



Closing the Gap in First Nations Public Health: From RCAP to the TRC

Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee

Union of Ontario Indians

CPHA National Conference

Sheraton Centre, Toronto, June 14, 2016



Learning Objectives

- Describe the factors that contribute to health disparities in First Nations communities in Canada.
- Define factors that impact First Nations public health practice and policy.
- Identify potential roles for public health in facilitating Indigenous ways of knowing and conceptualizations into community well-being



Closing the GAP

- The Gap is the vast difference in the quality of life experienced by First Nations people and non-Indigenous Canadians.
- The Gap is a fundamental human rights issue, inclusive of First Nations' collective rights to land and self-determination.
- The Gap should not exist in a country as rich as Canada.
- Source: AFN (2015) Closing the Gap <http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/closing-the-gap.pdf>



Assembly of First Nations Mandate

- The mandate of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) includes working to protect, maintain, promote, support and advocate for the inherent, treaty and constitutional rights of First Nations, including sustainable and equitable funding, as well as First Nations' control over the development and delivery of services and programs implemented in FN communities.



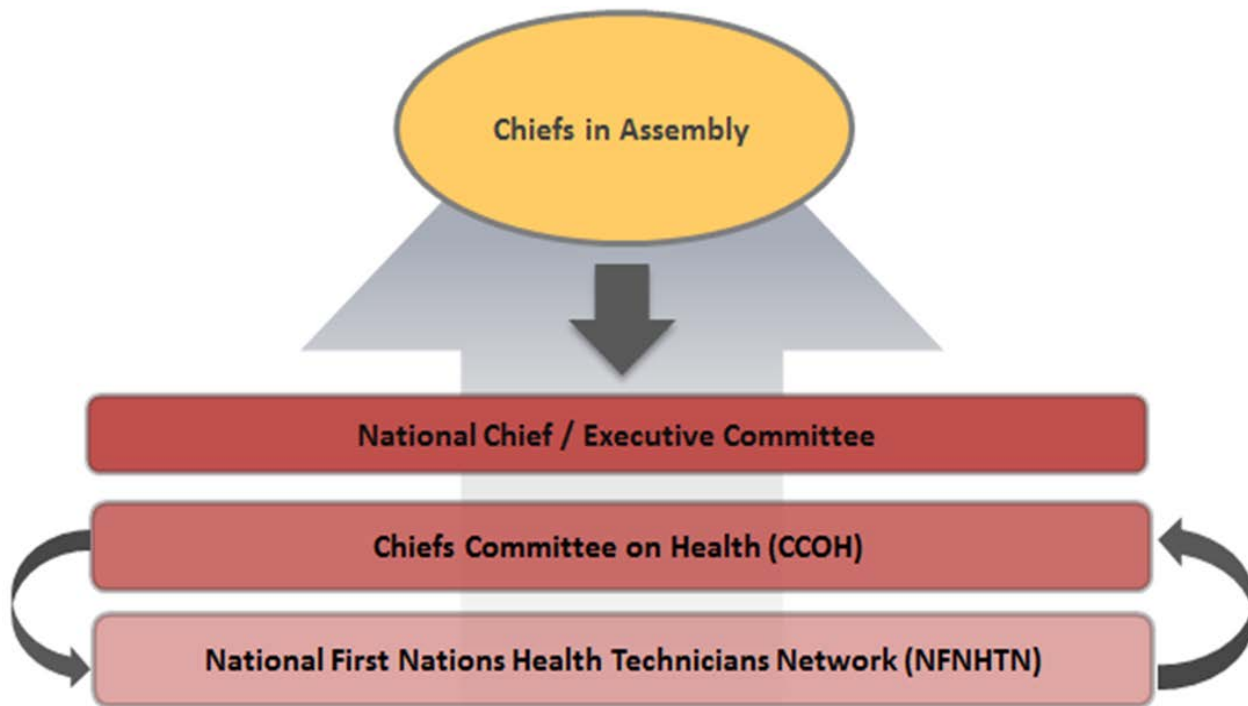
AFN Health Unit

- The AFN Health team is mandated to protect, maintain, promote, support, and advocate for the inherent, treaty and constitutional rights, (w)holistic health and well-being of First Nations.
- The ultimate goal is First Nations' control of the development and delivery of First Nations health services and programs.



