

All Party Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use, and Addictions Meeting Minutes

Date: November 26, 2024

Time: 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Committee Members: John Abbott, Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Joedy Wall, Jim McKenna, Jordan Brown, Perry Trimper

Officials: John McGrath, Niki Legge, Tara Power, David Coffin, Stephanie Wold, Bradley George

1. The committee approved minutes approved from:

- October 4, 2024
- October 28, 2024
- October 30, 2024
- October 31, 2024

2. Presentation – Chief Jenny Brake, Qalipu First Nation

- Chief Brake gave a background of the band and communities, which includes approximately 25,000 members from St. Alban's to the Northern Peninsula.
- Chief Brake noted that the federal program, Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) provides funding for mental health services with direct payment for counselling, coverage of prescription medications and medical transportation.
- She discussed the mental health and addictions challenges as well as historical/intergenerational trauma and the importance of culturally-relevant treatment to support improved outcomes for Indigenous people.
- She noted that while the band has a good relationship with NLHS's Western Zone and Central Zone where many of their members reside, there are more opportunities for partnership between the band and the Provincial Government and NLHS to deliver culturally relevant mental health and addictions services.

Other challenges include:

- Project-based funding is something that is heavily relied on.
- It feels like Indigenous communities are being consulted after, not engaged with during development processes. There is a need for both. It is therefore difficult to build trust, which presents obstacles to working together.
- Medical students and nurses cannot find employment back in their communities.
- There is still existing stigma and shame with identifying as Indigenous.

Recommendations to the Committee:

- Medical students require the knowledge to provide culturally-sensitive care.
- Hospital staff need more education and training (e.g., contacting an elder when someone reaches out for help) for providing care.

- Continue to engage the band in the care of Indigenous patients.
- There is a need for a culturally-relevant addictions treatment centre, which does not require flying out-of-province.

3. Action Items

- Secretariat to follow up with an additional presenter recommended by committee member.
- To circulate a draft of the final report of members' recommendations for review mid-December.