



**LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
MÉTIS NATION BRITISH COLUMBIA
AND
VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY**

This Letter of Understanding made this 24 day of November, 2022

Hereinafter referred to as “the Parties”

WHEREAS the Métis are a distinct Aboriginal people who are recognized in Section 35(2) of the Constitution Act (1982)¹;

WHEREAS the mandate of Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) is to develop and enhance opportunities for Métis Chartered Communities throughout British Columbia by implementing culturally relevant social and economic programs and services;

WHEREAS Métis Nation British Columbia signed the Métis Nation Relationship Accord II with the Provincial Government, November 2016;

WHEREAS the Métis Nation Relationship Accord II identifies health (community, families and individuals) and data collection as two of its nine objectives;

WHEREAS Métis Nation British Columbia has signed a letter of intent with the Provincial Government to reaffirm shared priorities;

WHEREAS Métis Nation British Columbia has signed the Métis Community Governance Charter with the two Métis Chartered Communities of:

- North Fraser Métis Association
- Powell River Métis Society

WHEREAS Métis Nation British Columbia may sign additional Métis Community Governance Charters with new Métis Chartered Communities within the Vancouver Coastal Health region.

¹ See Appendix 1 for information on Métis Nation British Columbia, including the Métis Nation Relationship Accord.

WHEREAS the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority provides health care to the residents of the Vancouver Coastal Health Region as prescribed in the Health Authorities Act, Section 5(1) and Section 5(2)². This includes citizens of Métis Nation British Columbia and self-identified Métis people.

WHEREAS the Government of British Columbia acknowledged that racism has made B.C.'s healthcare system an unsafe place for many Indigenous people and that harm to Indigenous people is known and has been perpetuated against Indigenous people for generations. The Government of British Columbia has committed to implementing all 24 recommendations of the In Plain Sight Report in BC.

1. Definitions

In this Letter of Understanding:

“Métis” means an Aboriginal person as defined in Section 35(2) of the Constitution Act (1982); who identifies themselves as Métis, is of historic Métis National Ancestry, is distinct from Aboriginal Peoples, and is accepted by the Métis Nation.

“Métis Community” means a group or body of Métis persons in subparagraph (1) above living in the same place, gathered closely together in forming a recognizable unity, having common characteristics and a community of interest based on Métis language, culture, history and traditions.

“Joint Committee” refers to a distinctions based committee jointly established by the Parties to oversee the implementation and review of the Letter of Understanding through the Work Plan and other mechanisms.

2. Purpose

The Purpose of this Letter of Understanding is to recognize and acknowledge that:

- 2.1 The Parties have common goals of (a) equitable access to health services and (b) improved health and wellness outcomes, for Métis citizens and self identified Métis within the Vancouver Coastal Health Region.
- 2.2 The Parties agree that the Métis Nation British Columbia Regional Governance Council of the Lower Mainland has the responsibility as elected officials of Métis Nation British Columbia, to advise and influence the delivery of Aboriginal health services provided within the Vancouver Coastal Health region, for their respective communities through the Joint Committee.
- 2.3 The Parties agree to ensure that the planning and delivery of health services to Métis individuals, family, and communities within the Vancouver Coastal Health region are culturally appropriate, utilizing the “Taanishi Kiiya” Métis Public Health Surveillance Program – Baseline Report, In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care, and the DRIPA Action Plan Theme 3: Ending Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination as core guiding documents for action within the health authority.

² See Appendix 2 for more information.

- 2.4 The Parties will agree to work together at the Joint Committee to identify opportunities for Métis Chartered Communities to participate in the planning and delivery of health programs to Métis individuals, families and communities. Where new funding opportunities become available from the BC Ministry of Health, the Parties will look for opportunities to support Métis Chartered Communities to participate in health planning and delivery.