AFN Health Accountability/Governance

Assembly of First Nations
Health Accountability / Governance Structure





AFN Health Program Areas

- Non-Insured Health Benefits
- Children, Youth and Maternal Health
- Home and Community Care
- Emergency, Infrastructure, Housing and Water
- Social Determinants of Health
- Obesity
- Public Health
- Chronic Diseases
- Mental Wellness
 - Suicide, Addictions, etc.
- Food Security
- Strategic Policy
- Oral Health
- Traditional Healing
- E-Health

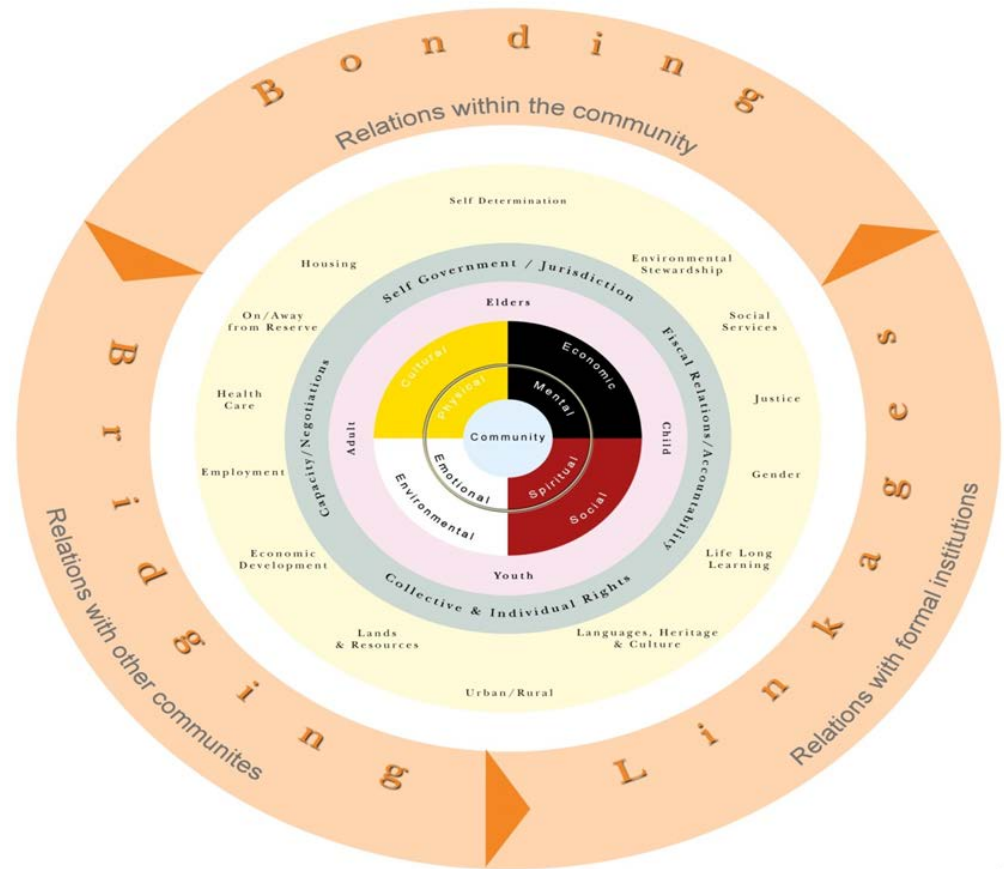


Indigenous Concept of Well-being

- Western medical models, which view disease as arising from the body and its components, do not account for the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual elements of Indigenous conceptions of life, health and well-being.
 - **Understanding Chronic Disease and the Role for Traditional Approaches in Aboriginal Communities**, National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health



