



Briefing Note	
<b>SUBJECT</b>	IRS Supports
<b>TO</b>	VP Community Health and Wellness Programs and Services
<b>FROM</b>	Strategic Policy, PPQ (Haven Lurbiecki)
<b>DATE</b>	June 29, 2021

## Purpose

**This note is for information** to provide an overview of FNHA response efforts related the recent Indian Residential School (IRS) discoveries and key supports available to First Nations

## Background

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) is working with communities and provincial and federal partners in light of the retraumatizing effects of recent residential school discoveries to identify needs and offer supports and services to address those needs.

## FNHA response efforts to-date

### Rapid Response Coordination Group formed

- FNHA, provincial and federal partners have formed a coordination group meeting weekly
- FNHA is serving as a liaison with federal and provincial partners to ensure urgent response coordination efforts and responsive to meet the needs of communities for culturally relevant mental health and wellness supports

### FNHA internal response structure implemented

- FNHA has moved quickly to set up our internal IRS response structure to support clear lines of communication and decision-making within FNHA both centrally and regionally and between FNHA and external response structures (See Annex A)

### FNHA IRS Working Group formed

- As part of our internal response FNHA has formed an IRS working group consisting of subject matter experts to undertake work in support of FNHA’s response efforts including the development of tools and resources

### Community-facing supports being developed

- Similar to our response efforts for COVID-19, FNHA is working to develop an IRS Community Support Guide document that provides a list of key supports and resources available to First Nations across British Columbia to be released as soon as possible
- An IRS specific email address has been set up to receive community support requests ([IRSneeds@fnha.ca](mailto:IRSneeds@fnha.ca))
- A FNHA IRS webpage is being created and expected to be released as soon as possible

## Summary of Supports

### FNHA Cultural Healing and Wellness Grant

- FNHA is providing \$10k in flexible grant funds, available to each community, in support of community healing and recovery. End date for funding is March, 2022.

## **Mental Health and Cultural Supports**

- **Mental Health Telephone and Crisis Support Lines**
  - FNHA supports the operation of several crisis support services including Kuu-Us Crisis Line Society, Indian Residential School Support Society.
  - Several mental health and crisis support lines are available many of which are 24/7 including Hope for Wellness Help Line, Indian Residential School National Crisis Line, Kuu-Us Crisis Line Society and Métis Crisis Line
  
- **Services Covered by FNHA First Nations Health Benefits**
  - Mental Health and Wellness Counselling in BC.
  - Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Health Support Services is a national program administered by FNHA and supports are available to survivors, family members and others who have been affected.
  - Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program (IRS RHSP) provides access to cultural supports and mental health counselling for former students of Indian Residential Schools.
  
- **FNHA Treatment and Healing Centres**
  - FNHA funds eight First Nations community-based treatment and healing centres across BC.
  - First Nations also have access to treatment centres across BC that accept FNHA per diem rates for Status First Nations.
  
- **FNHA resources on trauma and self-care**
  - FNHA has developed several fact sheets in support of understanding crisis and trauma response and in support of self-care and healing.
  
- **Mental Health and Wellness Services Provided by other First Nations Organizations**
  - There are also services provided by community-based service organization funded by FNHA including IRS RHSP Health and Cultural Supports, MMIWG supports, and Indian Day School Supports.
  
- **Other FNHA Culturally-Safe Supports**
  - First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day is a free, referral-based service for First Nations people in BC and their family members.
  - Virtual Substance Use & Psychiatry Service is an FNHA service providing virtual specialist support in addictions medicine and psychiatry.

## **Regional Supports**

- FNHA IRS regional leads are being identified in each region to serve as a community contact.
- The FNHA Vice Presidents of Regional Operations will be a key focal point.

## **Support for gathering safety during COVID-19**

- Community Service Covid-19 Supplies (CSCS) will include masks and hand sanitizer in support of COVID-19 safety during events and gatherings on a limited basis as supplies allow.

### **Additional Federal and Provincial Funding**

#### **Residential schools missing children – community support funding**

- The Government of Canada will fund up to \$27 million over 3 years to support Indigenous partners and communities in a range of activities, including school-specific research and knowledge-gathering on the children who died at residential schools and their burial places. <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1622742779529/1622742809449>

#### **Provincial supports for residential school sites response**

- The BC government has allocated \$12 million to support First Nations throughout BC with investigative work at former residential school sites, as well as cultural and wellness supports for communities and members experiencing trauma from residential school site findings. Work is currently underway to determine the criteria and process to access funds through the provincial coordination table. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021IRR0032-001255>

## **Annex**

### Mental Health and Wellness Supports