

**British Columbia Aboriginal Network on
Disability Society (BCANDS)**



National Indigenous Federal Accessibility Legislation Consultation

January, 2017 – March 2017



BCANDS Accessibility Consultation Report

January 2017 – March 2017

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1) Preamble

In 2016, the Government of Canada committed to develop new accessibility legislation to promote equality of opportunity and the increased inclusion and participation for all Canadians living with disabilities or functional limitations. As part of the development of this new legislation, the government actively engaged individuals and groups, through public consultation and on-line surveys across Canada.

The rate of disabilities experienced by the Indigenous population of Canada is twice that of the general population at around 30%. Disparities facing the Indigenous population of Canada in the areas of disability and health services, social and economic inclusion, accessible communities, housing, transportation, gender, etc. can be best described as a national epidemic. Indigenous individuals and families living with disabilities not only face these disparities, but also have to deal with the additional barriers and / or discrimination living with a disability and being of Indigenous ancestry can too often be seen.

In Canada, there are 619 First Nation communities, 53 Inuit communities and 5 provincial Métis organizations. The Indigenous population of Canada is one of the fastest growing populations in the Nation. Conservatively estimated there are approximately 1.5 million people in Canada who identify as Indigenous. Understanding this, and using the disability rate of 30%, we can conservatively estimate, there are over 450,000 Indigenous individuals living with a disability, both on and off-reserve in Canada today.

Ensuring a strong, clear and representative Indigenous voice speaks to, and recognizes the unique disability related needs and priorities of Indigenous people. This Indigenous voice is a priority for the government in the development of new legislation. To that end, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) has contracted with three Indigenous organizations, ending in march 2018, to conduct federal accessibility legislation consultations across Canada. The British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) is one of those agencies.

For more information on Canada's First Nations communities, please visit:

<http://fnp-ppn.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca/fnp/Main/Search/SearchFN.aspx?lang=eng>

For more information on Canada's Inuit communities, please visit:

<https://www.itk.ca/about-canadian-inuit/>

For more information on Canada's Métis, please visit: <http://www.metisnation.ca/>

For more information on the Government of Canada's Accessibility Consultations, please visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/planned-accessibility-legislation/consultation-legislation.html>

For more information on Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), please visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development.html>

2) **The British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society**

The British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, or as more commonly known as BCANDS, is an award winning, Indigenous disability and health, not-for-profit Society. Incorporated in 1991, BCANDS is the “stand alone” Indigenous organization of its type in Canada.

BCANDS oversees a variety of health and disability related programs and services including, but not limited to:

- Indigenous Disability Case Management Services;
- Indigenous Registered Disability Saving Plan (RDSP) Navigation Program;
- First Nation Persons with Disabilities (PWD) / Monthly Nutritional; Supplement (MNS) Adjudication Program;
- First Nations Health Information;
- Coordination / Collaboration with Indigenous, Federal and Provincial Governments in relation to Indigenous disability.

BCANDS Mission

“Supporting the unique and comprehensive disability, health and resource needs of Indigenous persons and organizations across British Columbia, through relevant, timely and accessible client services”

For more information on BCANDS, please visit: www.bcands.bc.ca

3) **Consultation Introduction and Methodology**

In mid 2016, BCANDS and ESDC began the initial conversation about the possibility of BCANDS performing a role in the consultation process regarding the new accessibility legislation initiated by Minister Qualtrough.

In late December 2016, the BCANDS / ESDC contract was finalized and the BCANDS Federal Accessibility Coordinator was hired by the Society and commenced responsibilities beginning in early January, 2017 . The BCANDS Coordinator position, due to contract limitations, will work full-time from January 2017 to March 2017, then move to a three day a week schedule beginning April 1st, 2017 and ending on March 31st, 2018.

In anticipation of the contract with ESDC and prior to the commencement of the BCANDS Federal Accessibility Coordinator, Practicum Students from the University of Victoria School of Nursing researched, updated and collated contact information relating to all First Nations communities in Canada. This was done to stream-line the consultation process for the Coordinator.

After orientation to the government’s accessibility consultation process and work to date, various document reviews and significant research into the current Indigenous issues, polices and

practices affecting the Indigenous population of Canada, the Coordinator developed two accessibility surveys. These surveys have been and continue to be sent to government agencies and to First Nations communities primarily in Ontario, as the first step of the BCANDS consultation process. At the time of this report additional surveys and responses were still being received and will be reviewed and reported on during the 2017 – 2018 fiscal year reporting cycle.

3.1) BCANDS Accessibility Survey – Government / Stakeholder Survey

Within Indigenous communities in Canada there are two primary government bodies that provide funding support and policy direction that impact Indigenous individuals and families living with disabilities, these are:

- Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC); and
- First Nations and Inuit Health (FNIH) – Health Canada

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, provides program funding and policy in relation to several areas within Canada’s Indigenous communities. These programs include but are not limited to:

- Transfer payments to First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and Northerners and their organizations for essential community services;
- Economic Development;
- Education;
- Environment and Natural Resources;
- Infrastructure and Housing.

For more information on Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, please visit:

<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010002/1100100010021>

First Nations and Inuit Health – Health Canada, provides health related program funding and policy in relation to several areas within Canada’s Indigenous communities. These programs include, but are not limited to:

- Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP);
- Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve;
- Fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects (FAS/FAE);
- Maternal health;
- Diabetes prevention and other chronic diseases;
- Injury prevention;
- Home and Community Care;
- Promoting Healthy Living through nutrition and physical activity;
- Aboriginal Diabetes Initiatives;
- Injury Prevention;
- Brighter futures;
- National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program;
- Building healthy communities (mental health);

- Alcohol, drug and solvent abuse;
- Indian residential schools;
- Suicide prevention;
- Crisis management;
- Non-Insured Health Benefits;
- Innu healing strategy.

** Note: In British Columbia the First Nations Health Authority has assumed responsibility for services formally delivered by First Nations Inuit Health – Health Canada.*

For more information on First Nations and Inuit Health – Health Canada, please visit:

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniiah-spnia/index-eng.php>

Government / Stakeholder Survey

From January 2017 to March, 2017, BCANDS has contacted the various INAC and Health Canada regions across Canada. Through this contact BCANDS has sent 137 surveys by email to various INAC employees and 341 surveys to various Health Canada employees.

The survey asked seven key questions (condensed).

- 1) What in your view, can be done at the federal level to improve services and access to care for Indigenous persons living with disabilities?
- 2) What are the limitations of current federal government programs that impact Indigenous persons living with disabilities.
- 3) What in your opinion would be a strategy to ensure coordinated and timely access to relevant information on programs, services and opportunities for persons with disabilities within the federal jurisdiction?
- 4) When thinking about your Ministry how would you describe your intergovernmental relationships and how those relationships incorporate the needs of Indigenous person living with disabilities in program funding and delivery. If relationships are limited how would you improve them?
- 5) What potential / positive change do you see new Federal Accessibility Legislation bringing to Indigenous communities and Indigenous persons living with disabilities in Canada?
- 6) When the legislation comes into effect, who should be responsible to monitor and ensure compliance within Indigenous communities?
- 7) Please provide any other insight or comments you have in relation to areas of concern, potential outcomes, best practice or other, as it relates to Indigenous disability within the federal jurisdiction.

Government / Stakeholder Survey Themes

The following is an overview of the top themes emerging from the Government / Stakeholder Survey.

Question 1: What in your view, can be done at the federal level to improve services and access to care for Indigenous persons living with disabilities?

BCANDS received a variety of responses in relation to this question however a number of dominant themes emerged. These themes were:

- **Funding / community needs** – 40 % of the respondents indicated that communities and programs required increased funding in order to meet the needs of the membership, this included funding increases in the areas of programs / services and capital projects;
- **Increased coordination / information sharing** - 30 % of the respondents indicated that better coordination between INAC, Health Canada and the provinces / territories was required to eliminate jurisdictional issues and ensure adequate programs and services and relevant information sharing with communities;
- **Specialized services / training** - 15 % of the respondents identified that increased training for government employees to work effectively with communities, in addition to the increased availability of specialized personnel and services , i.e. OT / PT, home care, respite care in community and comparable to services available within the non-Indigenous sector.

Question 1 - Potential Recommendations From Respondents Input:

- 1) A review of INAC and FNIH programs, policies and funding models available to and affecting First Nations communities and their membership living with a disability be conducted to identify areas of redundancy and inadequately. Review of funding levels available to First Nations communities and the formula currently, particularly in the areas of infrastructure, social housing, and programs utilized by persons with disabilities. Consideration to move from a population based funding model to needs based funding model.
- 2) Federal government departments to begin to work more cohesively in relation to on-reserve disability issues, concerns and priorities. This includes increased and ongoing coordination between INAC, Health Canada and other federal government departments to identify gaps in current models, and to eliminate mandate and departmental jurisdiction issues. i.e. “we don’t do that” From this expanded relationship increase collaboration with the provincial / territorial governments to ensure a full-range of disability related services and supports are available to the individuals and families living with disabilities and residing in Canada’s First Nation communities.

