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Office of the Premier
Health Canada
First Nations Leadership Council

CANADA'S NEW GOVERNMENT SIGNS FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AGREEMENT WITH B.C. AND FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

VANCOUVER – The Honourable Tony Clement, federal Minister of Health, Premier Gordon Campbell of British Columbia (B.C.) and the British Columbia First Nations Leadership Council today signed Canada's first-ever Tripartite First Nations Health Plan with the goal of improving the health and well-being of First Nations in British Columbia, closing the gaps in health between First Nations people and other British Columbians, and ensuring First Nations are fully involved in decision-making regarding the health of their peoples.

In the 10-year trilateral agreement, all three parties have committed to action in four priority areas:

- Governance, relationships and accountability;
- Health promotion and disease and injury prevention;
- Health services; and
- Performance tracking.

"First Nations people in Canada deserve quality, accessible and timely health care, and they have valuable insight to share that will improve health services in their communities," said Minister Clement. "By signing this tripartite agreement – which is the first of its kind in the country – our goal is to ensure that First Nations in British Columbia can have an effective role in the design and delivery of health care services for their people, and they have responsibility for achieving results."

"The 10-year Tripartite First Nation Health Plan signed today is the first in Canada and supports our commitment to ensuring that First Nations are fully involved in decision-making regarding the health of their peoples," said Premier Campbell. "This builds on British Columbia's First Nations Health Plan released last year that will help us to close the health gap between First Nations people and other British Columbians in areas like life expectancy, mortality, youth suicide, infant mortality, diabetes rates and childhood obesity. It will also increase the number of First Nations health professionals and supports our other initiatives such as the appointment earlier this year of B.C.'s first-ever Aboriginal Health Physician Advisor."

The new First Nations Tripartite Health Plan outlines a shared vision for health and health services affecting First Nations in British Columbia. It describes the shared principles that will guide the interaction and collaboration among the three Parties. The plan also commits all Parties to work together to create a new governance structure that will enhance First Nations involvement in the delivery of health services, and promote better integration and coordination of federally and provincially funded health services.

“Studies have shown that self determination is fundamental in closing the social and economic gaps faced by First Nations. The B.C. First Nations Tripartite Health Plan contains key commitments to implement a new structure for the governance of First Nations Health Services in concert with other efforts targeted at specific health priorities facing our communities. Taken together, these efforts will improve the health and well being of First Nations people and communities in B.C.,” said Grand Chief Edward John, a member of the First Nations Summit political executive and First Nations Leadership Council.

Today’s signing of the new First Nations Tripartite Health Plan fulfils a commitment made by all three parties in a Memorandum of Understanding on Nov. 27, 2006, to enter into negotiations to develop a tripartite ten-year health plan. All three parties have been working together over the last six months to produce the final Tripartite Health Plan.

To view a full copy of the health plan, please visit the Ministry of Health's media site at: www.health.gov.bc.ca/cpa/mediasite.

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