3. Principles

This Letter of Understanding is based upon the following principles:

- 3.1 Collaboration and inclusion
- 3.2 Mutual respect and cultural recognition
- 3.3 Transparency
- 3.4 Reciprocal accountability
- 3.5 Integrity
- 3.6 Sustainable access and quality health services

4. Priorities

- 4.1 This Letter of Understanding constitutes a framework in which the Parties will work together to increase the influence of the Métis Nation British Columbia in decisions related to health services that impact Métis individuals, families and communities within the Vancouver Coastal Health region (see map in Appendix 3). This framework encompasses new approaches to how Métis health services may be initiated and how Métis Chartered Communities and citizens are meaningfully engaged in planning with Vancouver Coastal Health through the Joint Committee and development of a LOU workplan.
- 4.2 The Parties will support the Métis Chartered Communities to maximize their capacity to meaningfully participate in the planning and delivery of health programs to Métis individuals, families and communities.
- 4.3 Recognizing the importance of the Métis Social Determinants of Health, the Parties will seek to improve the health outcomes for Métis individuals, families and communities by effective shared decision-making and shared accountability that will (a) reduce the perceived barriers and (b) increase access to health services.
- 4.4 Métis Nation British Columbia will participate and influence Joint Committee supporting the health and wellness of Métis people within the Vancouver Coastal Health region
- 4.5 The Parties will use a cooperative, collaborative approach to improving the health status of Métis individuals, families and communities through the design, delivery and evaluation of health services.

5. Process

- 5.1 The President and Chief Executive Officer of VCH, Vice President of VCH Indigenous Health, Minister of Health of MNBC, and Senior Technicians of MNBC will meet regularly to assess progress, address issues, and confirm the priority areas of focus contemplated in this LOU.

- 5.2 The Vice President of VCH Indigenous Health and Minister of Health of MNBC will be the senior officials responsible for strategic implementation of this LOU and will create and lead the Joint Committee.
- 5.3 Each party will identify operational leads to create an annual work plan outlining key projects and deliverables related to the priority areas of work under this LOU. The work plan will be revisited and revised annually, as mutually agreed by the parties.
- 5.4 Each party will assemble project team(s) to advance the key projects and deliverables outlined in the work plan contemplated in subparagraph (3) above.
- 5.5 Métis Nation British Columbia acknowledges that VCH is a public sector body subject to, among other things, the funding and reporting requirements of the Ministry of Health, public procurement requirements and its mandate as a regional health board.
- 5.6 The Parties will work to identify the available human, financial and capital resources (both internal and external) required to achieve the purpose of this Letter of Understanding.

6. Dispute Resolution

- 6.1 The focus of the dispute resolution process is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Métis individuals, families and communities.
- 6.2 In the event of a dispute between Métis Nation British Columbia and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority with respect to the interpretation, application or implementation of this Letter of Understanding, if the Joint Committee is unable to resolve the dispute, the issue will be passed to the respective signatories within the Parties for resolution.
- 6.3 If requested, culturally informed mediation processes may include a Sharing Circle and/or Métis Elders as participants and mediator.




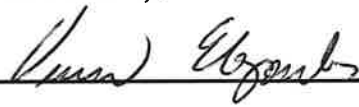
7. Term

- 7.1 The Term of the Letter of Understanding will be four years from the date of its signing.
- 7.2 The Letter of Understanding may be reviewed, strengthened, and renewed with written consent of both Parties.
- 7.3 Either Party may terminate this Letter of Understanding providing sixty days written notice including the reason for the termination.

8. Nature of LOU

This LOU is not contractual in nature and neither this LOU nor any discussion of this LOU shall bind any party or create any legal or other obligations relating to the matters herein contemplated. No binding agreement shall exist between the parties with respect to any subject matter covered by this LOU unless and until the parties have properly and duly executed definitive agreements, which may arise from or in furtherance of this LOU.