“A major challenge is the jurisdictional ambiguities between many layers of government local Indigenous governments, provincial government, federal government, and even the many different departments within government that generally do not function in a cohesive and concerted way to help support individuals. Second, it is important to recognize that Indigenous peoples already suffer from huge power imbalances and ongoing structural and overt discrimination and racism, including in accessing care, and those Indigenous persons with disabilities are therefore disadvantaged in multiple ways due to the way in which they are treated and cared for (or not) by society. Therefore structural changes and policies are needed to promote inclusion of Indigenous persons and particularly those with disabilities” Health Canada Employee

Question 2 - What are the limitations of current federal government programs that impact Indigenous persons living with disabilities

BCANDS received a variety of responses in relation to this question, however a number of dominant themes emerged. These themes were:

- **Funding / program needs** – similar to question 1, 55 % of the respondents indicated that communities and programs required increased funding in order to meet the needs of the membership living with a disability, particularly in the areas of Home Care and Non-Insured Health Benefits;
- **Housing:** - 25% of respondents indicated that current housing policies and the availability of safe, adequate and accessible housing within First Nation communities, for individuals and families living with a disability, was a priority area;
- **Communication / Departmental Coordination** – 15% of respondents indicated that lack of federal government coordination and sharing of information was a priority area.

Question 2 - Potential Recommendations:

- 1) As with question # 1, a review of INAC and FNIH programs, policies and funding models available to and affecting First Nations communities and their membership living with a disability be conducted to identify areas of redundancy and inadequately. Review of funding levels available to First Nations communities and the formula currently utilized to determine, including Home and Community Care and the Non-Insured health benefits Program.
- 2) Available, safe, and accessible housing is a critical issue for many First Nations communities, particularly for the membership living with disabilities. A review of current federal government on-reserve housing policy, coupled with a Nation to Nation housing needs assessment is recommended. Further, all capital, housing and infrastructure funding available to First Nation communities should be required to incorporate the accessibility lens, with appropriate funding available to the Nation to ensure and address accessibility issues within their community.
- 3) As with Question # 1, federal government departments to begin to work more cohesively in relation to on-reserve disability issues / concerns and priorities.

“Housing on reserve is a national embarrassment and should have increased availability and better standards. Disabled people on reserve without their own vehicle are disadvantaged for acquiring basic necessities such as groceries on their own as well as transportation to and from doctors appointments, as well as ensuring they have proper care for after procedures.”

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Employee

Question 3 - What in your opinion would be a strategy to ensure coordinated and timely access to relevant information on programs, services and opportunities for persons with disabilities within the federal jurisdiction?

Question 3 provided no clear themes from the respondents in relation to ensuring access to information. Input ranged from using social media to not using social media, from utilizing hospitals, banks and grocery stores for information dissemination to using the on-reserve Home and Community Care program as the communication hub.

Question 3 - Potential Recommendation:

It was clear from the respondents that no one method of communication was favoured over the other and that perhaps a formal communication strategy is not currently in place or is underutilized by the various federal government departments working within the Indigenous sector. A communication needs assessment should be conducted with First Nations communities across Canada in relation to identifying best methods to receive information from the government, as it pertains to available programs and services and those specifically relating to individuals and families living with a disability. As with prior recommendation, a coordinated approach through federal government departments will be necessary to ensure all information is available.

“Have hospitals and health care providers tell people with disabilities what services are offered to them, have information in important areas such as grocery stores, banks, and churches”. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Employee

Question 4 - When thinking about your Ministry how would you describe your intergovernmental relationships and how those relationships incorporate the needs of Indigenous person living with disabilities in program funding and delivery. If relationships are limited how would you improve them?

BCANDS received a variety of responses in relation to this question, however two themes emerged. These themes were:

- **No Coordination** – 40% of the respondents indicated that inter-departmental communications and collaborations were either minimal, non-existent or done on an ad hoc basis;
- **Difficulty coordinating with First Nations / provincial departments:** - 20% of the respondent indicated that they experienced difficulty when attempting to reach out to First Nation communities and provincial departments;

Question 4 – Potential Recommendation

- 1) Create inter-departmental committees and working groups specifically addressing issues pertaining to Indigenous persons living with disabilities while ensuring the involvement of Indigenous persons living with disabilities on those committees.

