

## Gathering Wisdom for a Shared Journey

Government of British Columbia  
Justice and Public Safety Sector

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December 1, 2016

## Setting the Context

Health and justice issues are interconnected. For example:

- Family violence impacts health beyond immediate physical injury and increases the risk for conditions such as depression, anxiety, high blood pressure, cancer, arthritis and heart disease.
- There is growing evidence of the effect of social stigma (e.g. arrest, incarceration, criminal record) on health disparities: directly by impacting health-care seeking behaviour and indirectly through the internalization of negative judgments.
- A study by the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice indicates that almost 40% of people between the ages of 18 and 35 reported experiencing a physical health problem as a direct result of their legal problems. The number is even greater for people between ages 55 and 64 (61.5%).

## Coordinating our Efforts

The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General are working together to:

- Address over-representation of Indigenous people in the justice system;
- Improve relationships and advance reconciliation; and
- Support culturally relevant, community-based alternatives and/or supports to the formal justice system.

## Understanding the Issues

There were key overarching issues that arose at the regional caucuses:

- The need for a coordinated response on **mental health and substance misuse**.
- The impact of **FASD** on families and communities.
- The importance of **shared decision making**, especially around children in care.
- The need for services to be available in **rural and remote** communities areas as well as in urban areas.
- The necessity of **cultural safety** training.

## Strengthening our Relationship

The regional caucuses created an extraordinary opportunity for dialogue. We will continue to maintain and strengthen the relationship by:

- Participating in an annual meeting between the FNHC and Ministers, per the MOU
- Supporting the development of the proposed social determinants of health strategy
- Organizing an Indigenous justice summit in 2017
- Actively seeking out future opportunities for collaboration with the FNHC and other Indigenous organizations

## Committing to Action

- First Nations Court models
- Access to justice services in the North and in remote locations
- Indigenous-specific/culturally relevant family justice program initiatives
- Supporting MCFD to review the child protection system for Indigenous peoples
- First Nations policing
- Building and strengthening relationships between First Nations communities/leaders and BC Corrections at local and provincial levels.
- Supporting the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

## Building the Future Together

- Remaining engaged and reaching out to Indigenous leaders on issues of shared concern
- Making provincial initiatives relevant at regional and/or community levels
- Entrenching our commitment in a ministry service plan goal

## Thank you

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