Dated on the 24 day of November, 2022:

 _____ Lissa Smith President Métis Nation British Columbia	 _____ Dr. Penny Ballem Board Chair Vancouver Coastal Health Authority
<i>Witnessed By:</i>  _____ Louis De Jaegar Minister of Health Métis Nation British Columbia	<i>Witnessed By:</i>  _____ Vivian Eliopoulos President and CEO Vancouver Coastal Health Authority

Appendix 1

Métis Nation British Columbia Backgrounder

Métis Nation British Columbia was established in 1996, and continues to evolve today as an accountable governance structure, working on behalf of the 89,405 Métis people in BC (2016 Census). In BC there are currently thirty-nine identified Métis Chartered Communities with registered community members, in seven regions throughout BC. The provincial Board of Directors of MNBC, along with the Métis Women of BC (MW-BC) and the Métis Youth of BC (MY-BC) are elected by Métis Citizens through provincial mail-in elections.

The Board of Directors consists of seven (7) Regional Directors, a provincial Women's Representative and a provincial Youth Representative, Vice President and President. Métis Nation BC has three (3) levels of governance, which include: the thirty-nine (39) Chartered Communities, seven (7) Regional Governance Councils and the MNBC Board of Directors.



In May 2006 MNBC signed a historic bilateral agreement with the Provincial Government. The Métis Nation Relationship Accord (MNRA) provides the framework for the Province of BC and for MNBC to strengthen existing relationships, including those formed by the Tripartite Self-Government Negotiations (TSN) Process. The Accord also provides support to move forward collaboratively to close the gap in the quality of life of Métis Citizens in relation to Non-Aboriginal residents of BC. The MNRA highlights Health as one of the seven priorities.



MÉTIS NATION RELATIONSHIP ACCORD II



WHEREAS the history of Canada has been greatly influenced by the Métis people who emerged in west central North America with their own language (Michif), culture, traditions, and self-government structures;

AND WHEREAS Métis people have played an important role in the history of Canada, guiding the early explorers and working as fur traders;

AND WHEREAS these Métis people refer to themselves, and are referred to by others, as the Métis Nation;

AND WHEREAS this recognition of the participation of the Métis people in the development of Canada is noted in section 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982, which states that the Aboriginal peoples of Canada includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada;

AND WHEREAS the Supreme Court of Canada has declared that Métis people, including those residing in BC, are included and recognized under section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867;

AND WHEREAS at the First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal Issues in Kelowna on November 25, 2005, First Ministers committed to strengthening relationships with Aboriginal people based on mutual respect, responsibility and sharing as well as collaboratively working with Aboriginal people in order to close the gap in the quality of life for Aboriginal people in Canada;

AND WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia and Métis Nation British Columbia signed the Métis Nation Relationship Accord in May 2006 specifically to strengthen relationships with Métis people and close the gap in the quality of life for Métis people in British Columbia, and now wish to renew and build upon that Accord;

Now therefore the Parties agree as follows:

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE MÉTIS NATION RELATIONSHIP ACCORD II

- .. Continue to strengthen existing relationships based on mutual respect, responsibility and sharing.
- .. Continue to improve engagement, coordination, information sharing and collaboration.
- .. Continue to work toward meeting the commitments of the First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal issues as they pertain to Métis people and their aspirations to close the gap on the quality of life between Métis people and other British Columbians.

2. SUBJECT MATTERS FOR THE MÉTIS NATION RELATIONSHIP ACCORD II PROCESS

The Parties agree on the following as a preliminary list of subject matters for the Métis Nation Relationship Accord II process. The Parties recognize that some work is already being undertaken in these areas and these efforts provide a foundation for enhanced work:

- .. Children and Families
- .. Education (Lifelong Learning) and Training
- .. Economic Opportunities (Including Procurement Opportunities with Crown Corporations)
- .. Health (Community, Family, Individual)
- .. Housing

- .. Information sharing
- .. Justice
- .. Métis Identification and Data Collection
- .. Wildlife Stewardship

Additional topics may be added at the request of the Parties to the agreement.

