



Building Wellness through Reconciliation: Moving Forward on the Calls to Action

2017 Atlantic First Nations Health Conference

November 7–9, 2017

Conference Report

Prepared by



Acknowledgements

Horizons would like to express our sincere thanks to the Conference Planning Committee and the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APC). We appreciate your commitment to creating a topical and capacity building health conference. Thank you to:

- Dawna Prosper
- James McGrath
- Jarvis Googoo
- Julian Morrison
- Kate Gray-Mews
- Laurie Touesnard
- Patricia Ward
- Roseanne Sark
- Thomas Hill
- Wanda Ralph

We appreciate the support you offered to our Conference team. We enjoyed working with you very much!

Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 1
Planning	Page 1
Promotion	Page 1
Registration	Page 2
Program	Page 5
Awards	Page 7
Exhibits	Page 8
Venue	Page 9
Evaluation	Page 11
Considerations	Page 11

Appendix A – Promotion

Appendix B – Registration

Appendix C – Program

Appendix D – Awards

Appendix E – Exhibits

Appendix F - Evaluation

Introduction

This report provides an overview of the planning and implementation of the 2017 Atlantic First Nations Health Conference, an initiative of the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APC), funded by the First Nations Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada (FNIHB). The conference was held November 7 - 9, 2017, at the Crowne Plaza, Moncton, New Brunswick. This report is structured to describe each component of the conference and to provide copies of materials developed for the conference (included as appendices). The complete evaluation report of the conference is also included as an appendix.

The final section of the report is called *Considerations*. It discusses recommendations from the Planning Committee and/or the Conference Coordinator to be considered for future conference committees/planners.

Planning

The 2017 Atlantic First Nations Health Conference program was planned by a committee comprised of representatives of health-related organizations from across the region, APC staff, FNIHB Atlantic Region staff, and supported by the Conference Coordinator.

The Committee met six times between August 31, 2017 and October 30, 2017, primarily via teleconference. Meetings generally included a verbal update from the Coordinator, discussion and decisions around potential conference topics, conference format, plenary speaker ideas, and concurrent speaker suggestions. At each meeting, the Coordinator provided an updated conference outline for approval, as well as an update on the status of topics and speakers. A number of Committee members also followed up on speakers or agreed to lead or participate in a session.

The Committee was also responsible for the selection of the *Honouring Our People* award winners. The Coordinator provided completed nominations to the Committee via email prior to two meetings held to make the selections.

A number of Committee members also volunteered on-site at the conference to introduce/host concurrent sessions.

Promotion

The conference was promoted to Health Directors in First Nations around the region; the Atlantic Health Partnership members (voting and non-voting), and its committees; health staff with tribal organizations; and treatment centres in the Atlantic region. Conference promotion included emailing (on September 11, 2017) a *Save the Date* notice to the broad mailing list drawn from the 2016 conference registration contact list and any updated information

provided. The notice (an email and 'postcard') included the conference dates and location. The conference notice is included in Appendix A.

The registration package was circulated to the mailing list via email on October 2, 2017. The package included an overview of the conference, including program themes and session areas; travel and accommodation information; an electronically-fillable registration form, and information about/a nomination form for the *Honouring Our People* awards, presented as part of the conference. The registration package is included in Appendix A.

Late in October, an update was created, listing sessions and additional conference elements, and the registration package, excluding the awards information was resent. The conference update is included in Appendix A.

Registration

As identified above, registration information was circulated at the beginning of October. Through the conference funding, two delegates from each First Nation in the region could be supported to attend the conference at no cost (i.e., no conference registration fee and travel costs reimbursed, as per the APC travel policy). For this year's conference, each First Nation community determined who the two delegates would be, including their Chief (or Proxy), Health Director (or Proxy), staff, or Councillor with the Health portfolio.

Treatment Centres and Tribal organizations were also each able to have one representative supported to attend, as were the Conference Planning Committee members.

Potential conference delegates were able to complete and return their registration form via a web-based registration form, or to send it via email or fax to the Registration Manager. 115 delegates took advantage of the online registration. The Registration Manager entered all registrations received via fax or email into the online system.

