



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

OVERVIEW

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Health Sector continues to advance and promote the First Nations Health Transformation Agenda (FNHTA). The FNHTA sets out 85 recommendations to federal, provincial and territorial governments. These cover a wide range of policy areas all aimed at stabilizing profoundly underfunded health programs, and increasing self-determination of First Nations health in keeping with inherent, Treaty and international rights.

As part of its' efforts to advance the regional health transformation initiatives, the AFN recently hosted the First Nations Health Transformation Summit on February 13 and 14, 2018, in Toronto, ON. Overall, the Summit was attended by nearly 500 representatives including First Nations leadership, technicians, federal/provincial/territorial officials and health professional organizations. Innovative

practices in health governance from across Canada were highlighted.

Other areas of work underway to support the implementation of the FNHTA includes, but is not limited to:

- Exploratory work on federal health legislation.
- Advancing the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework.
- Continued work on the AFN-First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Joint Review.
- Completing the AFN Health Partnerships Guide.
- The development of a new AFN Health Sector Strategic Plan.
- Launching the AFN Opioid Strategy.

UPDATE

At the December 2017, Special Chiefs Assembly, the AFN received a mandate from the Chiefs in Assembly (Resolution 69/2017, *Exploring a Legislative Base for First Nations Health*) to explore the concept of federal health legislation and develop tools to support First Nations in their own deliberations about the potential for legislation. The AFN has developed a workplan to achieve this work and is currently seeking appropriate experts to

inform the work. Proposed areas of inquiry include developing basic myth busting about legislation, a risk/benefit analysis, and a discussion around the relationship between Treaty rights and legislation. In addition, AFN will be hosting a dialogue session at the upcoming Special Chiefs Assembly on Legislation on May 1 and 2, 2018, in Gatineau, QC.

ISSUE UPDATE

April 2018

In an effort to advance health transformation, and in the context of the development of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the AFN Health Sector and FNIHB senior officials have developed a draft workplan. The proposed workplan activities include:

- Explore the idea of setting up a group of experts to advise First Nations on a voluntary basis on developing new models of control and advancing negotiations with federal/provincial governments.
- Design mechanisms to improve communications between FNIHB and First Nations on all levels.

Budget 2018 included significant new investments in Indigenous health in the order of \$1.5 billion over five years starting in 2018–19, and \$149 million per year ongoing. Notable areas of investment include new dollars for Health Transformation (\$235 million), a critical extension of the Indian Residential School Resolution Health Support Program (\$248.6 million/3 years) and investments in addictions treatment centres and staff (\$200 million/5 years). Notably, Budget 2018 signaled that a number of FNIHB programs will be shifted into A-based funding including clinical client care, accreditation, eHealth infrastructure, and the addictions treatment funding. The AFN will continue to seek details on budget implementation including regional allocations.

NEXT STEPS

A number of key next steps in advancing the AFN health agenda include:

- Finalizing and advancing the AFN-FNIHB shared workplan to support health transformation.
- Finalizing the workplan to respond to Resolution 69/2017, *Exploring a Legislative Base for First Nations Health*, and securing outside experts to inform this work.
- Launching the *First Nations Health Priorities to Reducing Problematic Opioid Use – Discussion Document: A First Nations Specific Opioid Strategy*.
- In order to conclude the AFN-FNIHB NIHB Joint Review, the AFN will convene meetings of the National Navigators Network, the Joint Review Steering Technical Working Group and Implementation Table throughout 2018. These meetings will focus on finalizing the reviews and approvals of the remaining benefit areas that will inform the next piece of work to bring transformative changes in benefit delivery and governance.
- An update on the Joint Review Steering Committee and next steps will be provided at the SCA in December 2018.