

ALBERTA NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRES ASSOCIATION

NEW DAWN RISING PROJECT SUMMARY

PROJECT DATA

- Funding sources: Health Canada
- Project start date: January 1, 2009 End date: March 31, 2010

PROJECT SUMMARY

Divided in to two phases, The New Dawn Rising concept is best described as:

Phase 1:

In Phase 1, there are four objective areas to be completed as follows:

1. Environmental Scan
An environmental scan will be undertaken to a) identify and document what addictions programs and services are currently available for urban Aboriginal populations living with the impacts of process and substance addictions; and, b) identify and catalogue what research studies have been completed within the past five years that specifically address and/or focus on the impacts of addictions (all types) of urbanized Aboriginal peoples in Canada with a particularly target of Alberta-based populations. The results of the environmental scan will help to establish research targets, priorities and recommendations for future research where gaps in the current research knowledge exist and where further research is warranted. As well, the scan will help to establish the current continuum of addictions care available in Alberta for urban Aboriginal peoples which will aid in focusing on areas where the continuum is either weak or non-existent.
2. Community Readiness Assessment
A community readiness assessment will be done using the community readiness model assessment tool established through the work of the Tri-Ethnic Centre for Prevention Research of the Colorado State University in 1995. The targets for the assessment will be the 20 member Friendship Centres of the Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association (ANFCA) to help to identify the readiness of each Centre to begin addressing the addictions awareness and prevention needs in their respective communities. As well, the assessments will help to establish specific social marketing targets for awareness and prevention interventions for each urban Aboriginal community.

3. Cultural Sensitivity Assessment Tool Design

A cultural sensitivity assessment tool will be designed through the proposed project to help identify how, more specifically, Friendship Centres are culturally sensitive in their program and service design, development, implementation, delivery and evaluation processes. Friendship Centres have not, to date, taken the opportunity or time to document how they are culturally sensitive and/or appropriate in their program and service delivery efforts. Development of such a tool will also be useful and helpful to other agencies who serve high populations of Aboriginal or culturally diverse peoples, whether or not they are Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal in orientation.

4. Cultural Inquiry

As part of the Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association's (ANFCA) efforts to be culturally sensitive and/or appropriate, the proposed project will include a cultural inquiry exercise. Cultural inquiry is a process whereby individuals or groups of individuals follow cultural protocols steeped in the traditional and/or ceremonial predispositions of a cultural group (i.e. Cree, Stoney, Dene or Blackfoot, etc) to seek guidance and answers regarding how something may have been done historically within the cultural norms of that particular group. Some cultural groups use fasting or vision quest ceremonies while others use pipe ceremonies while yet others will use a combination of those two with other culture-group-specific efforts such as feasts. There are historic references to some inquiries taking up to four (4) days to retrieve and/or receive the answers to questions posed by individuals to the 'seers'. Seers are loosely defined as individuals who have the ability to 'channel' or 'see' information from the spirit world through their genetic (blood-ties) connections to their ancestors who may have held specific cultural knowledge requested. Because the member Centres of the ANFCA are scattered throughout Alberta, there will be a need to bring together a number of traditional Elders or experts from throughout the province in order to reflect and include the diverse cultures that exist.

Phase 2:

In Phase 2, there is one objective area to be completed and that is the development of a program framework for "A New Dawn Rising" Wellness Program to address addictions in urban Alberta Aboriginal populations. The framework will be based on an integration of the results of the environmental scan, community readiness assessment, cultural sensitivity assessment and cultural inquiry objectives undertaken in phase 1. The exciting aspect of this proposed project is that it's never been done before in the way it is being proposed. It is a way of bridging the scientific and program expertise of the euro-centric Canadian mainstream with the cultural and spiritual knowledge and connections of Indigenous peoples to find new 'common-ground' on which to stand and deliver addictions prevention programming for urban Aboriginal peoples.

PROJECT GOALS

This project will focus on three long-term goals:

- a. Reduce the incidence and prevalence of illicit drug use among urban Aboriginal populations throughout Alberta where Friendship Centres exist.
- b. Reduce the negative impacts of addictions through the delivery of programs and/or services offered through Friendship Centres.
- c. Increase the number and effectiveness of wellness-based programs and services offered through Friendship Centres in Alberta that address addictions among urban Aboriginal populations.

This will contribute to achieving the objectives of the Drug Strategy Community Initiatives Fund by facilitating the development of community and provincial-based solutions for responding to illicit drug use.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- To complete the *Environmental Scan*, which reviews current research, programs and services available that address the impacts of addictions (both processes and substances) on urban Aboriginal populations in Alberta.
- To complete the *Community Readiness Assessment* that engages Friendship Centres and their communities regarding their overall awareness and/or willingness to address addictions among urban Aboriginal populations.
- To complete the *Aboriginal Culture-based Programs Framework* that outlines culturally appropriate and significant methods for engaging the urban Aboriginal population in wellness and addiction prevention programming.
- To complete the design of the *New Dawn Rising: An Urban Aboriginal Wellness Program* proposal and to secure support for the concept by public and private funding agencies.

The completion of each of these objectives will contribute to the successful achievement of the goals previously described by creating a strong foundation upon which an integrated strategy can be implemented.