As was the case at the 2016 conference, there continues to be difficulty ensuring timely receipt of proxies from delegates, and required a significant amount of follow-up.

Unlike the 2016 conference, a significant number of registrations (95) were received by the October 25 deadline, beginning the first day registration opened. Delegates continued to register following the deadline, up to and including on-site at the conference.

An onsite registration area was set-up at the entrance to the Crowne Ballroom and registered delegates checked in to confirm their registration information, and receive their delegate bag that included the onsite program and evaluation form. It also contained a number of promotional items, provided and/or gathered by APC. APC staff were part of the registration area, receiving and tracking onsite registration payments, and following up on proxy letters. With the Horizons team, they also helped to trouble-shoot delegates' registration and

conference questions. This area also provided a place for session hosts to collect the speakers' biographies and gifts.

Conference delegates were required to sign-in each day of the conference to confirm their attendance for travel claim purposes. The sign-in sheet is attached in Appendix B.

Delegates

The following tables provide an overview of conference participants by:

- Broad category
- First Nation
- Tribal Organizations
- Government Organizations
- Treatment Centres
- Resources/Services – health or First Nation-related organizations
- University

Category	# of Representatives
<i>Delegates</i>	139
<i>Speakers</i>	29
<i>Elders</i>	2
<i>Awards Dinner Attendance (tickets provided; tickets sold)</i>	149
<i>Planning Committee/Coordination Team</i>	12
<i>Total</i>	<i>182</i>

First Nations Representatives	# of Representatives
<i>Abegweit First Nation</i>	2
<i>Acadia First Nation</i>	4
<i>Bear River First Nation</i>	1
<i>Eel Ground First Nation</i>	1
<i>Elsipogtog First Nation/ Elsipogtog Health and Wellness</i>	9
<i>Esgenoopetitj First Nation</i>	5
<i>Eskasoni First Nation/Eskasoni Health/ Eskasoni Mental Health</i>	11
<i>Lennox Island First Nation</i>	1
<i>Listuguj First Nation</i>	1
<i>Membertou First Nation</i>	3
<i>Metepenagiag First Nation</i>	3
<i>Millbrook First Nation</i>	3
<i>Oromocto First Nation</i>	2
<i>Paq'tnekek First Nation</i>	8
<i>Pictou Landing First Nation</i>	2
<i>Potlotek First Nation</i>	6
<i>Sipekne'katik Health Centre</i>	5
<i>St. Mary's First Nation</i>	1

<i>Tobique First Nation/Neqotkuk Health Centre</i>	8
<i>Ugpi'gangig First Nation</i>	8
<i>Wagmatcook First Nation</i>	7
<i>Waycobah First Nation</i>	3
<i>Woodstock First Nation</i>	2
<i>Total</i>	96
Tribal Organizations	# of Representatives
<i>Assembly of First Nations</i>	1
<i>Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq</i>	13
<i>Mawiw Council</i>	2
<i>Mi'kmaw Confederacy of PEI</i>	2
<i>Union of New Brunswick Indians</i>	1
<i>Union of Nova Scotia Indians</i>	4
<i>Total</i>	23
Government Organizations	# of Representatives
<i>Department of Health, New Brunswick</i>	2
<i>Health Canada, First Nations Inuit Health Branch</i>	10
<i>Total</i>	12
Treatment Centres	# of Representatives
<i>Charles J. Andrew Youth Treatment Centre</i>	1
<i>Eagle's Nest Recovery House</i>	1
<i>Mi'kmaw Lodge and Treatment Centre</i>	1
<i>Wolastoqewiyik Healing Lodge</i>	3
<i>Total</i>	6
Resources / Services	# of Representatives
<i>Atlantic Canada's First Nation Help Desk</i>	1
<i>Atlantic First Nations Health Partnership</i>	1
<i>Donna Jones Reflexology</i>	1
<i>Healing Our Nations</i>	3
<i>Horizons Community Development Associates Inc.</i>	2
<i>Leader Development</i>	1
<i>Mawita'mk Society</i>	2
<i>Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services</i>	11
<i>National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program</i>	1
<i>Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselling Association</i>	4
<i>Nova Scotia Food Security Action Network</i>	1
<i>Rowan Tree Consulting</i>	1
<i>Sacred Fire Healing Lodge</i>	1
<i>Thunderbird Partnership Foundation</i>	2
<i>Vitalité Health Network</i>	2
<i>Total</i>	34

University	# of Representatives
<i>Université de Montréal</i>	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>1</i>
Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat	# of Representatives
<i>APC staff</i>	10
<i>Total</i>	<i>10</i>

The complete list of conference participants is attached in Appendix B.

