



# NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2012

Our Board and staff would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in our community of stakeholders for their ongoing support and contributions to the continuing success of FNWACCB. During this exciting transitional period of growth and development, we have much to share with you.

## What's new at a glance:

- Refined and expanded mandate & clarified role for FNWACCB
- Increased funding from FNIHB
- Development of new certification levels
- Changes to our Board of Directors & staff
- Development of the first Indigenous certification exam
- New partnership opportunity
- New offices in Vancouver
- Accreditation of training programs/courses



**FNWACCB 2012 SNAPSHOT**, June 21: Traditional Canoeing on Trout Lake at the National Aboriginal Day celebrations in Vancouver.

## Ongoing Growth and Development of FNWACCB

Over the past year our agency has made great strides in fulfilling our mandate and expanding our service portfolio. As a result, the role of FNWACCB within the NNADAP renewal process has been further clarified and is anchored in the Workforce Development section of the "Honouring Our Strengths" renewal framework document.

In recognition of the important and successful work of FNWACCB in 2011-12, FNIHB substantially increased our funding, ensuring that our agency will have the resources to continue as a key stakeholder and service provider in the NNADAP system of care. Our Executive Director has been invited to join the National Advisory Group on Workforce Development (NAGWD), which is coordinated by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA). With this appointment, mainstream substance abuse professionals recognise for the first time the importance of First Nations representation when assessing workforce issues for addictions workers in Canada.

## Certified Indigenous Wellness/Addictions Worker Certificate (CIWAW)

We have continued to receive applications from addiction practitioners in treatment centres and community-based programs and we now offer a new level of certification for Wellness and Addictions Workers. The CIWAW certification level allows employed addictions practitioners with one year of work experience and a basic level of education/training to be recognised for the knowledge and skills they apply in their job and gives them the opportunity to progress towards higher certification levels.

## New Prevention Certification

Do you work as an Addiction Prevention Practitioner? If so, we would like to hear from you.

FNWACCB is developing standards for a new Addiction Prevention Specialist Certification to be launched at the end of September 2012. We have been collecting job descriptions from NNADAP workers and would like to obtain more. If you are working as a prevention practitioner, please send us your job description.

We are also asking for volunteer participants to help determine the main areas of competencies in the practice of prevention, as well as the skills, knowledge and attitude that are required to carry out the responsibilities of this occupation. Those taking part in the teleconference will be provided with additional information, and will be offered a rebate on their certification or recertification as well as hours (equivalent to their participation) to be used toward their certification.

If you would like to participate in the creation of the Addiction Prevention Certification by submitting a job description or participating in a working group determining core-competencies, please see the end of this newsletter for our contact information.

## Certification Exam

Across the world professional certification is gaining greater recognition as more professions acknowledge the need for a better trained and highly skilled workforce. Nearly every professional certification body has incorporated a standard examination as part of their certification process. It is generally recognized that an objective measure is required to recognize that the training and education addiction workers receive has been retained. A certification exam is widely used in the industry, and mainstream organizations have used them for years. With these issues in mind, FNWACCB has decided to implement a certification exam for addiction workers who are applying to us for professional certification. We feel that such an exam is necessary in order to maintain the highest standards of practice possible.

We feel that our exam needs to be tailored specifically to our workforce of addiction counsellors that are predominantly of First Nations heritage. Therefore the exam needs to include components on First Nations culture and healing practices as well as meet the same standard of excellence in core competencies as other mainstream certification exams. However, since no other certification exam includes a section measuring cultural competencies



**FNWACCB 2012 SNAPSHOT**, February 21: at the Assembly of First Nations Justice Forum, Vancouver BC. Alan Podsadowski with Shawn Atleo, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations and hereditary chief of the Ahousaht First Nation.

specific to First Nations cultures, we have decided to create our own exam that includes this essential component..

We are assembling a team of experts in addictions and First Nations culture & healing who are volunteering their time to assist us in the development of the first certification exam for Indigenous addictions counsellors in the world. While this is a major undertaking, we are confident that in the end we will have something of extraordinary value that is culturally relevant on all levels. A process is being put in place to field test the questions with First Nations addiction workers and students before pilot testing the exam electronically with applicants. There are numerous elements to this process that are too lengthy to elaborate on in this brief report, but we would be glad to discuss them at length with anyone who would like to contribute their expertise to this important endeavour. Our goal is to begin pilot testing the exam in the field with addiction counsellors and students in September of this year.

## Accreditation of Training

Wellness and addiction practitioner certification and training accreditation have been part of the FNWACCB mandate since its inception. These objectives are entrenched in our non-profit registration documentation, documents of national incorporation, the FNWACC 2012-2012 Operational Plan, and in our contribution Agreement with Health Canada. Although it is true that accreditation and certification are often used synonymously, FNWACCB has used them to denote different concepts. FNWACCB Certification is designed to provide an attestation of the level of competence demonstrated by individual practitioners in the field of wellness and addictions, assessed against a comprehensive and relevant set of standards. FNWACCB provides accreditation for continuing education programs, courses, workshops, conference and other training session formats – provided by educational entities that provide this type of training and wish to obtain this accreditation from FNWACCB.