3. THE MÉTIS NATION RELATIONSHIP ACCORD II PROCESS

The Parties agree to continue to work toward the 2005 First Ministers' Meeting commitments and when appropriate, utilize a tripartite process in order to implement the objectives of the Métis Nation Relationship Accord II.

To support this relationship, the Parties to the agreement will each appoint two senior officials. These officials shall constitute the Métis Nation Relationship Accord II Secretariat. The Secretariat's primary roles will be to encourage the implementation of the provisions of the Accord and to review the progress of the implementation on an ongoing basis.

The Secretariat will assist in the coordination of strategies designed to address the social and economic gaps and arrange meetings on subject matters listed in section 2. Each Party will have the responsibility to ensure that relevant representatives will be in attendance based on the agenda topic.

Once a year, the Parties will make best efforts to convene a meeting between the President of the Métis Nation British Columbia and the Province of British Columbia as represented by the Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation.

The Parties agree that the Métis Nation Relationship Accord II process will continue to support the overall multilateral process agreed to at the First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal Issues in November, 2005.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

The Secretariat will prepare a joint progress report on results achieved under the Accord no later than March 31st each year, which the Parties will post on the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and Métis Nation British Columbia websites.

5. GENERAL

The Métis Nation Relationship Accord II process will also recognize and respect existing bilateral and tripartite processes that are in place between the Parties.

For greater certainty, nothing in this Accord changes, affects, infringes on, or limits existing bilateral and tripartite processes now in place between the Parties but is intended to complement and enhance existing dialogues.

This Accord does not recognize, deny, define, affect or limit any Aboriginal rights within the meaning of Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

The Parties acknowledge the Government of Canada also has an important role to play in closing the gap in quality of life for Métis people in British Columbia. The Parties will work diligently to engage the Government of Canada while maintaining their shared commitment to progress towards the objectives of this agreement Accord.

Signed this 16th day of November in the year 2016.

On Behalf of the
Province of British Columbia

On Behalf of the
Province of British Columbia

On Behalf of the
Métis Nation British Columbia

THE HONOURABLE JOHN RUSTAD
Minister of Aboriginal Relations
and Reconciliation

MARC DALTON
Parliamentary Secretary for Métis Relations

CLARA MORIN DAL COL
President, Métis Nation British Columbia

Appendix 2

Vancouver Coastal Health Authority Roles and Responsibilities

Vancouver Coastal Health Authority's roles and responsibilities according to the purpose and description under the Health Authorities Act. Section 5(1) and Section 5(2) which states that:

“(1) The purposes of a board are as follows:

- (a) To develop and implement a regional health plan that includes
 - (i) The health services provided in the region, or in a part of the region,
 - (ii) The type, size and location of facilities in the region,
 - (iii) The programs for the delivery of health services provided in the region,
 - (iv) The human resource requirements under the regional health plan, and
 - (v) The making of reports to the minister on the activities of the board in carrying out its purposes
- (b) To develop policies, set priorities, prepare and submit budgets to the minister and allocate resources for the delivery of health services, in the region, under the regional health plan;
- (c) To administer and allocate grants made by the government for the provision of health services in the region;
- (d) To deliver regional services through its employees or to enter into agreements with the government or other public or private bodies for the delivery of those services by those bodies;
- (e) [Repealed 2002-61-4] therefore not applicable;
- (f) To develop and implement regional standards for the delivery of health services in the region;
- (g) To monitor, evaluate and comply with Provincial and regional standards and ensure delivery of specified services applicable to the region.

(2) In Carrying out its purposes, a board must give due regard to the Provincial standards and specified services.”

Appendix 3

Métis Individuals, Families and Communities within the Vancouver Coastal Health Region

The two Métis Chartered Communities, Powell River Métis Society and North Fraser Métis Association, located in the Vancouver Coastal region are shown below:

