



ONION LAKE HEALTH BOARD

ABORIGINAL HEALTH TRANSITION FUND

**Following is a brief summary of the Onion Lake
Aboriginal Health Transition Fund (AHTF)**

Integration Initiative objectives:

- Development of a Steering Committee comprising of Onion Lake Health Director, Board member, elder and members from Prairie North Regional Health Authority (PNRHA)
- The project will seek to establish formal collaboration and working relationships, based on written protocols and agreements with PNHR. The Onion Lake Cree Nation is located within PNHR.
- These relationships and agreements result in the provision of clinical consultation and medical oversight by our doctor for a number of health staff.
- Onion Health Center already has telehealth, video conferencing capacity and electronic medical records and we wish to establish new relationships with PNHR in these specific areas: implementing an effective tele-health, e-health, and video conferencing capacity between Onion Lake Health Services and PNHR that would support joint professional development, improved

onsite diagnosis, medical consultation, information sharing and communications.

- **Development and implementation of approaches to improve the knowledge of off-reserve providers about the health delivery system, culture and critical health issues of First Nations communities among PNHR staff to improve recognition and respect of First Nations' health centers.**
- Investigate improvements in health information technology required to facilitate and maintain integration and collaboration (**Accessibility to Community Net**)
- Participation in training opportunities which will improve the knowledge of PNHR staff about the health delivery systems, culture and critical health issues of First Nations.

Anticipated New Collaborative Opportunities

The Onion Lake Health Integration project will result in new opportunities and relationships with Prairie North Health Region that will:

- Provide clinical consultation and professional oversight for a number of Onion Lake health staff.
- Improve electronic medical records to enhance service delivery.
- Improve diagnosis by improving on-site laboratory and x-ray services by upgrading equipment, additional staffing and long term funding arrangements with First Nations and Inuit Health.

Anticipated Project Outcomes

The anticipated outcomes of the Onion Lake Health Integration Project will include:

- Improved professional/clinical supervision of Onion Lake Health staff, including nurses, nurses working in expanded roles, nurse practitioners, counsellors and therapists and emergency medical technicians
- Improved access to comprehensive medical histories, pharmacology and background information on clients through improved electronic integration of OLHS and PNHR records. This would be on the basis that our medical and community health records are OCAP compliant.
- Service enhancements through increased use of tele-health and video conferencing.
- Improved and earlier diagnosis of illnesses and other medical conditions as well as improved follow up and after care, through improved lab and x-ray services, improved access to client medical information and increased use of tele-health.
- Achieving service efficiencies and cost saving through integrated service delivery

Successes and new initiatives:

Onion Lake Health Services have been integrating services with Prairie North Health Region for a number of years. In March of 2005 First Nations and Inuit Health and Prairie North Health Region had signed an agreement to set out a mutual understanding between both parties (governments) with respect to a three year pilot project respecting the provisions of laboratory and X-ray services at the Onion Lake Health Center. In support of its twin goals of local capacity development and integrated service delivery, the

Onion Lake Health Centre operates a full time, five days a week medical laboratory and x-ray services. The goal of the medical laboratory service is ***"to secure long term funding arrangements with both governments and to provide comprehensive, timely, quality, professional medical laboratory services to the community members of Onion Lake Cree Nation and residents within the surround area of the Onion Lake Cree Nation"***.

Next steps would be to negotiate and firm up funding arrangement for new x-ray equipment. We are in the process of meeting with the new FNIH Regional Director and anticipate a funding arrangement that would accommodate our Health Center to new x-ray equipment.

The Onion Lake Cree Nation owns their ambulances and provides services for our community and surrounding area. This is another provincial legislated operation by Saskatchewan Health and Onion Lake Health operates a full complement of ambulance services on federal lands. Again as mentioned earlier, the Onion Lake Health Services hopes to upgrade its Emergency Medical Technicians to a Physician's Assistant model. This again is another integrated service undertaken by our community. Integration of this provincial service has taken place where we provide ambulance services to the Hutterite Community located east of our First Nation. **Challenges:** The provincial Saskatchewan Emergency Medical Services Association (SEMSA) does not provide the Onion Lake Ambulance Services with a subsidy as they do other Ambulance Service providers within the province. This again an issue of jurisdiction and because of this provincial/federal jurisdiction, we are

deprived of having the same financial subsidy provision as other members of SEMSA.

Our Health and Wellness program has been utilizing video conferencing to access services of a clinical psychologist from here in Vancouver. This has assisted our Health and Wellness staff in keeping our community members home with the provision of clinical supervision by video conferencing.

Over the past year the use of video conference training for health center staff and also our Child and Family Services staff have been utilizing our video conference equipment to increase their learning capacities within the community. With the use of the video conference equipment for training purposes, it saves our health center budget on staff travel by being able to provide specific training modules offered through Saskatchewan Telehealth. With the telehealth capacity we have been able to access the training from FNIH Alberta Region "onehealth". One highlight of our video conferencing/consultation was a medical specialist from Edmonton was able to do consultation with one of our members within our health center. We are now also accommodating physicians from Lloydminster, North Battleford and Saskatoon by having their patients use our video conference capacity to have consultations prior to a major surgery. Patients have now been using the ADAPT program from our facility and no longer have to travel to Lloydminster for medical consultation. FNIH had provided funding prior to AHTF project for an e-health project and with e-health and telehealth being combined in the AHTF workplan, we were able to expand our e-health to include

and equip our Doctor's residence with telemedicine capacity and the tools to conduct medical assessments. Dr. Warburton can now conduct medical assessment from his home with the nurses being at the health center with the patients ***Again the cost savings of medical transportation, accommodations and patient time is to be considered in the process.**

The purpose of this process is for the benefit of our community membership when Dr. Warburton retires and we would still have a Doctor providing clinic services to his regular patients but by a telehealth/telemedicine process. We have been successful in having connectivity from our health center to Dr. Warburton's home and can commence doing assessment from home.

Challenges in this area are to obtain access to "Saskatchewan Community Net" which would enhance connectivity to other medical facilities in the province. The assurance of continuity of funding for the e-health, electronic medical records and Telehealth is a major concern for Onion Lake Health Services.

Activities for 2010-2011

In the coming year, we will be conducting more community information workshops so that our members in Onion Lake will have first hand information as to the next steps of improving health service provision to our community.

I will also be conducting a community health needs assessment which will assist my project in the evaluation process. The evaluation process will identify what areas of our health services should be improved and how improvements could be accomplished.

We were able to have one two day Cross Cultural Training session in Lloydminster. My target group are health

services providers from PNRHA. We only had three people from PNRHA attend due to the staff only being able to participate for one day each. It was very successful based on the evaluation forms that were completed. I will be offering other Cross Cultural Training sessions next month and hopefully at least three more over the next fiscal year.

In closing, some comments about the MOU that was signed by Federal, Provincial governments and the FSIN, we are still waiting for the outcomes of the agreements. The MOU is to identify the gaps in health care service provision to First Nations people in Saskatchewan, and how these disparities are to be addressed. I personally feel that the governments (Provincial and Federal) are just providing us with lip service but never to mention the sustainability of our health care programs on First Nations nor have either government identified a long term plan on how they would bring the level of First Nations health status to the same level as other residents within this province.

Also in order for First Nations to continue working on the improvement of health conditions in our communities we need to have the Governments recognize their issues on jurisdiction. Jurisdictional issues are a major barrier for our First Nations people, which in many cases have caused our First Nation's people to be deprived of health services that other Canadian citizens have daily access to.

Thank you.

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