compensation and effects.

“The consultation process has been culturally sensitive and culturally appropriate: considering local traditional protocols spirituality, and allowing Aboriginal service providers to voice concerns in a safe environment – the consultation process produced action items that are also being worked on, not just identified then left.”

Inez Jasper, Community Health Nurse
Stó:lō Nation Health Services
Quality relationships are the foundation of progress. They lead to mutually-respectful collaboration and partnerships. They create awareness and sharing of valuable knowledge and they facilitate the ability to continually plan and to measure progress. Evaluating results as we go permits us to adapt plans to create more success.

Collaborations

Fraser Health often collaborates with First Nations communities on Aboriginal Health initiatives that are partially funded by the communities and other sources. Examples of these collaborations include:

▲ Primary Health Clinic at Kla-how-eya Aboriginal Centre
▲ Pediatrician services at Stó:lô Nation

Health Promotion and Prevention Services and Aboriginal Health are working with Aboriginal communities on Health Integration Projects funded by Health Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health. These projects are still in their early stages of planning and include:

▲ Katzie Health Promotion Team
▲ Chawathil Telehealth Care Plan
▲ Nlaka’pamux Nation Tribal Council, Child and Youth Mental Health Project

“I want to congratulate Fraser Health on the advancement they have made, the direction they are going and their commitment to delivering the [Aboriginal] Health Plan.”

Pattie Rosvold, Office Administrator, Health Information Officer
North Fraser Métis Association
Healthy Living

A Healthy Living Coordinator has joined the Aboriginal Health Team specifically to support Aboriginal communities’ healthy living activities. Since starting in this position the Healthy Living Coordinator has worked to develop relationships in Fraser Health and has developed a series of culturally appropriate healthy living materials.

With 1,500 Act Now B.C. pedometers, the Healthy Living Coordinator has supported three Fraser Health communities, including Kla-how-eya Aboriginal Centre, Seabird Island First Nation and the North Fraser Métis Association to implement healthy living challenges and walking programs.

Pedometers have been provided to 40 people at the North Fraser Métis Association for their walking program, “Journey to Batoche”.

“As the city of Surrey grows, the number of Aboriginal people is fast growing as well. With this in mind Fraser Health has increased its focus on Aboriginal people’s health in an effort to close one of the gaps between people of First Nations and other British Columbians.”

Lix Lopez, Health & Wellness Manager
Kla-how-eya Aboriginal Centre of SACS
Aboriginal Service Contracts:

In 2007 - 2008 the following direct service Aboriginal Health contracts were funded:

**Chawathil First Nation Diabetes Prevention Program**
Providing a diabetes prevention and maintenance program for the residents of Chawathil First Nation.

**Chehalis Community School Youth Outreach Program**
Providing a youth outreach program for the students of Chehalis Community School.

**Fraser-Thompson Youth Counselling Worker**
Providing a youth counselling/support program for the youth and families of Boothroyd Indian Band.

**Kla-how-eya HIV/AIDS Support & Education**
Providing HIV/AIDS support to clients of Kla-how-eya Aboriginal Centre.

**Kla-how-eya Heart Disease Prevention & Education Program**
Kla-how-eya Aboriginal Centre is providing a heart disease prevention and education program for the off-reserve Aboriginal residents of Surrey and North Delta.

**Kwikwetlem First Nation Family Support**
Providing a family support program for the residents of Kwikwetlem First Nation.

Preventing addictions and mental health problems based on traditional and cultural aspects.

Providing counselling and support in the areas of addictions and mental health.

**Mission Friendship Centre Society Community Health Kitchen**
Providing a health awareness and prevention program focusing on diabetes and mental illness, for the off-reserve Aboriginal residents of Mission and the Fraser Valley.

**Mission Native / TO’O Housing - Chronic Disease Prevention, Support, Education Program**
Providing a chronic disease prevention, support and education program for the off-reserve Aboriginal residents of Mission.

**Native Court Workers Counselling Association Alcohol & Drug Program**
Providing an alcohol and drug outpatient counselling, support and prevention program for the off-reserve Aboriginal residents of Surrey and North Delta.

**North Fraser Métis Association - Health Information Program**
Providing a health information and resource centre program for the Métis and off-reserve residents of Burnaby.

**Seabird Island First Nation Chronic Disease Prevention Program**
Providing a nutrition and physical wellness program for the residents of Seabird Island First Nation and Skwah First Nation.

