



NEWS RELEASE

Indigenous Governments and NL Health Services Sign Memorandum of Understanding to Advance Indigenous Health and Well-Being Outcomes

November 27, 2025

Today, representatives from Miawpukek First Nation, Qalipu First Nation, and Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) Health Services participated in a signing event to formalize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aimed at advancing health and well-being outcomes for Indigenous peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador.

NL Health Services and the Indigenous Governments recognize the need to identify common priorities and mutually beneficial opportunities to help improve the delivery of health services for Indigenous populations.

In 2023, Miawpukek First Nation, Nunatsiavut Government, Mushuau Innu First Nation, Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation, and Qalipu First Nation commenced a project entitled: "A strategy and plan for distinction-based meaningful integration, inclusion and engagement of Newfoundland and Labrador's Indigenous peoples in the newly forming Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Health Authority."

One of the project objectives was to identify approaches to facilitate meaningful Indigenous participation in the Provincial Health Authority. Indigenous Services Canada's Health Services Integration Fund and the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Advisory Committee supported the development of a Project Leadership Team whose work over the past two years resulted in the MOU.

Purpose and Goals of the MOU

This MOU will facilitate ongoing, inclusive, and effective communication and collaboration between Newfoundland and Labrador's Indigenous peoples and NL Health Services. It will also serve as a mechanism for Indigenous Governments to meaningfully contribute to the design of health programming and policy in identified areas.

There are four goals identified within the MOU outlining how all parties will work together:

1. Collaboration to achieve meaningful engagement

2. Development of a formal communication process
3. Consultation and collaboration to deliver culturally safe care
4. Accountability for respective contributions to Indigenous health outcomes

Parties Signing on November 27, 2025

The MOU is structured to allow for phased participation. While Miawpukek First Nation and Qalipu First Nation are signatories at the November 27, 2025 event, other Indigenous project partners may sign at a future date, in alignment with their respective internal processes and timelines. This phased process respects distinctions-based approaches.

Quotes

NL Health Services

“NL Health Services is committed to improving health outcomes and achieving health equity for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, including Indigenous peoples. The signing of this MOU is in line with recommendations outlined in Health Accord NL and represents our continued commitment to enhance partnerships and increase collaboration with valued partners. While signing this MOU is an important step, NL Health Services will continue to work with and strengthen our partnership with many other Indigenous groups and organizations as well.”

- Dr. Pat Parfrey, CEO, NL Health Services

Miawpukek First Nation

“We are quite pleased to be a party to this MOU as the health and well-being of our members is a priority for our First Nation. We look forward to working with NLHS in carrying out the goals and action items identified in the MOU. In particular, we welcome the opportunity to work with NL Health Services to enter a bilateral agreement that establishes our working relationship, protocols, and approach to cooperatively working toward better health outcomes for our membership.”

- Miawpukek First Nation, Chief Brad Benoit

Qalipu First Nation

“This MOU demonstrates our unwavering commitment, collaborative spirit, and collective strength. Together, we will transform health outcomes for Indigenous people in our province, fostering a future of wellness and equity. All parties to this MOU will benefit from a distinctions-based approach respecting the culture and heritage of individuals and the unique needs of our Indigenous communities.”

- Qalipu First Nation, Chief Jenny Brake

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

“Today reflects our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. It is our commitment to build a health care system where every Indigenous person - regardless of where they live - can access care that honors their identity and supports their well-being. This MOU is just the beginning. There is much work left to do to address the health and social disparities that are faced by Indigenous peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador.”

- The Honourable Lela Evans, Minister of Health and Community Services and Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Indigenous Services Canada

"When communities are able to make their own decisions about the future of service delivery, we know it leads to better access to care and stronger, more vibrant communities. By working together to support culturally safe, high-quality health initiatives and projects, we're building a system that will lead to greater outcomes for Indigenous Peoples across Newfoundland and Labrador."

- The Honourable Mandy Gull-Masty, Minister of Indigenous Services

-30-

Media Contact:

Jeanette O'Keefe

Director – Communications

t: 709-285-8303

e: jeanette.okeefe@nlhealthservices.ca