



National First Nations Homelessness and Mental Wellness Forum

November 13-14, 2024 | Pan Pacific Vancouver Hotel | Vancouver, British Columbia

Forum Agenda

The purpose of the National First Nations Homelessness and Mental Wellness Forum is to explore and share wholistic solutions, best practices, and future advocacy opportunities for enhancing First Nations community well-being. The objectives of the Forum are:

- To engage in discussions on the AFN National First Nations Homelessness Action Plan and the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework;
- To advocate for integrated, culturally-relevant strategies that place mental wellness at the core of homelessness initiatives; and,
- To drive regional and national initiatives forward, highlighting best practices and challenges in addressing First Nations homelessness and mental wellness.

Tuesday, November 12, 2024 Pan Pacific Vancouver

Time	Activity	Location
5:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Forum Registration	Crystal Pavilion Foyer
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Welcome Reception <i>Entertainment: Shawn Bullshields</i>	Cypress Suite

Day 1 – Wednesday, November 13, 2024

Time	Activity	Location
7:30 a.m.	Forum Registration	Crystal Pavilion Foyer
7:30 a.m.	Hot Breakfast	Crystal Pavilion Foyer
9:00 a.m.	Opening Ceremonies/Welcoming Remarks <i>Forum Chair/Facilitator: Suzette Amaya</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Prayer and Welcome Song – Knowledge Keeper Sempulyan Stewart Gonzales, Squamish Nation and Knowledge Keeper Judy Clark, Abegweit First Nation • Chief Jen Thomas, Tsleil-Waututh Nation 	Crystal Pavilion Ballroom
9:20 a.m.	Opening Remarks by National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak	
9:35 a.m.	Video Message by Newfoundland Regional Chief Brendan Mitchell	
9:45 a.m.	Setting the Context for the Forum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grace Martineau, Director of Housing and Infrastructure, Assembly of First Nations • Cheyenne Joseph, Director of Health, Assembly of First Nations 	
10:15 a.m.	Health Break	Crystal Pavilion Foyer



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10:30 a.m.	<p>Cultural Interventions to Address Colonial Pathways to Homelessness for First Nations in Canada</p> <p><i>Dr. Brenda Restoule, First Peoples Wellness Circle</i></p> <p>Current research identifies unique pathways to homelessness for Indigenous people in Canada that signals the need for different strategies to address this growing problem. These pathways are linked to adverse childhood experiences and traumas perpetuated by the current colonial systems experienced by First Nations people. This keynote will delve into the unique pathways to homelessness including the continued failure of addressing systemic racism as a key variable and will outline community and culturally based strategies that must be applied to address and prevent homelessness for First Nation people.</p>	Crystal Pavilion Ballroom
11:00 a.m.	<p>Homelessness Strategies – Saskatchewan</p> <p><i>Tribal Chief Mark Arcand, Saskatoon Tribal Council</i></p>	
11:45 a.m.	<p>Minister’s Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Honourable Ya’ara Saks, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions (virtual) • Video Message from The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services 	
12:15 p.m.	Lunch Provided	Crystal Pavilion Foyer
1:15 p.m.	Introduction to Concurrent Sessions	Crystal Pavilion Ballroom
1:30 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions #1 - #4	
Session #1:	<p>Thunderbird Partnership Foundation</p> <p><i>Presenter: Dr. Carol Hopkins and Mary Deleary, Thunderbird Partnership Foundation</i></p> <p>This dialogue session will focus on substance use and homelessness within First Nations communities. Using the First Nations opioid and methamphetamine data as a starting point, we want to engage the audience in exploring the following: contaminated housing from methamphetamine and strategies to prevent; exposure to overcrowding, seven or more people in a home and risk for increased drug use; impacts and supports needed for vulnerable populations in drug use environments; and, presence of psychosis and homelessness in community. Through the dialogue session, strategies will be presented and then determine what is needed to implement the strategies and what needs modification to fit First Nations communities.</p>	<p>Crystal Pavilion Ballroom</p> <p><i>Simultaneous Interpretation Available</i></p>