First Nations Wholistic Planning Model



Key Elements:

Community = Core

Lifespan

Self-government

Determinants of well-being

Relations within & outside Community

Legend

-  Medicine Wheel
-  Lifespan
-  First Nations Self-Government
-  Health Determinants
-  Social Capital



First Nation Health Crisis

- Half of First Nations children live in **poverty**
- Lower life expectancy, up to **5-7 years less**
- Tuberculosis at **31x** the national average
- HIV infections and of those living with HIV are most prevalent in the Indigenous population
- Suicide rates are **5-7x** the national average

– Source: Closing the Gap, 2015 Federal Election Priorities for First Nations and Canada, Assembly of First Nations, (2015)
<http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/closing-the-gap.pdf>



Social Determinants of Community Health

- Factors or Determinants that affect the health and well-being of a community are sadly - numerous
- Lack of adequate supplies of safe drinking water
 - Lack of proper sanitation
 - Overcrowded schools
 - Overcrowding in homes
 - Mold
 - Lack of recreational facilities



Physical Environments

- **120** First Nations are currently under boil water advisories. **73%** of First Nation water systems are in high or medium risk.
- 130,197 new homes needed in the next 25 years on-reserve to account for population growth and condemned units, as well as the 1 in 4 adults living in overcrowded housing and deteriorated units.
- Almost 4,000 First Nation citizens remain displaced from their homes due to flooding dating back to 2011.
- (AFN, Closing the Gap, 2015)



Hillary Moonias doesn't remember a time when she could drink water directly from the tap. Neither do her daughters. (Martine Laberge/Radio-Canada)

<http://www.cbc.ca/m/touch/aboriginal/story/1.3271165>



First Nations Inequities



Norman Shawaybick, centre, tows an oxygen tank on a toboggan along the winter road to Webequie First Nation. That's where his wife Laura died after the oxygen supply was depleted at the local nursing station. (Blue Earth Photography) Feb 2016

Source:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-man-drag-oxygen-tank-1000-km-on-a-toboggan-in-health-care-protest-1.3470149>



First Nations Inequities

- First Nations Child and Family Services Programs
- Education on-Reserve
- Non-Insured Health Benefits for First Nations
- 2% cap



Emerging Opportunities in First Nations Public Health

- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- TRC Calls to Action (2015)
- Health Accord
- Ontario Investment in Health, 2016



UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

- The UN Declaration sets out minimum standards for ensuring Indigenous peoples enjoy fundamental human rights, including:
 - collective right to self-determination and
 - rights to our lands, territories and resources.
- Recognizes that Indigenous peoples have the right to physical and mental integrity, as well as **the right to equal enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.** Article 19 (2)



TRC Calls to Action 2015

- Call #19 We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and **close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities**, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long term trends.



Health Accord 2016

- Most significant opportunity to influence investment into First Nations health since the 2005 Kelowna Accord.
- Articulates First Nations priorities and high level markers to shape federal investments under the current government.
- Long term, sustainable and substantive investments are needed to close the gap in health.



Ontario's First Nations Health Action Plan

- Investments in four key areas:
 - primary care
 - public health and health promotion
 - seniors care and hospital services
 - life promotion and crisis support



AFN Health Collaborations

- First Nations Inuit Health Branch
- First Nation Information Governance Centre
- Thunderbird Partnership
- Mental Health Commission of Canada
- National Aboriginal Diabetes Network
- Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network
- First Nations Health Managers Association
- Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association



Questions ?



Miigwich

- For more discussion on this presentation, please visit the AFN at BOOTH 13
- AFN documents cited in this report are available on the AFN website and there are electronic copies available at our booth
- Thank for your interest in our work and future direction.