

Gathering Wisdom for a Shared Journey

Government of British Columbia
Justice and Public Safety Sector

Richard J.M. Fyfe, QC
Deputy Attorney General
&
Mark Sieben
Deputy Solicitor General

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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

Richard J. W. Fyfe, QC
Deputy Attorney General
Ministry of Justice and
Attorney General

Mark Sieben
Deputy Solicitor General
Ministry of Public Safety
and Solicitor General