We have developed our own accreditation process geared towards educational institutions (Colleges), training companies and agencies, and services agencies involved in the wellness and addiction field, and NNADAP training. When assessing these kinds of training opportunities, we consider the relevance of training against our training/education requirements and the cultural competence and safety of this training. Thus, not only the content of the program is assessed but also how and with whom the program was planned, how and by whom it is delivered, how and by whom it is evaluated, and how this evaluation is used.

FNWACCB also registers trainers as part of the accreditation of the training. Those who are successful in getting registered are then included in a Registry so that anyone who wish to provide training on a given topic can consult this registry. This registry will be available on line at the end of the summer.



**FNWACCB 2012 SNAPSHOT**, at the Assembly of First Nations Justice Forum. Following the disclosure of residential school experiences by several attendees of the forum, everyone comes together to form a healing circle.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting will be held in Vancouver on **September 5th & 6th**. The Sylvia Hotel in the west end of Vancouver will host our get together. The Board and staff will also take this opportunity to work together on our strategic plan, as FNWACCB looks to a very bright future. Our colleagues and other stakeholder groups are always invited to join us on this occasion.

## Board of Directors

On March 21, 2012 our Board President, Patrick Dumont of Quebec, resigned from the Board at FNWACCB. Patrick made this difficult decision for personal reasons and indicated his unequivocal support for our organization. He stated that it had been a great pleasure and experience working with our national certification Board, our external partners, and everyone that assisted FNWACCB to become the successful organization it is today. Patrick's leadership has been crucial during the very important transition between submitting a successful Request for Proposal and securing ongoing funding from FNIHB. His strategic thinking, insight, and dedication to our cause were instrumental in providing stability and support for our agency.

Patrick worked very closely with his regional treatment group and was very helpful in finding his replacement from Quebec. At our June Board meeting, Keith LeClaire was elected to our Board of Directors.

Keith is a Mohawk from the Kahnawake First Nation. Keith has served on several addictions organization boards, including as Executive Director of the Onen'to:ken Treatment Center (Kahnnesatake First Nation (1986-91), past President of the National Native Association of Treatment Directors (1989-91), a member of the Quebec Regional Addictions Working Group (1980-82 and 1997-2004), a member of the Board of Directors of the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation (2002-2005) and is presently an ex-officio Board member (2007-ongoing) of NNAPF. Keith's strengths lie in community development, capacity building, management, policy analysis, evaluation and interpersonal relations. He looks forward to strengthening the partnerships between First Nation communities, provincial, federal and other Non-Government Organizations in our ongoing work to reduce and eliminate addictions within our First Nation community.

We are very pleased to announce the election of our first Board member from the province of Alberta. Kim Hallock is Metis, and has been the Program Director at the Kapown Rehabilitation Centre in Grouard Alberta for the past five years. Kim has been working on the reorientation of their treatment program and service delivery, to a co-occurring disorders model. Kim is a dedicated, team-oriented and creative healing professional, who is determined to do her part and motivate others to find solutions to the challenges of substance abuse in our First Nations communities. We look forward to learning more about the needs of addiction workers in Alberta, and through Kim, making meaningful connections with the First Nations treatment network across Alberta.

Gloria Rach from Manitoba has been elected by the Board as interim President until our Annual General Meeting in September when elections will be held. All of our Board members are of First Nations heritage. With members from the West Coast, East Coast, and the Prairies, we ensure that our Board has a true national perspective and that all of the interests of First Nations people from across Canada are represented on our Board of Directors.

---

## Staff

On May 28th, our new Communications & Administrative Coordinator began her career with FNWACCB. Vicki Haynes is from the Gitksan Nation in Northern British Columbia. Vicki comes to FNWACCB with a graduate degree from the University of Victoria and experience working for non-profit organizations, post-secondary students, and with First Nations communities in B.C. Her administrative, writing and communications skills are great complementary assets to the team and will play a major role in the implementation of our 2012-2013 work plan.





## New Partnership Opportunity

FNWACCB is very excited to report that we now have a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology based in Merritt British Columbia, with a campus close by in Burnaby. N.V.I.T. is proud to be B.C.'s only public Aboriginal post-secondary institution, serving about 1500 students and representing students from two-thirds of B.C.'s First Nations communities. The college offers numerous degree programs including an excellent Chemical Addiction Program.

This partnership provides us with an opportunity to share resources and collaborate on projects that promote enhanced training and strengthen services for First Nations addiction workers.

## Our New Offices

We are very pleased to announce that FNWACCB has found a new and more suitable office space here in Vancouver. We now have a self-contained, clean and bright private space that meets our needs, and is suitable for the head office of a national non-profit corporation. We can now meet comfortably with colleagues, stakeholders and prospective clients. While it is less than 600 sq. ft. in total area, it is well laid out and the rent is considerably less, saving us nearly \$4000 per year!

If you are in the Vancouver area, please don't hesitate to give us a call and arrange for a visit. We always welcome the opportunity to meet face to face with our colleagues and stakeholders.

Our new address is:  
207 – 2735 East Hastings St.  
Vancouver BC  
V5K 1Z8



**FNWACCB 2012 SNAPSHOT**, July 6: Dr. Verna Billy-Minnabarriet, Vice President Academic and Strategic Partnership at NVIT, and Alan Podsadowski sign partnership agreement

---

"Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls;  
the most massive characters are seared with scars."

– Kahlil Gibran