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Session #2:	<p>First Peoples Wellness Circle</p> <p><i>Presenters: Dr. Brenda Restoule and Anne Duquette, First Peoples Wellness Circle</i></p> <p>The issue of homelessness and mental wellness is complex requiring a comprehensive response that can leave Nations unsure of what to address first, where to begin in the planning process or how to address the issue. This dialogue session will use a homelessness first approach to examine the different types of homelessness and the varying needs that must be attended to in the planning. The First Nation Mental Wellness Continuum Framework will be introduced as a planning tool to define a strategy that considers the unique circumstances and needs of the First Nation. Using case examples participants will use the Framework to map out a strategy to attend to homelessness and mental wellness needs.</p>	Cypress Suite
Session #3:	<p>Ta skwálwentn: Healing Through Culture and Navigating Detox and Treatment</p> <p><i>Presenters: Sean Burke and Mackenzie Gomez, Squamish Nation</i></p> <p>Join the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) as we present ta skwálwentn, the Nations app that empowers members to reconnect with Skwxwú7mesh language and culture as a pathway to healing. Launched with resounding success, ta skwálwentn has seen over 25% of Nation members engage with its teachings, completing more than 18,000 in under a year. This app stands as a testament to the strength of cultural connection in fostering wellness and resilience. In addition to the culture is healing app, we are developing a detox and treatment navigator tool, aimed at simplifying and centralizing access to essential detox, harm reduction and treatment across all service organizations. This project collaborates with multiple health authorities, including FNHA, VCH, PHSA and CMHA BC. This navigator is designed to streamline pathways to care for Nation members and reduce barriers.</p> <p>This session will offer a dual focus on ta skwálwentn's community-centered approach to cultural healing and the innovative collaboration behind the development of our detox and treatment navigator. The presenters invite participants to explore how these tools can serve as models for other Nations and to engage in discussions on bridging cultural and clinical support to holistically address community wellness.</p>	Coal Harbour Suite
Session #4:	<p>Dene Nation On-The-Land Wellness Camp</p> <p><i>Presenter: Wilbert Cook, Director of Housing, Dene Nation, Melissa Hardisty and Steve Norn</i></p>	Pacific Rim Suite 1
3:00 p.m.	Health Break	Crystal Pavilion Foyer
3:30 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions #5-#8	
Session #5:	<p>End Homelessness Winnipeg</p> <p><i>Presenter: Jason Whitford, End Homelessness Winnipeg</i></p> <p>The presentation will focus on the Winnipeg context in trying to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples experiencing houselessness: building relationships, working with First Nations and systems change.</p>	<p>Crystal Pavilion Ballroom</p> <p><i>Simultaneous Interpretation Available</i></p>



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Session #6:	<p>Unseen and Unheard: Deconstructing the Colonial Paradigm</p> <p><i>Presenters: Marie Frawley-Henry, Assembly of First Nations; Marsha Ireland, Oneida Nation; Shannah McInnis, Disability Intersectional Consultant</i></p> <p>Join us for an interactive workshop to deconstruct the colonial policies that are impacting the safety, security and cultural well-being of First Nations citizens experiencing homelessness and its mental wellness colonial consequences.</p> <p>You are invited to journey around the medicine wheel to learn about compelling new data that will serve to empower and bring back to the circle of our Nations, the unheard and often invisible First Nations persons with disabilities (FNPWD) population and to support the growing vulnerable First Nations population. Applying the AFN's Draft Distinct First Nations Accessibility Legislation and Draft Accessibility/Disability Framework as decolonizing tools, we will explore how First Nations culturally distinct ways of knowing and understandings of disability, spirituality and mental wellness can transform future policy and shape culturally strong First Nations legislation.</p> <p>This session also provides an opportunity for participants to contribute perspectives and participate in an interactive data session to inform future initiatives that prioritize First Nations-driven solutions that will help build fully accessible First Nations governments, leaving no one behind.</p>	Cypress Suite
Session #7:	<p>PATH Process: Community Grown Journey</p> <p><i>Presenters: Irene Gonneau and JoLynn Parenteau, National Indigenous Homelessness Council</i></p> <p>Indigenous communities from coast-to-coast-to-coast are leading the development and piloting of an Indigenous community-grown process for engaging people experiencing homelessness. Join us to learn about piloting PATH in four communities nationally, with a focus on the local Vancouver pilot location, as an alternative to common assessment tools under Coordinated Access. Dive into the PATH Process content AND Training/Technical Framework to understand how the Process is being tailored by pilot locations, ensuring it is uniquely shaped to communities.</p>	Coal Harbour Suite
Session #8:	<p>Southern Chiefs' Organization: Harm Reduction Program</p> <p><i>Presenter: Chris Trimble, Southern Chiefs' Organization</i></p> <p>Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) Harm Reduction Program provides more than just Narcan training to support their citizens' health and wellness. Please join and hear how SCO is using culturally safe education, to reduce stigma and barriers to Harm Reduction Services and Sexual Health, see what evidence-based approaches are used to educate and support their member Nations and as to what other possible topics can be covered within harm reduction and sexual health.</p>	Pacific Rim Suite 1
5:00 p.m.	Adjourn for Day 1	