“Currently any collaboration depends on good will, chance, relationships between individuals working in government. One employee told me that their counterpart from another department working on the same file would never return this person's calls. What can one do? Go to the director, get him/her to talk to the director of the other department and get them to collaborate. It cannot be so haphazard. There needs to be intersectoral approaches integrated into the way government operates, and even restructuring so that all the levers are under a single authority so that they have power to act” Health Canada Employee

Question 5 - What potential / positive change do you see new Federal Accessibility Legislation bring to Indigenous communities and Indigenous persons living with disabilities in Canada?

BCANDS received a variety of responses in relation to this question, however two themes emerged. These themes were:

- **Improved services / better life for disabled** – 74% of the respondents indicated that they felt that the introduction of new accessibility legislation would see improvements for

Indigenous individuals and families living with disabilities in the areas of employment, overall health care, improved infrastructure, increased disability related funding and services and overall community inclusion;

- **Uncertain of Change** – 26% of the respondents indicated that they felt uncertain or did not know if any positive would be seen.

“Will be more lawsuits to force governments & bands to “do the right thing.” Health Canada Employee

Question 6 - When the legislation comes into effect, who should be responsible to monitor and ensure compliance within Indigenous communities?

Common themes in relation to this question were:

- 53% of Respondents indicated that Health Canada (FNIH) should be responsible;
- 17% of Respondents indicated that INAC and Health Canada (FNIH) should share responsibility;
- 11% of Respondents indicated that an Indigenous / First Nation organization should be responsible ;
- 17% of respondents indicated that it should be a joint responsibility between INAC and the provinces / or a collaboration of various government agencies;
- 2% of Respondents provided no answer.

Question 7 - Please provide any other insight or comments you have in relation to areas of concern, potential outcomes, best practice or other, as it relates Indigenous disability within the federal jurisdiction.

Some examples of comments / recommendations received under Question 7:

“If funding and related support is not increased to First Nations communities we will see more lawsuits like Jordan's Principle. I have advised my managers of this but they have chosen to do nothing. The Federal Government will never win a legal case against First Nations groups as we have legal responsibilities to them (Treaties) as well as Human Rights legislation which is being violated by government inaction. Any additional legislation will bring this to light. The best option is for MoUs to be signed so that provinces/territories and First Nations organizations can deliver needed services in coordination and the Federal government pays for them. That would be wins all around”

“I worry that the only way forward will be lawsuits, but hope some proactive work on the government’s behalf could prevent this”

“Were First Nations consulted for their input?”

“Need to ensure funds provided are being used for the intended purposes”

“Indigenous Peoples need to direct the development of anything that affects them (e.g., a federal accessibility legislation)”

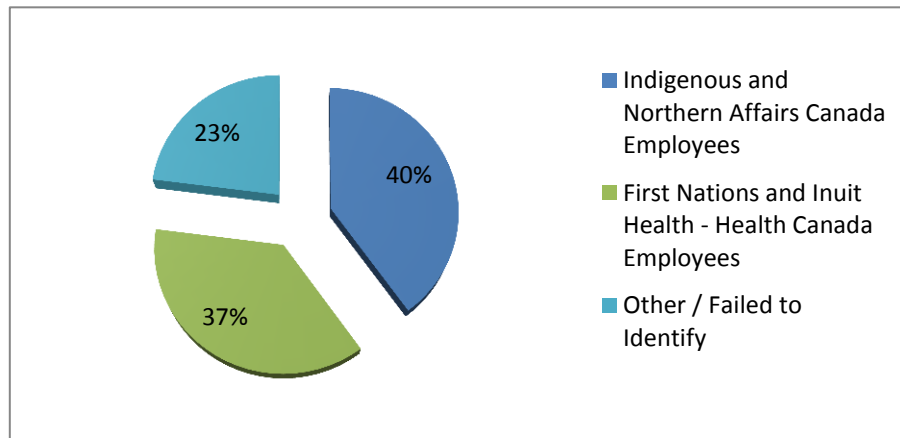
“A good first step, but the government should not follow only process measures but actually attempt to get into communities and urban areas and find those living with disabilities and speak with them and determine whether this new law is actually making a noticeable impact in their lives - and if so, how, and if not, why the same status quo in spite of the "on paper" changes - how come this doesn't reach them and what would make their lives better.”

“The aging population should also be addressed. As First Nations people are living longer, many have to leave their homes/reserves to live in personal care homes due to disabilities caused by deteriorating health (diabetes, amputations, dementia, etc.). Funding to assist in establishing professional care in the home or personal care homes on reserve for as long as possible. Training people on-reserve and providing funding for salaries for those caring for the elderly/disabled.”

“Community based/ flexible funding/ specialized services and resources/ opportunity for pilot projects to see what works/ training opportunities for band members who have first hand knowledge of what it's like to live in the community. Services must be equivalent and comparable to what's offered off reserve. Keeping in mind community uniqueness/ cultural appropriate.”

“Partner with provincial programs and services.”

Breakdown of Government Survey Respondents



The BCANDS Government Accessibility Legislation Survey can be accessed on-line at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BCANDS>

3.2) Indigenous Community Survey

From January, 2017 to March, 2017, BCANDS began contacting First Nation communities, on-reserve departments and Indigenous organizations both through telephone interviews and surveys, connecting with 42 communities and agencies and sending out over 100 surveys.

The Indigenous Community survey asked seven key questions (condensed).

- 1) What strategies should be developed for Indigenous persons with disabilities that would assist in their ability to be active and included members of their communities, economically, socially and within the built environment?
- 2) What, in your opinion would be the best way for the federal government to engage and include Indigenous persons living with disabilities in the planning, development and implementation of disability related policies and programs?.
- 3) What do you feel are the main barriers to accessibility that community members face within Indigenous communities across Canada? Example - lack of sidewalks or ramps for wheelchair accessibility, programs, services, respite care, NIHB, etc.?
- 4) In your opinion, what would it take to fix those barriers?
- 5) What barriers, in relation to attitudes and prejudices, face Indigenous persons living with disabilities in Canada?
- 6) What actions do you think could be taken by the federal government that would help reduce stigma and promote the inclusion of all people living with disabilities, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous?
- 7) In relation to accessing information about available disability related services and programs, how does your community receive information? What would be the best way for your community to receive information?
- 8) If you could send ONE message to your community's leadership regarding disability issues / services in your community - what would that be?
- 9) Why should OR why shouldn't Indigenous communities in Canada fall under new federal disability legislation?



Pictured left: The Honourable Minister Carla Qualtrough and BCANDS Board President Stephen Lytton at Accessibility consultation in Victoria, British Columbia

Indigenous Community Survey Themes

The following is an overview of the top themes emerging from the Indigenous Community Survey.

Question 1: What strategies should be developed for Indigenous persons with disabilities that would assist in their ability to be active and included members of their communities, economically, socially and within the built environment?

BCANDS received a variety of responses in relation to this question, with respondents indicating multiple areas however a number of emerged. These themes were:

- **Fully Accessible Communities** – 50% of the respondents indicated that communities and buildings need to be built to be fully accessible / ensure accessible construction is mandated in the community;
- **Increased training / access to disability related supports and services** – 49% of respondents indicated that increased training for staff on what is available for persons with disabilities, as well as increased availability of current programs including, access to computers / technology, nursing, medical, assessments and respite care;
- **Transportation** – 31% of the respondents indicated the need for accessible and available transportation for their community members living with disabilities;

Question 1 - Potential Recommendations:

- 1) Review of INAC, FNIH and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) policies and current requirements as it pertains to capital projects within Canada's First Nation communities. Ensure mandatory accessibility requirements for band social housing, band buildings and overall community infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, parks, etc.). Develop policy template in relation to VisitAble Housing within First Nations communities for distribution and inclusion in individual First Nation Housing policies across Canada.
- 2) Ability to adequately access respite care for families living with a disability is a priority area. A review of the FNIH Home and Community Care program and the INAC Assisted Living Program specifically in the area of respite services is recommended in coordination with First nations communities to identify barrier's, gaps and funding short-falls at it pertains to services for persons living with disabilities within Canada's First nation communities. Coordination with Indigenous, federal and provincial / territorial governments to ensure collaboration and coordination of services.
- 3) Access to accessible, reliable and consistent transportation continues to be a priority for many First Nations communities in Canada, particularly isolated, remote and semi-remote. Limited access to transportation impacts individuals and families living with disabilities in their ability to access necessary health and disability related services, shopping, recreation, voting and other activities. A First Nation specific transportation

strategy is recommended to be developed, in addition to a review of the FNIH – Non-Insured Health Benefits policy, specifically in the areas of what transportation is eligible under the current program and distance requirements (i.e. must reside 50 KM or more away from services to access program)

“My granddaughter has disabilities - trachea and g-tube for feeding. Needs 24-7 care and constant air compressor going along with many other equipment on an 'as needed' basis. For instance - kangaroo feeding pump, suction machine, nebulizer, oxygen, etc. It is very difficult for this mother to get out into the community to take part in any activities within the community that are social or economic.”

