



Interior Health
Every person matters



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Our Commitment to Aboriginal Health

— BACKGROUND & SUCCESSES —

- In 2012, Interior Health signed a [Partnership Accord](#) with Interior First Nations that committed both parties to work together to improve health and wellness outcomes for Aboriginal people. This accord is strengthened by individual Letters of Understanding between IH and seven First Nations governments and Metis Nation British Columbia. Through these relationships, we agreed to partner on strategies to reduce the barriers Aboriginal people face when they require health services.
- In 2013, the FNHA assumed the programs, services, and responsibilities formerly managed by Health Canada's First Nations Inuit Health Branch – Pacific Region. The FNHA aims to reform the way health care is delivered to BC First Nations by working with the province and regional health authorities to address service gaps through new partnerships, closer collaboration, and health system innovation.
- The [IH Aboriginal Health and Wellness Strategy \(2015-2019\)](#), developed in collaboration with our Interior Regional First Nations, the First Nations Health Authority, our urban Aboriginal Service partners, and the Metis Nation BC, also reflects these commitments. It is through collaborative planning like this, as well as ongoing engagement, that we will be able to deliver culturally sensitive health-care services that best meet the needs of Aboriginal populations in alignment with the Ministry of Health's key priorities for the B.C. health-care system.
- Meaningful strides have been made towards improved collaboration with our Nation partners since the signing of our Partnership Accord in 2012. Highlights include:
 - 13 nurse practitioners have been hired or are in the process of being hired across Interior Health to work specifically with Aboriginal populations.
 - Nine Aboriginal patient navigators work in both acute and community settings to support Aboriginal patients, caregivers, and their families while in the health-care system.
 - In collaboration with the First Nations Health Authority and Ministry of Health, through the Joint Project Board, 22 mental health, social work, and other allied health staff have been hired or are being recruited to work within Aboriginal communities across the Interior region.
 - CEOs of IH and FNHA signing onto the Declaration of Commitment: Cultural Safety & Humility in Health Services Delivery for First Nations and Aboriginal People in BC along with all other health authority CEOs and the BC Ministry of Health.
 - Extensive work has taken place across IH to incorporate Aboriginal culture in health facilities with the goal to symbolically demonstrate welcoming and acknowledgment of Aboriginal people and the Nations where IH facilities reside. This includes: art, sacred spaces, welcome signs, and cultural ceremonies.
 - Interior Health developed an Aboriginal Human Resources Plan in 2013 to support recruiting and retaining Aboriginal employees in the IH labour force. A significant ratio of

Aboriginal employees adds an important cultural component within the workforce and helps create a culturally safe environment for patients, residents, staff, physicians, and volunteers.

- All Interior Health staff have the opportunity to enrol in PHSA Indigenous Cultural Safety training (since 2009, more than 2,600 employees have completed this online program), which provides an overview of European colonization, Indian residential schools, Indian hospitals and the health system generally over the past 100 years. In addition, IH hired a Cultural Safety Educator in August of 2015, who has created region-specific, in-person training for Interior Health that focuses on Aboriginal culture and traditions and the important role both play in healing and health promotion for First Nations and Metis people.