

## INUIT HEALTH APPROACH

### 1. Preamble

The Inuit Health Approach is a commitment of the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) Strategic Plan which states that FNIHB will “*work with Inuit, territorial and provincial governments, and other federal partners to develop an approach to Inuit health that informs planning within Health Canada.*” This Approach must be seen as complementary to the FNIHB Strategic Plan and the National Inuit Committee on Health (NICoH) Strategic Framework.

The relationship between FNIHB and Inuit must be grounded in the four Inuit land claim agreements which are constitutionally protected and govern the relationship between Canada and Inuit. FNIHB will contribute to the successful implementation of federal responsibilities to the land claim agreements in alignment with its mandate (i.e. policy and program authorities). This is consistent with recognizing the importance of the social determinants of health (SDOH) as these agreements are instrumental in supporting Inuit self-determination which, in turn, will lead to better health and wellness. FNIHB will respect and recognize the distinctiveness of each of the four Inuit land claim agreements:

- Inuvialuit
- Nunavut
- Nunavik
- Nunatsiavut

### 2. Objectives

- 2.1 Promote awareness among all FNIHB employees of the unique features of Inuit health, and contexts of the four Inuit regions and ensure that the Inuit Health Approach is a cornerstone of the Branch’s policy and program frameworks;
- 2.2 Clarify the appropriate engagement process of FNIHB with Inuit at the national and regional levels; and
- 2.3 Ensure that FNIHB respects the principles and processes established in the Land Claim Agreements in its relationship with Inuit.

### 3. Shared Principles

The principles of the **FNIHB Strategic Plan** and the **NICoH Strategic Framework** will contribute to ensuring that:

- An Inuit informed analysis is applied to initiatives impacting (or potentially impacting) Inuit;
- Respect and recognition of the commonalities and distinctiveness of the four Inuit land claim agreements;

- An Inuit Health Approach requires regional and national commitment at all levels of FNIHB. As needed, FNIHB will liaise other areas of the Department for support.
- More meaningful engagement will lead to better evidence and traditional/community knowledge considered in the development of policies and programs, resulting in improved health outcomes for Inuit.

#### 4. Working Together

##### 4.1 National Relationship

- FNIHB and ITK will support meetings between the federal Health Minister and the ITK President.
- ITK is a member of FNIHB’s Senior Management Committee (SMC) on Policy and Planning, whose mandate is to:
  - Provide overall policy direction for the Branch, consistent with the goals and principles of the Strategic Plan;
  - Monitor and provide direction for the Plan’s implementation, including collaboration and partnership initiatives;
  - Review, approve and provide direction on policy issues and approaches; and
  - Review and approve proposals for modernizing policies and programs.
- ITK is also a member of the SMC Policy and Planning Sub-Committee which develops and informs the SMC Policy and Planning Committee agenda and decision-making, such as by:
  - Defining the initial scope of a new proposal or terms of reference for policy/program development or modernization;
  - Obtaining a *mandate to further explore* the proposed initiative, such as through the NICOH Strategic Framework;
  - Presenting the initiative to the SMC Policy and Planning Committee;
  - Developing an engagement approach including all relevant partners;
  - Soliciting independent research and/or expertise such as through a peer review process;
  - Overseeing the pilot testing of the policy/program output by “people on the ground”, front-line workers, users of the tools proposed, clients receiving the services/interventions etc. This step is critical to ensuring the operationalization of the policy or program is well understood (its positive and negative impacts) prior to national and/or regional implementation; and
  - Ensuring all steps in the policy/program development or modernisation process are adhered to prior to seeking a *mandate for change*.
- FNIHB will ensure that a sub-group of SMC on Policy and Planning with Inuit relevant mandates, called the SMC Inuit Health Approach Sub-Committee, meet face-to-face with representatives of

ITK/NICoH/Inuit land claim agreements, a minimum of twice per year, to discuss Inuit specific issues, initiatives, or approaches that may arise.

- ITK will advise FNIHB on when the Branch must engage directly with the National Inuit Committee on Health (NICoH).
- When a national initiative surfaces, FNIHB will inform ITK to ensure NICoH has the opportunity to advise as to the best engagement approach for the four Inuit regions. FNIHB regions will be kept informed of the progress and outcomes of the discussion with ITK and NICoH.
- FNIHB will participate on Inuit task groups/working groups upon ITK and/or Inuit land claim organization invitation.
- FNIHB and ITK will work within their current multi-year funding agreement that provides ITK with the flexibility to work with and support the National Inuit Committee on Health in identifying and addressing Inuit -specific health priorities, and in so doing, work collaboratively with FNIHB.
- FNIHB will select with ITK and/or representatives of the National Inuit Committee on Health, an Inuit Health Approach Champion who will oversee implementation of the Inuit Health Approach across the Branch and ensure annual reporting of progress, including activities under the NICoH Strategic Framework and Tracking Our Progress (section 6). The Champion is not a designated an expert in Inuit issues, nor a short-cut to implementation of the consultation process as outlined in this document.
- ITK and FNIHB have negotiated an engagement process related to FNIHB Departmental Evaluations which is complimentary to this Approach (Annex B).

#### 4.2 Regional Relationships

- FNIHB Regions will engage directly with Inuit land claim organizations in their Regions on the development of Regional Health Plans, including strategic and annual operational plans. (FNIHB to share plans with ITK).
- Within FNIHB policy and budget authority, FNIHB Regions will work with Inuit, territorial and provincial governments, and other federal partners to develop an approach that results in greater Inuit control over federal resources.
- FNIHB Regions will advise and share information with Inuit land claim organizations on their participation in discussions with provinces and territories and will facilitate maximum Inuit engagement in these discussions.

- Inuit land claim organizations will advise and share information with FNIHB Regions on their participation in discussions with provinces and territories.

#### 4.3 Engagement with Other Partners of Mutual Interest

- FNIHB will notify and invite ITK or appropriate land claim organizations to participate in discussions with non-government and private sector organizations that may lead to collaboration of policy or program initiatives specific to Inuit. FNIHB will share information with ITK on outcomes of these discussions in the event that there is no ITK participation.
- FNIHB will rely on engagement with ITK, Inuit land claim organizations or Inuit designated representatives as the formal mechanism to achieve meaningful engagement with Inuit.

### 5. Our Common Priorities and Actions (needs further development with ITK, NICOH and FNIHB input)

- 5.1 FNIHB will act within its policy and budget authority to support ITK in the advancement of NICOH’s broad themes as identified in the NICOH Strategic Framework and/or the ITK strategy. (details to come after approval of this framework)
- 5.2 FNIHB and ITK, with the input of NICOH, will develop a two-year workplan to advance common priorities and actions. This workplan will be the basis for the SMC Inuit Health Approach Sub-Committee agenda.

### 6. Tracking Our Progress

- FNIHB will work with ITK and Inuit land claim organizations to develop Inuit-specific indicators in its Indicators Framework based on the Inuit Nunangat Health Indicators Project.
- Once the Indicators Framework is developed, FNIHB will commit to working with Inuit and other partners (such as provincial and territorial governments) to populate and report on the data on a schedule to be agreed to with ITK and Inuit land claim organizations.
- ITK and FNIHB will produce an Annual Progress Report to be shared publicly about its collaborative work. This report will focus on tangible outputs, as well as any data available from the Inuit Nunangat and FNIHB Indicators Frameworks