Evaluation Highlights

As part of the conference evaluation, conference delegates were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with components of the registration. Over three quarters (77.6%) of respondents were satisfied with the registration materials, while slightly fewer delegates (73.7%) indicated they were satisfied with the conference registration deadline.

Program

The 2017 conference theme was *Building Wellness Through Reconciliation: Moving Forward on the Calls to Action*. This theme was determined through discussion at the initial meetings of the Planning Committee. Using this as a foundation, the Planning Committee focused the conference program on the role of health in reconciliation, the importance of self-care, and the Health Partnership’s two priority areas – mental wellness and chronic disease prevention and management. Speakers were asked to share best and wise practices from their work, and to identify the lessons they and/or their organizations or communities had learned.

The overall conference design allowed for participants to travel on the opening day, with a 1:30 p.m. start time, and again on the last day, when the conference finished before noon. The conference program was designed to incorporate a mixture of plenary sessions and concurrent sessions that reflected health from a broad perspective. Day 1 and Day 3 were hosted by Allan Polchies Junior, while Jarvis Googoo hosted Day 2.

Day 1 of the conference began with an opening plenary, which included an opening prayer and words offered by Elder Ivan ‘Tulley’ Paul from Metepenagiag First Nation, and a moment of silence for colleagues who had passed away. This was followed by welcoming remarks from Chief Candace Paul, Co-Chair of the Atlantic First Nations Health Partnership and by Dr. Annette Elliot Rose, Acting Regional Director, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada. As part of the opening, *Poqji-welo'lti'kw - we are starting to heal* was shown. The video was created to showcase a healing gathering held for descendants and family members in Cape Breton during the fall of 2016. The video was produced by the Eskasoni First Nation’s Indian Residential School Survivors Support Team.

The opening was followed by a plenary session with Carol Hopkins from the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation who, building on her sessions at the 2016 conference, detailed continuing work on moving the Mental Wellness Continuum Framework forward.

Day 2 and Day 3 each began with a short welcome to share any announcements or reminders for delegates, prior to the beginning of the sessions. A plenary session was also held at the beginning of Day 2 with Todd Leader, who shared his perspective on collaboration and patient/client-centred care.

In total, the program included two plenaries, and fifteen concurrent sessions. In addition, a session to demonstrate and learn about Waltes was offered at the end of Day 2.

A closing was held on Day 3 after the block of concurrent sessions, which provided the opportunity for delegates to complete their conference evaluations, have closing remarks and a closing prayer and smudge with Elder Tulley Paul.

Speakers were asked to share any presentation materials with the Conference Coordinator prior to the conference so they could be loaded on laptops in the session rooms. This was done for the most part, with a few presentations needing to be loaded during the conference. Following the conference, all presentations were converted to pdf and placed in a public Dropbox folder for delegates to access. The web address for the folder was included in the conference program. Unfortunately, there was a technical issue with this link, so another was created at the conference and shared with delegates onsite. The Coordinator also sent an email to all delegates when the folder was ready, with the updated web address. All conference presentations can be found at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/y998rncf>.

Speakers not receiving a fee for their services received a stained glass feather as a thank you gift. Those that presented more than once received a stainless steel water bottle.

The complete conference program provided to delegates can be found in Appendix C.