**Stó:lō Nation Health Facility Liaison Program**
Providing a Health Facility Liaison program for the Aboriginal residents, on and off reserve, of Chilliwack and vicinity.

**Stó:lō Nation Day Treatment Program**
Providing an alcohol and drug outpatient education, support and intervention program for the Aboriginal residents, on and off-reserve, aged 18 years and older, residing within the traditional territory of the Stó:lō Nation.

**Stó:lō Nation Mental Health Liaison**
Providing on-going consultation with Aboriginal communities in Fraser Health, with a full range of mental health support and referral services within the Mental Health Liaison Program for Aboriginal persons residing in Fraser Health who are experiencing any mental health issues.

**Tsawwassen First Nation Chronic Care Program**
Providing a chronic disease prevention and education project, focusing on diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, and obesity, for the Aboriginal residents, on and off-reserve of Tsawwassen and Ladner.
Highlights and Achievements in the Region

In the spring of 2008, Fraser Health supported a Fun Run at Seabird Island First Nation. 180 people participated.

The Stó:lō Elders Lodge assisted living place just celebrated their first anniversary on Wednesday, July 30, 2008 in Chilliwack.


Several participants from the North Fraser Métis Association’s “Journey to Batoche” gathered for a Healthy Living evening on September 5, 2008. The evening started with a workshop on ‘Staying Motivated’ where the group identified and shared personal tips for staying motivated. Not only did they make progress with their “Journey to Batoche”, but participants are gaining health benefits from the physical activity. The evening was filled with lots of laughter, learning and fresh fruit and salad dishes to share.

Fraser Health Speech Language Therapy Services, the Fraser Valley Child Development Center, and the Seabird Island First Nation signed a protocol agreement in support of a collaborative approach to the delivery of speech services to Aboriginal children and their families in the Circle One AHIC (Eastern Region).

“Participating in the Canoe journey Kla-how-eya coordinates with host First Nations communities every year is reminiscent of ancestral Coast Salish journeys. Values are spoken of and modeled by the adults, and expected of the young - respect, caring, trust, honor, integrity. The young women are gathered and taught about their sacred life giving cycle in a manner of respect. This is our work – engaging the whole community.”

Hašii?ukmis-ukuuup (Jacquie Adams)
Community Engagement Coordinator (South)
Aboriginal Health
Together, we are celebrating all that has happened in our region this past year through our work.

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of a team of dedicated people working together in a good way towards the same vision. We, as First Nations people, talk about work being done in a good way that is safe and respectful. I celebrate our Aboriginal Health team and its beneficial mix of cultures which serve the Aboriginal population in many different means beyond basic medical services.

As Aboriginal Health Project Director, it was important to hire the appropriate people to ensure we have the right people in the right places. It was important to make sure we were surrounded with people that shared the same passion. The proper network has been established and has proved to allow for the continued implementation of the Aboriginal Health Plan. Integral to continued success is keeping the promise to act on and report back to all levels including executive and grassroots.

The Aboriginal Health Improvement Committees (AHIC) are primarily grassroots driven, working at a community level. The AHIC meetings are designed to find out what health services are needed by meeting Aboriginal community members where they are. The commitment to meet where the people we serve reside, or receive services, allows for exposure, and creates a comfort level where they are. The meetings are not Fraser Health driven. The Aboriginal Health Team is there to help facilitate the discussion and the meeting is led by the group in attendance. The Committee members have taken away and learned so much more from being present and interactive on their land. Blending corporate with the cultural appropriateness of holding the meetings in the Aboriginal communities creates a different type of experience. AHIC meetings are about bringing people together for a purpose.

So what is next?

There is no limit to the possibility of achievements this coming year can bring, given the dynamic team we have in place. We talk about weaving the Aboriginal thread through the fabric of Fraser Health. Only a few stitches in, we will continue implementing health service and delivery and building the plans that support the implementation commitment.

Kw’as hoy (Thank you),

Leslie Schroeder (Tzeachten First Nation)
Project Director, Aboriginal Health
Contact

Circle North
Dina Lambright
Community Engagement Coordinator – North

Circle South
Jacquie Adams
Community Engagement Coordinator – South

Circle East
Brian Muth
Community Engagement Coordinator - East

About the Aboriginal Health Services identifier

Our identifier represents a culturally inclusive and caring organization.

The hummingbird symbolizes health.

The Métis flag and the Inuit Inukshuk represent the diversity of our Aboriginal population.

The medicine wheel symbolizes balance and represents the four elements of life including mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health.

The drum represents the heart beat of the Aboriginal Nation.