
HIV Steering Committee and HIV Technical Working Group

January 2018 Quick Facts

Who:

- Founding partners - Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation, Big River First Nation, Saskatoon Tribal Council and FNIHB

What:

- Promote collaborative guidance, education, insight and feedback to support and improve health outcomes for people in First Nations communities of Saskatchewan who are living with HIV or at risk of HIV and also interrelated programs and services such as Hep C and other sexually transmitted or blood-borne infections

When:

- Initiated and formed in December 2015 by founding partners, with collaborative member First Nations Inuit Health Branch Saskatchewan Region (FNIHB SK)

Why:

- To achieve the UNAIDS goal of 90-90-90 through expansion of the Know Your Status model in the First Nation communities'
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Background

- Formed in December 2015, at the behest of founding partners: Chiefs of Big River First Nation and Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation; the Tribal Chief of Saskatoon Tribal Council; (all of whom have led deeply successful, sustainable and replicable HIV programs within their First Nation communities, affected/infected populations) and the FNIHB SK Regional Executive.
- Established in response to crisis-level HIV infection rates amongst First Nations people within the province; a rate eleven times that of the national average.
- The formation of the HIV Steering Committee follows numerous meetings between the founding partners and Health Canada executives in Regina, Ottawa and Saskatoon.
- The HIV Steering Committee oversees the HIV Technical Working Group.
- This represents a critical first step in ensuring First Nation community voice in, and leadership of, the design, implementation and delivery of an HIV strategy and ground-level programming including education, prevention, testing and linkage to care, in collaboration with key resource partner, FNIHB SK.

Purpose

- To expand the successful Know Your Status model in First Nation communities.
 - The purpose of the HIV Steering Committee is to provide guidance and support in the development and implementation of a community-based HIV Strategic Action Plan for sustaining and developing programs and services; and to collaborate across First Nation, federal and provincial governments.
 - The purpose of the working group will be to present recommendations to the HIV Steering Committee regarding the development, resourcing and implementation of HIV prevention, care, treatment and support strategies. These recommendations will include the broad range of social determinants of health with an emphasis on the importance of culture.
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- Key activities of the groups will be to increase knowledge sharing and best practices around HIV in First Nation communities.

Participants

- HIV Steering Committee membership includes Chiefs and senior representatives of founding partners who are able to make decisions for their own communities and provide guidance to the development and implementation of the First Nations HIV programs and services, as well as the Regional Executive Officer and senior representatives of FNIHB SK.
- The HIV Steering Committee will designate representatives from each of the founding partners and stakeholders to participate in the technical working group.
- Membership includes First Nation Elders.
- Membership will expand as determined by the HIV Steering Committee.

Key Activities to Date

- Established Terms of Reference for the HIV Steering Committee and HIV Technical Working Group
- Conducting Enviroskans of founding members' current services to identify current strengths and gaps
- Development of an Action Plan identifying priorities for the HIV Technical Working Group.
- Development and planning for a First Nation Community forum to invite all Saskatchewan First Nation communities to attend to learn from successful programs and discuss HIV services more broadly- The first forum was held February 2017 in Saskatoon.
- Invitation to all Tribal Councils and Independent Bands to attend a discussion on HIV and Hepatitis C in Saskatchewan First Nations sent. Meeting was held on November 2, 2017.
- Draft action plan 2017-2022 for HIV and Hepatitis C in Saskatchewan First Nations developed at November 2, 2017 meeting being reviewed at present.
- Second Annual Know Your Status Forum "From Knowledge To Action" to be held February 13 and 14, 2018 in Saskatoon at Travelodge Inn.

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UNAIDS 90-90-90 goal refers to the 90-90-90 targets, whereby 90% of people living with HIV know their status, 90% of people who know their status are accessing treatment and 90% of people on treatment have a suppressed viral load.

ii Know Your Status model refers to the highly successful HIV program developed and implemented by Big River First Nation and Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation. It encompasses community engagement and education, prevention and harm reduction, clinical management and surveillance and evaluation.