Question 2 - What, in your opinion would be the best way for the federal government to engage and include Indigenous persons living with disabilities in the planning, development and implementation of disability related policies and programs?

BCANDS received a variety of responses in relation to this question however one dominant theme emerged. This themes was:

- **Include those affected / First Nations communities** – 80% of the respondents indicated the development of any legislation must be done in participation and cooperation with First Nation individuals and families living with disabilities and First Nation community leadership.

Question 2 - Potential Recommendation:

- 1) Increased coordination and partnership with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and provincial Indigenous leadership for information sharing, understanding and collaboration as it relates to Indigenous disability issues within the federal sector and new accessibility legislation. In any consultation process engaged in by the federal government that does, or has the potential to impact Indigenous persons and communities, a representative percentage of those meeting should be held within Indigenous communities.

“Actually have persons that live on reserve participate in focus groups, etc. and actually listen to what they are saying and implement their recommendations.”

Question 3 - What do you feel are the main barriers to accessibility that community members face within Indigenous communities across Canada? Example - lack of sidewalks or ramps for wheelchair accessibility, programs, services, respite care, Non-Insured Health Benefits, etc.?

BCANDS received a variety of responses in relation to this question however two main themes emerged with respondents highlighting several areas in their responses, which were broken out below. These themes were:

- **Non-Insured Health Benefits** – 48% of the respondents indicated the current limitations of the Health Canada’s NIHB program particularly in the areas of the provision of disability related equipment and the programs restriction to only cover travel expenses related to medical appointments;

- **Lack of proper community infrastructure** - 52% of the respondents noted that infrastructure to ensure accessibility was often lacking, including no sidewalks, no elevators in two-story community buildings, no ramps, non-accessible housing, no accessible play / green space.
- **Limited access to programs specific to disability** – 35% of the respondents indicated that disability related programs and services were lacking or minimally provided including respite care, legal assistance, specialized services medical / disability navigation services, Jordan’s principle, nursing services, mental health, etc.

Question 3 – Potential Recommendation:

- 1) Review of the current limitations, gaps and barriers of Health Canada’s – Non-Insured Health Benefits Program from a disability lens, particularly in the areas of assessments, travel assistance and authorized travel appointments (medical appointments only, no support for disability related appointments)
- 2) As echoed with question 1, limited accessibility in communities, i.e. housing, roads, sidewalks, community buildings, accessible vehicles etc. continues to be a priority for many First Nations. A review of current infrastructure funding available to First Nations and criteria should be engaged with the intent of ensuring adequate funding support and guidance to relating to accessibility for all new infrastructure / development projects. Additionally, development and delivery of measures and support necessary to address historic community accessibility issues.
- 3) Lack of access to medical, nursing, mental health, respite and disability related supports continue to be a barrier for communities and individuals and families living with disabilities, particularly in rural and remote areas. A review of the current Health Canada and INAC home support / assisted living program, including funding limitations, should be conducted. Appropriate funding levels should be established to ensure First Nation communities have equal opportunities to attract and maintain key health and disability related personnel, and in some cases at levels higher than sectorial norm (depending on location of community and need). This would include but not be limited to: competitive wages and benefits, vacation and sick time replacement costs, training and transportation costs, benefits and pensions. Employee funding levels and associated costs should be, at a minimum, equal, but more likely higher, to similar positions within the federal and provincial government systems. This is necessary to minimize turnover of key disability and health related employees within First Nation communities and to improve the ongoing delivery of services available to individuals and families living with disabilities.

“Have to go too far to access anything, sidewalks are great, but not if they lead to nowhere”

Question 4 – In your opinion, what would it take to fix those barriers?

BCANDS received a variety of responses in relation to this question however two dominant themes emerged. These were:

Funding / infrastructure support – 80% of the respondents indicated that overall increases in funding for programs and services as well as funding supports to address community accessibility was required;

Training / awareness – Increase awareness and training in relation to accessibility and navigating community programs and services is required within First Nation communities and regarding those services accessed by Indigenous individuals and families living with a disability, away from their of their home community (doctors, home care, local health services, etc.).

Question 4 – Potential Recommendations

Please refer to recommendations outlined in question 3.

“Go live with the disabled for a while and then you tell me, the answers are evident.”

Question 5 – What barriers, in relation to attitudes and prejudices, face Indigenous persons living with disabilities in Canada?