Evaluation Highlights

The primary focus of the conference evaluation was the program. The following are highlights regarding the program found in the summary report (Appendix F):

- The opening and Healing Gathering video and the closing were well received by delegates;
- Both plenaries were well received by delegates. In particular, a number of delegates identified that the presentation by Todd Leader were the best feature of the conference;

- Almost all delegates were satisfied with the concurrent sessions that they attended and indicated that they were current and relevant. They were also generally satisfied with the variety of topics. Of particular note were these highly rated sessions¹:
 - L’nuwey Ankukum’kewey - Eight Point Star Teachings (33/33, 100.0%)
 - Sacred Fire Healing Lodge (32/33, 97.0%)
 - Supporting a Positive Self-Care Plan (22/23, 95.7%)
 - Mental Wellness Programs—Sharing Good Work (20/21, 95.2%)
 - Reflexology Therapy - Its Role in Health (15/16, 93.8%)
 - Alternative Pain Management Therapies (23/25, 92.0%)
 - My Path to Strength—A Team Approach to Self-Care (23/25, 92.0%)
 - Mental Health Promotion (29/33, 87.9%)
- When asked how they would share their conference learnings, delegates identified they would do so primarily with their colleagues at work through staff meetings, work of mouth, and sharing the presentations; and
- When asked for suggestions for topics for future conferences, most suggestions centred on mental wellness/mental health and addictions, traditional medicines/traditional healing, and on alternative forms of health care and healing.

Awards

The *Honouring Our People Awards* are an annual part of the Health Conference. The awards nomination information was incorporated with the circulated registration package (see Appendix A). Again this year, a fillable pdf form was used and parameters around length of responses were provided. Nominations received by the deadline (October 20) were reviewed by the Conference Planning Committee. Because there were no nominations from two provinces, the Committee decided to extend the deadline to October 27 and circulated an email to Health Directors and other key contacts to share this information. The Committee met again to determine the award winners. Nomination information can be found in Appendix A, with the pre-conference package.

Telephone calls were made and/or emails sent to all award winners to congratulate them and to share logistical information about attending the dinner. If they chose to do so, they could attend the conference on a complimentary basis. Information shared with award winners regarding travel, accommodations, and complimentary conference attendance is included in Appendix D.

This year’s *Honouring Our People Award* winners were:

- New Brunswick: Patricia Murphy
- Nova Scotia: Jasine Bernard
- Prince Edward Island: Gerard Gould
- Lifetime Achievement: Clark Paul, Kenny Prosper, and Mary Simon

¹ Rating is based on conference participants satisfaction rating (somewhat satisfied or satisfied).

The awards were presented at the Awards Dinner held on November 7. Conference emcee Allan Polchies, Jr. hosted the evening. The Coordinator developed an Awards program, which was placed on each table at the dinner, providing the evening's agenda and brief biographies of the award winners (see Appendix D). The Coordinator developed a script for the emcee with more complete information about each award winner.

J. Hubert Francis, a Juno-nominated singer/songwriter from Elsipogtog First Nation provided entertainment following the awards presentation.

APC hired *kelly clark photography* to capture pictures of the winners and candid shots of delegates at the Awards Dinner, as well as during the conference on Tuesday and Wednesday morning.

Award plaques were purchased from Ron's Trophy & Sign Shop in Milton, NS.

Evaluation Highlights

As part of the conference evaluation, delegates were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the Awards Dinner. Of those that responded to this question, most (84.6%, 44/52) were satisfied with the event. When asked to comment on the best feature of the conference, a few delegates (7.9%, 6/76) explicitly identified the awards dinner. When asked about one change they would make to the conference, a few delegates (6.6%, 5/76) identified the awards dinner, in particular the food.

In reviewing the returned evaluation forms, it was discovered that one of the award recipients was not able to check in at the hotel due to not having a credit card, and spent the night in their vehicle. This unfortunately was the first mention of this troubling issue. The award winner's employer (Health Department and Administration office) were provided with the accommodations information and procedures for travel reimbursement. A consideration is identified below, based on delegates' feedback.

Exhibits

Exhibits or displays are an ongoing component of the Health Conference. This year, exhibitors were a mixture of health-related organizations and two First Nations crafters and artists. Exhibitors were provided with a draped table, chairs, and access to electricity for their display, as required. In lieu of a fee to exhibit, each exhibitor was asked to provide a 'gift' that could be used by the Conference Planning Committee for speakers and/or draw prizes. The exhibitor registration form can be found in Appendix E.

This year's exhibitors were:

Health Resources/Services	Crafters
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• APC – NIHB Navigator• Breath of Life: Federal Tobacco Control Strategy• Canada Revenue Agency - Community Volunteer• Catalyst Healthcare• COHI Oral Health• Donna Jones Reflexology/• FNIHB - INHB• Healing Our Nations• Heart and Stroke Foundation• Jordan's Principle• Mi'kmaw Family & Children's Services/ Kinship Assessment Foster Care• Sacred Fire Healing Lodge• Thunderbird Partnership Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jeanne's Quilting• Eagle Spirit Arts and Crafts

Exhibitors were required to be set-up by noon on Day 1 of the conference. Nutrition breaks were held with exhibitors to allow ample time for conference participants to visit the displays.

Evaluation Highlights

Although over three quarters of conference delegates who completed the conference evaluation (58/76, 76.3%) indicated they were satisfied with the exhibits, a number of delegates indicated their concern about the lack of accessibility of the space used, which required people to use stairs to visit the exhibits and access the nutrition breaks.

Venue

The conference was held at the Crowne Plaza Downtown Moncton in Moncton New Brunswick. Three of four rooms within its Crowne Ballroom were used for conference plenaries. The exhibits were in a large meeting room on a lower level. Three additional meeting rooms were used for concurrent sessions. In addition, the Planning Committee and Conference Coordinator had access to an additional room, which was used for a Waltes demonstration. The primary plenary space was set-up in rounds of eight, while the session rooms were set in theatre style with small head tables.

The Coordinator visited the venue once prior to the conference to tour the facility (October 10) and meet with the hotel's representative to review the set-up and general outline of the conference, and had regular, ongoing communication with the hotel's representative. The planner used by the Coordinator and Planning Committee was also shared with the representative prior to the conference, which confirmed room set-up, menus, meal numbers, and any additional requirements.

The hotel does not have an audio-visual company onsite, but works closely with Sonic Image to meet a/v requirements. The Coordinator met with the company representative by telephone to review the conference's needs in order for them to prepare a quote for their services. The company also received a copy of the planner prior to the conference. Memory sticks with all received presentations were provided during set-up before the opening of Day 1 and slides were loaded. Each room was set-up with a laptop, projector and screen, and speakers. The plenary space used the in-house system, and had a microphone, podium, and floor mic for delegate questions or comments. Speakers had the opportunity prior to the conference to identify any additional a/v requirements to the Conference Coordinator. Sonic Image staff were professional and accommodating, able to deal easily with changes, additional presentations, and last minute requests, as needed.

The venue provided generic conference signage for meeting rooms so the Coordinator created signage, listing sessions and times, for each meeting space. A map of the conference space was included in the conference program.

Nutrition breaks were held with the exhibitors as described above. Day 1 saw a delay in the first nutrition break's refreshments arriving late to the Exhibit space. Initially, coffee and tea were not provided at the beginning of the day; rather they were included in the breaks' refreshments. A number of complaints were received about this at the beginning of Day 2 so the decision was made to move this portion of the refreshments from the Day 3 break to the start of the day.

Overall, the service offered by hotel staff was good, and Denise Chandler, the hotel's representative was helpful and problem-solved with the Coordinator and APC staff when needed.

Evaluation Highlights

Conference delegates provided significant feedback about this year's conference venue. Highlights of their feedback include:

- Concerns about sound carrying between session rooms, making hearing some speakers an issue;
- Concerns about the accessibility of the facilities, particularly the stairs to the Exhibits/Nutrition Breaks and having to use the elevator to reach three session rooms;
- More than half of delegates completing the questionnaire found the conference facilities and the refreshments/meals satisfactory; and
- When asked what one change to the conference could be made, issues regarding the venue, its layout and parking were identified by a number of delegates. A few also identified the food and the meal served at the Awards Dinner as a concern.

Evaluation

Time was provided during the closing plenary for the completion of the conference evaluation form (attached in Appendix F). 78 evaluation forms were returned. When completed and turned in, conference participants received a ballot to complete to be entered for draw prizes, also carried out as part of the closing.

Overall, conference delegates were satisfied with the conference. Approximately three quarters of delegates completing the evaluation reported that the conference was a good opportunity for professional development and networking. They also reported that the conference helped them learn about Mental Wellness. Over half of delegates completing the evaluation identified that the conference helped them learn about chronic disease prevention and management, self-care, and the role of health in reconciliation, and provided them with fresh ideas/strategies/ resources to use in their own work.

The complete evaluation summary is attached in Appendix F.

Considerations

The following considerations are respectfully offered to enhance the planning of future conferences, based on input from the Planning Committee, conference delegates, and the Coordination Team.

Planning

- Consider a distinctive nametag (or attachment to the tag) for conference team and planning committee for easy identification by delegates.
- Identify and involve an Elder in the conference planning from the beginning of the process.

Registration/Promotion

- The online registration option was a popular one for delegates and should be considered again for future conferences. A progression for this, and to improve promotion, could be to establish a part of the APC website's Health page to host the link and offer timely program updates.
- Continue to refine the language in the pre-conference information and registration form for clarity around supported delegates, proxies and proxy letters. Consider adding check off boxes to the form to identify days delegates plan to attend and a section for delegates to indicate they have read and understood the information/requirements.

- Consider whether the registration fee charged is intended to cover costs for those delegates that are not their communities or organization's representatives. Meal, nutrition breaks and gratuity charges, delegate bags, name tags, etc. can all be considered in determining a per delegate cost.
- Have onsite registration in its own space rather than in the back of a plenary space and continue to look at ways to streamline the process for delegates.

Program

- Ensure the conference theme is clearly incorporated into all elements of the conference. When liaising with speakers, emphasize the theme and expectations in this area. Request any presentation materials prior to the conference to ensure adherence.
- Determine whether to offer the opportunity to communities or organizations to share information or video presentations with delegates as part of the pre-conference process (or via the website). All materials or request will be vetted by the Planning Committee to determine appropriateness or suggest another vehicle for sharing.

Conference Venue/Accommodations

- When selecting venues for future events, consider the accessibility of the rooms for program sessions, nutrition breaks, and exhibits. Availability or amount of parking and the offering of a complimentary breakfast can also be a consideration. Because this year's venue did not offer a complimentary breakfast, many delegates came to the morning sessions expecting coffee to be served. Ensure, at minimum, that coffee/tea is available, and budgeted for, for the beginning of each day.
- When smudging takes place, consider having it in one spot rather than throughout the room, in consideration for allergies or other health issues.
- Because of the many issues dealt with at the conference, including IRS, mental health and addiction issues, etc., Regional Chief Augustine suggested setting aside a space for quiet reflection, debriefing or support.
- Ensure the venue can offer alternatives to room guarantee or deposit, beyond a credit card, and that front desk staff are able to do so.

Awards

- Tactfully determine whether any award winner has confirmed accommodations. Ensure the recipients' nominator or employer, if applicable, has made accommodation arrangements.

- Ensure the biography provided by the nominators is correct. Provide to winner for approval prior to program printing.
- Consider pieces of First Nation artwork as awards (rather than plaques) with appropriate inscriptions.

Conference Coordination

- Ensure expectations around any expenses expected to be incurred by the Conference Coordinator (e.g. printing, etc.) are explicitly included in the Request for Proposals. Provide maximum numbers to support accurate budgeting.

Timing of Planning

- The 2017 conference had a slightly earlier start in planning than 2016, and occurred one week later. The small increase in planning time was helpful, although a June start would allow for earlier confirmation of speakers, earlier sending of registration information, and a more fulsome pre-conference program to be circulated to potential delegates.

Appendix A - Promotion

- Save the Date Notice
- Conference Registration Package
- Conference Update

Appendix B - Registration

- Conference Sign-In Sheet
- Conference Participant List

Appendix C - Program

- Conference Program

Appendix D - Awards

- Information for Award Winners
- Awards Program

Appendix E - Exhibits

- Exhibitor Registration Form

Appendix F - Evaluation

- Conference Evaluation Form
- Conference Evaluation Summary



PO Box 2404
Wolfville, NS B4P 2S3
Phone: 902-542-0156
Email: admin@horizonscda.ca
Web: www.horizonscda.ca