

LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

The Okanagan Similkameen Healthy Living Society (OSHLS)

and

Interior Health Authority, City of Penticton, Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen, Penticton Indian Band and School District 67

(The above named being collectively referred to as “The Parties”)

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Parties seek to form an organized collaborative for Healthy Livingⁱ through which they will apply their collective resources to the common goal of reducing the prevalence of lifestyle-related chronic diseases in our population.
- 1.2 The Parties’ primary purpose is to collaborate to provide services that will attract, engage and support the people of our community in successful and sustained achievement of healthy lifestyles with a focus on children, youth and high riskⁱⁱ populations.
- 1.3 When an organizational structure has become established, as expertise and capacity are added, it will expand its purpose to include:
 - 1.3.1 Advocacy for policies and strategies that make healthy choices more affordable, accessible and attractive;
 - 1.3.2 Recommendations for improvements to the built environment that will support healthy living.
- 1.4 The collaborative will be a 5-year pilot project with the intention that it will become a model for the development of similar programs in other communities throughout Interior Health and the Province. The 5 year pilot project can be reviewed and renewed at the end of term.
- 1.5 The collaborative will seek engagement with UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College to pursue research opportunities on health behavior change presented by the collaborative’s work
- 1.6 The Parties agree that it is both necessary and appropriate to transfer research knowledge from the clinic to the community, with an emphasis on the population segment that has not accessed the health care system for the management of lifestyle-related chronic disease.

2 PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Each Party has a unique mandate but shares a common goal with the others of promoting and supporting wellness among its constituency and the wider community.

- 2.2 Collaboration in a defined organized structure will enable the Parties to develop a global and integrated healthy living strategy for the region. Such a strategy will permit efficiencies, improved effectiveness, and the development of unique new synergistic programs and services that would not otherwise be attainable to achieve measurable lifestyle and health outcomes.
- 2.3 The design and delivery of programs and services will be sensitive to the specific needs and cultural safety of the groups and population segments for which they are designed.
- 2.4 The collaborative recognizes and will honor the Letter of Understanding developed between Interior Health Authority and the Okanagan Nation Alliance.
- 2.5 By agreeing to this LOU the Parties commit to establishing goals, activities, roles, responsibilities, information management, quality management, timelines and priorities for collaborative action and to the development of a budget that identifies the cost of its work and anticipated revenue sources.
- 2.6 Being signatory to this LOU does not infer a financial commitment to any of the Parties; any financial commitment would be the subject of agreement to be reached between the new organizational structure and its member Parties.
- 2.7 It is expected that this new organization, by virtue of its collective and unique potential to positively impact health behaviors at the community level, coupled with its depth of expertise and proven resources, will be able to generate adequate external funding to support its work.
- 2.8 The program will include well-planned formative and summative evaluation processes.
- 2.9 The new organization will hire a qualified project manager to assist in the implementation, planning and implementation of this project.

3 ASSUMPTIONS

- 3.1 Once Parties have agreed to organize themselves into a defined entity, they will take steps to define an organizational structure that describes governance, roles, relationships, decision making, conflict management and accountability.
- 3.2 The organization will have access to Foundation Grants and other sources of funding that require charitable status with the Canada Revenue Agency; the OSHLS has applied for this status.
- 3.3 The initial partners will encourage other regional agencies and groups that provide services to support healthy lifestyles and/or whose constituents have healthy lifestyle needs to join the coalition.
- 3.4 Although the collaborative will initially focus on engaging and supporting individuals in our communities in personal lifestyle change, it will expand its work to include policy and built environment issues that impact the adoption of healthy lifestyles.

4 GEOGRAPHIC AREA

4.1 The organized group will encompass the entire population and all municipalities within the Okanagan Similkameen Regional District

5 SERVICE PROVISION

5.1 The members will determine a detailed service plan to achieve the organized purpose of the group.

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ⁱ Healthy Living is a term used by the BC Health Authorities and the BC Ministry of Health, Population Health and Wellness to identify three lifestyle behaviors: a smoke-free lifestyle, healthy eating and physical activity as representing the major lifestyle components for preventing chronic disease in British Columbia at this time. We have adopted this terminology to describe the scope of our program.

ⁱⁱ High risk populations refers to identifiable groups within the larger population that are known to have an observed higher incidence and prevalence of lifestyle-related chronic diseases. In our region this would include aboriginal and indocanadian peoples.