In this question respondent overwhelmingly indicated that Indigenous people and Indigenous persons living with a disability were often to subject to discrimination and stereotyping. This includes:

- Medical professionals assuming Indigenous persons / Indigenous people living with a disability are drunk / on drugs when seeking assistance;
- Indigenous persons / Indigenous people living with a disability are looked upon as a lower status of person;
- Non-Indigenous population are afraid of Indigenous people;
- People are generally ignorant of Indigenous people / Indigenous people living with a disability;
- Indigenous people / Indigenous people living with a disability receive different treatment when accessing services compared to non-Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people living with a disability;
- People assume that all Indigenous people receive a lot of funding / money and all their needs covered through their Band or government.

“Double stigma for already a marginalized and racialized population”

Question 6 - What actions do you think could be taken by the federal government that would help reduce stigma and promote the inclusion of all people living with disabilities, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous?

Question 5 / 6 - Potential Recommendation

- 1) Limited statistical information is available in relation to Indigenous disability in Canada, The Indigenous population experience disability at a rate twice that of the non-Indigenous population of Canada, however little priority has been given this component of the disability sector. Increased coordination by federal and provincial government and increased collaboration in relation to the collection of information and statistical data relating to Indigenous disability is needed to accurately highlight this priority area, to create partnerships and collaborations and in doing so, create change.
- 2) Indigenous people in Canada are often subject of a negative “one brush paints all” mentality, this affects Indigenous people at all levels including indigenous persons living with a disability, both in how they are perceived and treated when accessing services. Federal and provincial governments have not actively worked to highlight Indigenous communities, organizations and Indigenous individuals living with disabilities and the essential and vital role they play, locally, provincial and nationally. Nor have governments actively worked to dispel the common myths often perpetuated about Indigenous people. It is recommended that the federal government work internally and externally with Indigenous and provincial / territorial partners to develop a strategy to address discrimination / stereotypes that negatively affect the Indigenous population of Canada including those living with disabilities.

“Develop and support policy / legislation that is inclusive for all people of Canada”

Question 7 - In relation to accessing information about available disability related services and programs, how does your community receive information? What would be the best way for your community to receive information?

Respondents indicated the following in relation to question 7.

- 55% - indicated that social media, radio or community newspapers / flyers should be utilized;
- 37% - indicated that email was the best methods for information sharing;
- 33% - indicated that they were uncertain or that their community had limited connectivity
- 22% - indicated that community leadership should be contacted and distribute information

Question 7 - Potential Recommendations

- 1) First Nation communities across Canada will have different needs / capabilities in relation to methods of receiving and sending relevant information particularly in remote communities. It is recommended that a communication needs assessment be conducted to identify best / preferred method(s) of contact. It is also recommended that the government of Canada coordinate and ensure the distribution of all relevant government (all federal departments) disability information and disability related funding opportunities through a centralized department, negating the need for communities to search potential disability related opportunities through a variety of Ministries. This would assist reducing the potential of communities missing opportunities such as the Enabling Accessibility Fund, which is minimally utilized and known within Indigenous communities.

“No information – Knowledge of available programs severely limited – no information sharing”

Question 8 - If you could send ONE message to your community's leadership regarding disability issues / services in your community - what would that be?

From Question 8 one dominant theme emerged, community leadership has to do more to assist their membership living with disability to be included, and to make disability issues, needs and solutions a priority.

“Leadership at all levels needs to think about inclusion – inclusion of the PWD and his / her family and how, specifically can we do this / provide for this? Leadership at all levels of government need to understand this needs to happen today – not tomorrow, not next year, but now.”

Question 9 - Why should OR why shouldn't Indigenous communities in Canada fall under new federal disability legislation?

The following was conveyed through Question 9.

- 50% of the respondents indicated that First nations should not be exempt from new federal accessibility legislation
- 25% of respondents indicated that the individual community / Nation should be allowed to determine their participation
- 25% of respondents indicated that they were unsure

