

## First Nations Make Historic Decision in Health

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COAST SALISH TERRITORY/WEST VANCOUVER



On May 26, 2011, First Nations in British Columbia passed a historic resolution to assume greater control and decision-making over their health and wellness.

146 of the 167 Chiefs and representatives in attendance (87%) voted in favour of the resolution which will make BC First Nations the first in Canada to take over health service delivery from the federal government. The resolution also provides the First Nations Health Council a strong mandate to work with the Province and the Health Authorities.

“BC First Nations are true leaders,” said Grand Chief Doug Kelly, Chair of the First Nations Health Council. “We are leading the way in developing innovative practices and approaches not seen anywhere else in the country. Through this new health governance approach, we will see remarkable improvements in the health and well-being of First Nations people in BC within one generation, and contribute to the health services accessed by all British Columbians.”

Warner Adam, Deputy Chair of the First Nations Health Council added, “We will now proceed with confidence in the work First Nations have asked us to do – support First Nations to engage with provincial Regional Health Authorities, develop models for a First Nations Health Authority, negotiate with federal and provincial governments, and most importantly throughout this process maintain our process of engagement with BC First Nations.”

The resolution adopted by BC First Nations endorsed the signing of a *Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance* by First Nations, the Province of BC, and the Government of Canada. This legally-binding Framework Agreement outlines the new health governance structure for First Nations health services, the funding commitments for the transfer of federal First Nations health programs and services, and how First Nations and the provincial health system will work together to better meet First Nations health priorities and needs. The resolution also adopted a Consensus Paper that sets out a historic level of agreement amongst First Nations in BC about their health and well-being, and a series of next steps for the First Nations Health Council to undertake.

“The stark and grim reality is that First Nations people are currently not reflected in the health care system in this province and country,” said Chief Doug White of the First Nations Summit Task Group. “With this historic decision, we have achieved a remarkable level of unity as First Nations in BC, and it is through this unity that we will achieve the transformative change required to realize the healthy communities our people deserve. This is a time of great change, a time of great responsibility, and I honour the fact that we are taking these steps together as one.”

The First Nations Health Council was created in 2007 to provide leadership in the implementation of the Tripartite First Nation Health Plan. The 10-year Health Plan was created to improve the health and wellbeing of First Nations, and to close the gaps in health outcomes between First Nations and other British Columbians.

For more information about the Health Council please visit: [www.fnhc.ca](http://www.fnhc.ca)

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