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Day 2 – Thursday, November 14, 2024		
Time	Activity	Location
8:00 a.m.	Forum Registration (open until 12:00 p.m.)	Crystal Pavilion Foyer
8:00 a.m.	Hot Breakfast	Crystal Pavilion Foyer
8:45 a.m.	Welcome and Recap of Day 1 • Forum Chair/Facilitator: Suzette Amaya	Crystal Pavilion Ballroom
9:00 a.m.	Concurrent Sessions #9 - #12	Crystal Pavilion Foyer
Session #9:	Voices for Non-Insured Health Benefits Transformation: Listening to First Nations Who Experience Homelessness <i>Presenters: Jenny Gardipy, Assembly of First Nations; Kierra FineDay, NIHB Navigator, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations</i> This workshop focuses on advocating for the health and well-being for First Nations, particularly addressing the challenges faced by those experiencing homelessness in relation to the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program. By fostering dialogue among First Nations clients, service providers, community leaders and health technicians, this workshop aims to identify culturally safe and wholistic healthcare solutions that align with First Nations inherent rights and needs.	Crystal Pavilion Ballroom <i>Simultaneous Interpretation Available</i>
Session #10:	Confronting the Crisis: Building Resilience Against Opioid and Toxic Drug Harms for First Nations Across Ontario <i>Presenter: Alexis Kydd, Chiefs of Ontario</i> This dialogue session will explore the increase in opioid related harms, deaths and toxicity for First Nations across Ontario. Through meaningful discussion and the presentation of provincial First Nations specific data, this session will seek to demonstrate the urgent need for community developed strategies to address opioid and toxic drug harms happening across and beyond the region. This session will also provide up-to-date information on the contents of drug samples being tested in Ontario to demonstrate the volatility and unpredictability of the unregulated drug supply and what this means for First Nations communities across Turtle Island. Identified throughout the dialogue session will be examples of effective, evidence-and-culturally-based strategies to demonstrate the need for more informed, holistic and community led initiatives that could keep people safer from harms, amid the opioid and toxic drug crisis they are facing.	Cypress Suite
Session #11:	McCreary Centre Society – Youth Indigenous Research Team <i>Presenters: Youth Indigenous Research Team, McCreary Centre Society</i>	Coal Harbour Suite
Session #12:	Lethbridge Wellness Shelter Stabilization Unit: An Indigenous-Led Initiative <i>Presenters: Chevie-Lee Mitchell and Suzanne Buchanan, Blood Tribe</i> As an Indigenous-led Initiative, the presenters will discuss their experiences, learnings, challenges and successes with running a homeless shelter and how they have adapted to operate through barriers and challenges and look to expand their services for their most vulnerable populations.	Pacific Rim Suite 1
10:30 a.m.	Health Break	Crystal Pavilion Foyer



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11:00 a.m.	Panel Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dr. Carol Hopkins, Thunderbird Partnership Foundation</i> • <i>Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi, Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness</i> 	Crystal Pavilion Ballroom
12:00 p.m.	Lunch Provided	Crystal Pavilion Foyer
1:00 p.m.	Remarks by Grand Chief Jerry Daniels, Southern Chiefs' Organization (TBC)	Crystal Pavilion Ballroom
1:15 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions #13 - #16	
Session #13:	Innu Nation: Mitshuap Shelter <i>Presenters: Alexandra Ambroise and Nadia Robertson, Innu Nation Mitshuap Shelter</i>	Crystal Pavilion Ballroom <i>Simultaneous Interpretation Available</i>
Session #14:	Wiigiwaaminaan Lodge: Mobilizing Indigenous Leadership in Homelessness Services <i>Presenters: Andrea Jibb, Terri King and Ryan Joseph, Atlohsa Family Healing Services</i> Exploring Indigenous harm reduction practices as active resistance to state sanctioned necro-politics such as Indigenous homelessness and violence of the opioid crisis, this presentation showcases examples of Indigenous leadership through the implementation of Wiigiwaaminaan Lodge, an Indigenous-led hub as part of London, Ontario's, "Whole of Community Response". Strategies will be highlighted on finding ways to keep our relatives safe, becoming acts of resistance to the colonial systems which have created the crisis of homelessness in our territories. Centred in all aspects of our Indigenous homelessness service provision is Indigenous Sovereignty and participants will explore a community strategy centred on LAND BACK.	Cypress Suite
Session #15:	G4 – Reaching Home - Stoney Nakoda Tsuut'ina Tribal Council <i>Presenters: Chantelle Cardinal, Stoney Nakoda Tsuut'ina Tribal Council; Roman Katsnelson, KR Consulting</i>	Coal Harbour Suite
Session #16:	NiGiNan Housing Ventures <i>Presenters: Keri Cardinal, Chief Executive Officer; Carola Cunningham, NiGiNan Housing Ventures</i> The presenters will present on behalf of Niginan Housing Ventures, an Indigenous Led Supportive Housing that provides housing to those with complex needs and deemed the hardest to house in Edmonton. Niginan provides this level of service by leading with love, following the four natural laws and decolonizing the work on an ongoing basis. Join us as we share the story of Niginan from beginning to present and the future projects planned in the coming years.	Pacific Rim Suite 1
2:45 p.m.	Health Break	Crystal Pavilion Foyer



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3:00 p.m.	Closing Keynote <i>James Harry, ED/Outreach, All Nations Outreach Society</i>	Crystal Pavilion Ballroom
4:00 p.m.	Closing Remarks • British Columbia Regional Chief Terry Teegee	
4:15 p.m.	Closing Ceremonies	
4:30 p.m.	Forum Adjourned	