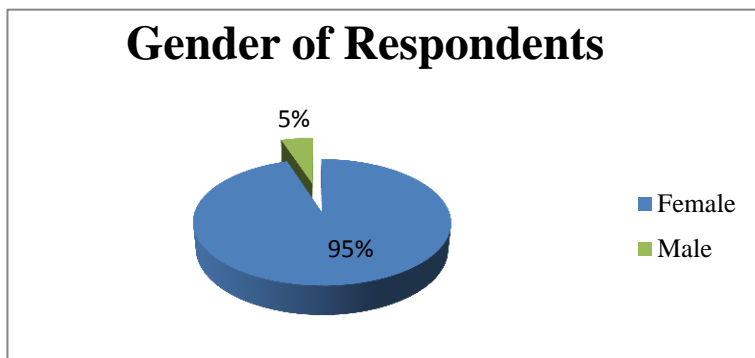
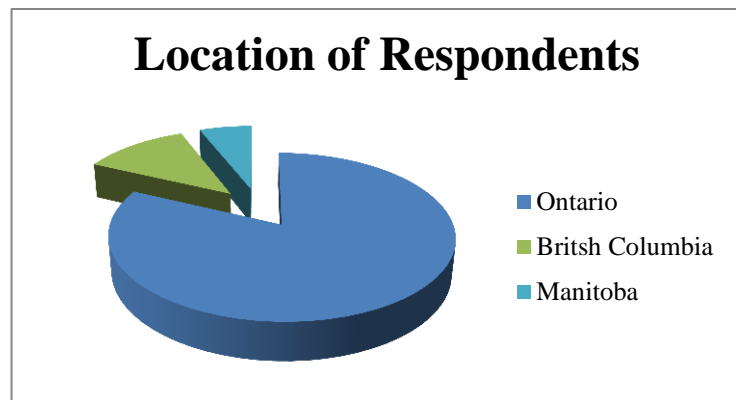
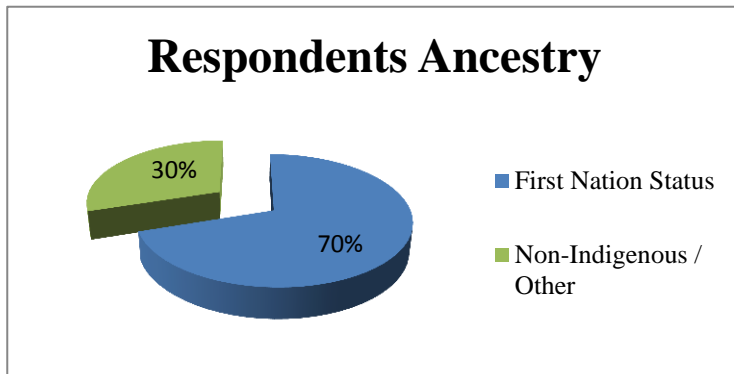
Question 9 - Potential Recommendations

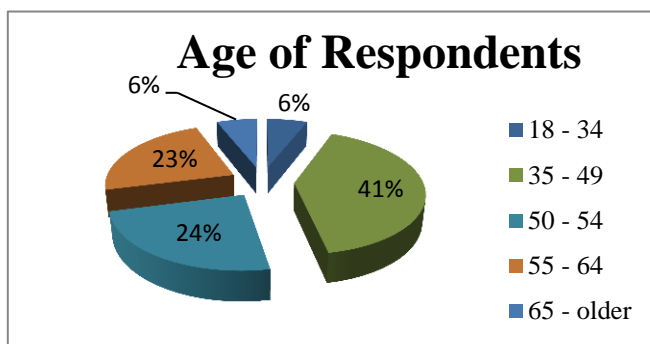
Although the majority of respondents indicated that Indigenous communities should fall under federal accessibility legislation, at this point, no recommendation can be made, however recommendations will be formulated as the consultation process continues. Some respondents indicated a hesitation to support new legislation as they felt that too many rules already apply to First Nations, while others pondered why accessibility requirements would not be required within their community for the benefit of their membership living with disabilities.

The BCANDS Indigenous Community Accessibility Survey can be accessed on-line at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BCANDS2>

Indigenous Survey Respondents Overview





4) Closing Observations

The consultation process to date has provided valuable information, however has been a point of some frustration seeing the coordinator having to contact departments, individuals and communities multiple times to gain some response / insight.

A general lack of priority / interest in relation to overall disability needs in First Nation communities and the accessibility consultation process, knowledge of it and participation in, has been noted.

As one senior government employee noted. “Having reviewed the survey, I do not believe we are part of the appropriate target group to contribute to this survey.” Despite the fact that, that federal department delivers / funds services to Indigenous communities and in all likelihood would be aware of some the barriers and opportunities that are present and experienced both in policy and service delivery.

That being said, as the BCANDS consultation process continues, it is anticipated that through the planned future engagements by BCANDS with Nations and governmental departments, awareness of the accessibility consultation and the new legislation and its importance, will grow, and in turn, increased participation and the collection of vital recommendations and insight relating to Indigenous disability within the federal jurisdiction.

Thank You!

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