

# A Cross Jurisdiction Decision-Making Process

Northern Health Leadership Working Group

## A STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

Spring 2007



Northern Health Strategy Health Leadership Group

**A STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

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## Background and Context

This **statement of understanding** is the result of collaborative and cooperative efforts by northern Saskatchewan health jurisdictions.

As transfer and devolution of services gain momentum in northern Saskatchewan, the effected health jurisdictions experiencing similar health status, similar geography, similar funding and service deficits, unique social and cultural perspectives, and a belief in the notion of wholistic health principles, recognize the need to assemble their individual strengths to advance northern health through common effort.

At a board-to-board meeting of northern health districts/authorities in Prince Albert on October 20, 2001, the first Northern Health Strategy Working Group (NHSWG) was created by signing a Northern Health Accord. The accord provided the following directions:

- Articulate a Northern Health Strategy and communicate it to others;
- Facilitate the development and approval of a work plan which addresses immediate, short-term and long-term actions associated with the implementation of a Northern Health Strategy;
- Develop partnerships/agreements between and among member organizations.

To strengthen the Northern Health Strategy partnership, northern health leaders consulted between January 2005 and April 2006 to establish a more effective method of collaboration from which to enhance the partnerships' priorities. These meetings resulted in the development of a cross jurisdiction decision making mechanism. This cross jurisdiction decision making mechanism in effect was adopted through the signing of the revised **Northern Health Strategy Memorandum of Understanding**

## Partners Eligible for full partnership in the Northern Health Leadership Working Group

- Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC)
- Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC)
- Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation (PBCN)
- Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB)
- Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority (NITHA)
- Keewatin Yatthé Regional Health Authority (KYRHA)
- Kelsey Trail Regional Health Authority (KTRHA) (Northern Village of Cumberland House)
- Mamawetan Churchill River Regional Health Authority (MCRRHA)
- Athabasca Health Authority (AHA)

## Vision Statement

To work cooperatively to improve the health status of all residents in northern Saskatchewan.

## The Mandate

- work cooperatively to improve the health status of all residents in northern Saskatchewan
- work together across jurisdictions with the development of health service delivery and health promotion frameworks
- increase family, community, and northern region capacity
- develop partnerships while ensuring diversity
- ensure equitable resource allocation

## Principles

- be holistic
- place individuals within the appropriate family and community context
- recognize the North's unique historic, geographic, language, cultural, and demographic situation
- emphasize prevention and not just treatment
- recognize and respect the complex jurisdictional issues in the North (First Nations, Métis, health authorities, federal and provincial governments)
- recognize that the health of northern people requires cooperation and support from departments and agencies that do not view themselves as delivering health services

## Values

The basis for a NHS is the concept of holistic primary health care that considers the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health of individuals, families, and communities. Its values are:

- collaboration
- cooperation
- a holistic viewpoint
- prevention and promotion as well as treatment
- respect for jurisdictional authority
- cultural appropriateness
- client focus and community input
- a team approach
- respect for professional responsibilities
- partnership and consensus.

## Cross Jurisdiction Decision-Making Mechanism

The Northern Health Leadership Working Group (NHLWG), comprised of two representatives from each partner's Board of Directors, meets semi-annually to guide development and discuss issues or initiatives presented by the Northern Health Strategy Working Group (NHSWG). Federal and provincial representatives, who act as witnesses to the signatories to the Northern Health Strategy Memorandum of Understanding, are invited to attend and participate in meetings of the Northern Health Leadership Working Group.

### Organizational Structure

Reflective of north's geographic uniqueness, ethnic diversity, cultural presence and languages, the Northern Health Leadership Working Group will; once per year select two co-chairs who will serve to coordinate meeting plans, agendas, approve health leadership communication measures, and ensure follow up of initiatives driven by the Northern Health Leadership Working Group or Northern Leadership Forum.

### Consensus

Consensus building is identified as key to successfully addressing northern health concerns; legislation impacting member organizations; and issues emerging from federal and provincial policies.

Genuine consensus takes into account as broad a range of opinions as possible and typically requires more focus on developing the relationships among stakeholders, so that they work together to achieve agreements based on willing consent. Members can 'declare reservations' or 'stand aside' if there is significant disagreement with a proposal but may still be willing to let the proposed initiative pass. Members may also wish to alter the position(s) surrounding a proposition to encourage those standing aside or declaring reservation to encourage full consensus.

Consensus defined under this statement of understanding does not warrant unanimity and does not provide individual member organizations veto over decisions of the Northern Health Leadership Working Group.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The Northern Health Leadership Working Group has two primary roles and responsibilities. These include recommending and advising on northern health policy development to all levels of government, health agencies, and organizations which may be deemed to have influence in the north's determinants of health. Additionally, the Northern Health Leadership Working Group is responsible for the overall development and implementation of Northern Health Strategy priorities and initiatives.

- Provide broad strategic advice on health development policy
- Provide relevant advice and direction on quality of health care delivery and the general performance of health care in the north
- Review and action health leadership priorities
- Provide insight to Northern Health Strategy priorities and initiatives
- Offer strategic advice on communication of Northern Health Strategy development, initiatives, and public health concern
- Review and approve contribution agreements with and from funding agencies
- Review and approve Northern Health Strategy budgets
- Review and approve Northern Health Strategy Working Group activities and work plans

- Organize and lead an annual Northern Leadership Forum
- Ensure nurturing of the Northern Health Strategy partnership
- Provide efforts to link key stakeholders and community organizations
- Advocate strengthening of northern health infrastructure and capacity
- Review and approve adjustments to Northern Health Strategy membership
- NHLWG Co-Chairs may from time to time be required to participate in the Northern health Strategy Working group meetings

### **Funding**

All parties acknowledge that federal and provincial funding for the Northern Health Leadership Working Group (NHLWG) and the Northern Health Strategy will be needed.

### **Technical Support**

Staff from the Northern Health Strategy office will provide technical and administrative support in most aspects of the Northern Health Leadership Working Group. Additionally, the Chief Executive Officers and Directors of Health of partner organizations who attend the Northern Health Leadership Working Group meetings can offer their respective support.

### **Periodic Review**

Representatives of the Northern Health Leadership Working Group (NHLWG) will, on an annual basis, on or around the anniversary date of approval of this Northern Health Leadership Working Group **Statement of Understanding**, jointly evaluate progress and implementation.

