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The seven interior Nations and Interior Health renew Partnership Accord

KELOWNA – The seven interior Nations and Interior Health (IH) have renewed their commitment to work together to improve Aboriginal health outcomes and to ensure cultural safety across the health system. The Partnership Accord, originally signed in 2012, was yesterday re-signed and extended through 2024.

Leaders from the Nlaka’pamux, Dākelh Dené, Secwepemc, Tsilhqot’in, St’at’imc, Ktunaxa, and Syilx Nations were joined by Interior Health’s Board Chair and President & CEO for the signing ceremony.

“This is an important milestone on a long journey to culturally safe and equitable health care for our people,” says Charlene Belleau, Secwepemc Nation Representative and Partnership Accord Leadership Table (PALT) Co-chair. “Our growing partnership with Interior Health is a key part of this process.”

“The re-signing of our Partnership Accord is formal acknowledgment of our partnership and shared purpose,” says Doug Cochrane, IH Board Chair and PALT Co-chair. “We have reaffirmed our commitment to provide the people of the interior Nations equitable access to quality and culturally safe care that meets the needs of patients and families.”

“I am proud and honoured to work in partnership with Interior First Nations, as we continue to strengthen our relationships and work to have a positive, measureable impact on health and wellness outcomes for First Nations people,” says Susan Brown, IH President & CEO. “I am personally committed to this work, and to cultural safety and cultural humility being embedded in all aspects of care across Interior Health. I am excited to see what else we can achieve together through continued collaboration in the years ahead.”

Updates to the Partnership Accord included an acknowledgement of the federal and provincial government endorsements of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

“We have come a long way in a short time,” says Allan Louis, Syilx Nation Representative. “This progress is founded on the relationship built by PALT and Interior Health in the years prior to the first signing. Now, with renewal of the Partnership Accord, we continue to enhance this relationship. Our challenge now is to ensure equal access for all health services in a culturally appropriate way.”

The agreement also lays out a series of shared objectives, including a implementing a holistic wellness approach, cultural safety and delivering improved health and wellness outcomes for people in the Interior region.

“The FNHA is a witness to the Partnership Accord and key partner in the improvement of health services to First Nations in the Interior region,” says Joe Gallagher, Chief Executive Officer. “We look forward to supporting the seven Nations of the Interior region to fulfil the commitments of the Accord to reach their health goals and aspirations.”

The original 2012 Partnership Accord builds on several key documents and agreements on First Nations’ health, including **the Transformative Change Accord: First Nations Health Plan, Tripartite First Nations Health Plan, Consensus Paper 2011: British Columbia First Nations Perspectives on a New Health Governance Arrangement, British Columbia Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance, and Interior Nations Unity Declaration.**

The First Nations Health Council Interior Caucus is guided by direction from the Seven Nation Interior Executive that consists of members from the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Secwepemc, Syilx, St'at'imc, Tsilhqot'in, and Nlaka'pamux Nations, together representing 54 First Nation communities in the region.

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Photo caption: Front row, from left to right, Interior Region Nation Executives Jamie Tanis (Ulkatcho) on behalf of Zach Parker, Ko-waintco Michel (Nlaka'pamux), Allan Louis (Syilx), Charlene Belleau (Secwepemc), Leo Porter (Northern St'at'imc) on behalf of Chief Michelle Edwards, Loretta Williams (Tsilhqot'in), and Gwen Phillips (Ktunaxa). Back row, from left to right, Susan Brown, Interior Health CEO & President; Dr. Doug Cochrane, Interior Health Board Chair; and Joe Gallagher, First Nations Health Authority CEO.

Background Documents:

[British Columbia Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance \(2011\)](#)
[Interior Nations Unity Declaration \(2011\)](#)

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