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Federal, Provincial, and First Nations Leaders Sign Charter of Relationship Principles

News Release

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Government commits to working together with Nishnawbe Aski Nation, representing 49 First Nations in Northern Ontario on health transformation

July 24, 2017 - Ottawa, ON - Health Canada

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), the Government of Ontario, and the Government of Canada recognize the challenges to delivering health services in First Nations communities and are committed to working together to help overcome them.

Today, as a concrete sign of a renewed relationship with Indigenous peoples, federal Minister of Health Jane Philpott and Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Eric Hoskins met with Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler of Nishnawbe Aski Nation in Ottawa to discuss the urgent health needs across Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities and announce the signing of the [Charter of Relationship Principles Governing Health System Transformation in Nishnawbe Aski Nation \(NAN\) Territory](#).

The Charter is a shared commitment to advancing progress and creating stronger accountability for outcomes among the federal and provincial governments and NAN leadership. It sets out common objectives and commits partners to work collaboratively to design innovative solutions, transform the delivery of healthcare to First Nations communities and support First Nations-driven health systems. In concrete terms, the Charter will support the alignment of federal and provincial resources and supports so that they better address the health priorities of NAN communities. For example, it will create a process that would review the urgent health needs identified by NAN and other First Nations health entities within NAN territory in order to prioritize actions. The Charter is accompanied by an action plan that documents and tracks investments, outcomes and actions.

Many NAN communities have faced crises in the last several months. The Charter, as well as an accompanying transformation action plan which is currently under development, will lead to a more comprehensive and effective prevention, response and recovery strategy for these communities.

Quotes

"Our government is deeply committed to a renewed relationship with Indigenous peoples. In partnership with NAN and the Ontario government we have been working to respond quickly to recent crises. However, improving health and mental wellness requires a transformational approach that will create long-term solutions. The Charter of Relationship Principles is an important step. It is the roadmap to meeting the needs and priorities of NAN First Nations, and restoring hope and self-determination."

The Honourable Jane Philpott
Minister of Health

"We are pleased to sign the Charter of Relationship Principles with our federal and provincial Treaty partners to support the realignment of the health system. We must shift the health system from crisis response by reorganizing structural accountabilities, responsibilities and resource allocations to bring improved outcomes for our First Nations. Realignment will lead to community-driven health transformation, and is a move towards reconciliation."

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler
Nishnawbe Aski Nation

"The Charter of Relationship Principles is a historic step towards transforming Indigenous health care so that priorities and solutions are community-led and investments lead to long-term meaningful improvements in health outcomes. We are committed to working with all other First Nations communities towards health care transformation that strengthens First Nations' role in the authority, design and delivery of appropriate and impactful health care."

Dr. Eric Hoskins
Ontario Minister of Health and Long Term Care

Quick Facts

- All parties committed to the development of the Charter following the declaration of public health emergency by NAN and the Sioux Lookout Chiefs Committee on Health on February 24, 2016.
- Health Canada and the province of Ontario will each be providing \$150,000 to help support a NAN Health Summit that will occur in the Fall 2017.
- Other actions that have been taken by the federal and provincial governments and NAN leadership since February 2016 include a commitment to:
 - jointly identify health priorities for communities in NAN, and undertake joint health planning and strategy development for health system transformation; and
 - implement health service integration projects that increase First Nations control and/or strengthen federal-provincial health service integration.
- In Budget 2017, the Government of Canada committed more than \$118 million over five years to mental health programing. This is in addition to the \$69 million announced in July 2016 for immediate crisis interventions and the \$300 million that the Government provides annually to support culturally relevant mental wellness programs and services in First Nations on-reserve and Inuit communities.
- The Government of Canada has also made recent investments in NAN territory to support crisis response and mental wellness teams. Just over \$7 million has been committed to date in 2017/18; as well as \$4.4 million for NAN Choose Life applications under the Jordan's Principle Child First Initiative. Choose Life is geared to First Nations children and youth in Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities who are at risk of suicide. The goal is to implement a simplified process to access funding for mental health services.
- The Government of Ontario has invested in the Ontario First Nations Health Action Plan, including over \$222 million in new investments over three years; and \$104.5 million on-going.

Associated Links

- [Nishnawbe Aski Nation](#)

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