

Project Update

February 2020



What's included?

MNA through Shining Mountains launches D&S project in Red Deer, AB

Shining Mountains Living Community Services lead DBS testing in Alberta



Métis community leaders, Elder and D&S team members present at Red Deer D&S project launch September 19th, 2020

DRUM & SASH NEWSLETTER

Métis Nation of Alberta, through Shining Mountains Living Community Services launches DRUM & SASH project in Red Deer and leads Dried Blood Spot (DBS) testing in Alberta

The Métis Nation of Alberta officially joined our D&S project in 2019 and has delegated Shining Mountains Living Community Services, under Executive Director Raye St. Denys's leadership, to be their lead.



MNA leadership, Shining Mountains staff, community members, PHAC National HIV Lab staff, Alberta Health Services staff, local service providers, DRUM & SASH team members and local government representatives gathered to support the Dried Blood Spot testing launch in Red Deer, Alberta on September 19th, 2019

As a result of Raye St. Denys's on-going efforts and advocacy to address health disparities for Métis people, Shining Mountain was invited to partner with the National Laboratory for HIV AIDS Reference Services (John Kim) under the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), to conduct DBS testing in their community through his research grant.



Dr. John Kim – National HIV lab

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-zX3jtCRfoI>



Driftpile Cree Nation Elders meet to learn more about HIV, Hep C and STBBIs so they are better equipped to guide the youth and families in their community

“it is not possible to have a cultural response if there is no place in our culture for HIV and Hepatitis C – give it a place and then we can respond”

Driftpile Cree Nation Elder

In order to perform DBS testing in Alberta, new pathways and processes within the Alberta Health Services (AHS) reporting systems and the NLHRS needed to be created. Considerable effort on the part of all the partners was needed to make this happen. Raye St. Denys, Executive Director of Shining Mountains Living Community Services, NLHRS (John Kim, Chief, and staff), AHS staff (Christopher Wood, Executive Director Communicable Disease, David Strong, Lead Medical Officer of Health Calgary Region; Kevin Fonseca, Clinical Virologist at the Calgary AHS ProvLab, with support from their key team members), and the Red Deer Street Clinic (Keith Clarke), worked together to design a pathway that was culturally-based and adhered to the provincial requirements for collection, processing, reporting and connecting people who are tested to appropriate services.

DRUM & SASH staff supported Shining Mountains through this process. We also worked with Shining Mountains through Danielle Atkinson, our D&S graduate student, who is doing her MPH thesis (University of Victoria) on a Métis specific assessment tool and its application to the DBS testing implementation (see article below).

Creating a community cultural response to STBBIs through language translation and protocols



Stoney Elders, the Stoney D&S Coordinator and D&S team members met at the Health centre in Morley, AB

Three Elders met with their D&S coordinator, Alana Wahpooseywan, and D&S team members to begin the work of translating STBBI-related awareness and prevention from commonly used English words into the Stoney language. The Elders were very generous with their teachings and even though it is a very difficult task – especially considering the cultural protocols that make it difficult to discuss sexuality in a mixed group of men and women – they made amazing progress during the first day. These three Elders were joined by others in the next meeting and were able to complete all the words/ways of saying things in Stoney for Alana to design their first Stoney language Hepatitis C prevention poster! It was very important to hear the teachings of these special Elders around protocols and cultural considerations, and this will mean we can all move forward in STBBI efforts in a culturally respectful and appropriate way.

Elders provide cultural foundation and Blackfoot language for their community STBBI response



Standoff, Alberta – Blood Tribe



Blood Tribe Elders, community D&S lead, and D&S staff in Standoff, AB

Six Elders joined members of our D&S team and the community D&S lead, Bonnie Weasel Moccasin, on February 4th in the Standoff Health Centre to share their knowledge and wisdom so the project may proceed in a culturally safe and appropriate way. Words used in STBBI health and prevention, many of which are harsh and have their roots in the residential school experience, were discussed, and Blackfoot ways of saying them were created. It was very humbling for those of us who were visitors to spend the day with these remarkable Elders, who were very patient and generous with us. We are excited about what has begun and look forward to working with them again in the near future.

MNA includes Dried Blood Spot testing in annual Health Fair



Raye St. Denys, ED of Shining Mountains shares STBBI information with MNA health fair participants



Kandace Ogilvie, D&S coordinator provides resources and information on STBBI prevention and care offered by Shining Mountains

Shining Mountains was asked by the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) to include DBS testing at the MNA annual health fair. This was an excellent opportunity to connect with Métis people from throughout the province and provide valuable STBBI information, as well as DBS testing. AHS, as part of their DBS pilot, supported the event by providing a training update to Shining Mountains staff and testing supplies for the event. Cari Egan and David Strong from AHS attended the event and provided most welcomed support to the Shining Mountains DBS team.

“ For so long Métis people have been given things developed for non-indigenous or First Nations people and told we have to adapt it. This time we are starting at the beginning and developing tools and processes by and for Métis people”

Raye St. Denys – ED Shining Mountains



Fry bread tacos and salad! Elected Vice-president Dan Cardinal and Elder Doreen Bergum lead the way to a delicious meal prepared by community members and served at the D&S launch



Networking at D&S launch during lunch break

Developing Métis-specific wellness assessment tools and evaluating the DBS experience



Métis Elder, Shining Mountain ED, D&S coordinator, Métis knowledge holders and D&S team members meet in Edmonton to begin the development of Métis-specific tools

Members of the Métis community gathered in Edmonton in May to begin the work to develop a Métis-specific assessment tool for use in determining supports and services Métis people want in their shared-care model for STBBI and related conditions. This is particularly exciting as historically tools developed for First Nations and non-Indigenous people have had to be adapted to try to fit the uniqueness of the Métis culture and protocols. The tool is based around the Red River cart and the things a person would pack in it for their journey. There was considerable discussion on the items that would have traditionally been available to pack and icons were chosen to represent them.



Métis Elder, and Métis knowledge holders, Shining Mountain ED, D&S Métis coordinator and D&S team members

A diverse group of Métis leaders and D&S team members met in Edmonton in November to move the Métis-specific assessment tool forward to a final draft for language translation. This group built on the work of the first gathering and finalized the different items and icons for translation into Cree-Michif.



Dan Cardinal,
elected
provincial
Vice-
president
MNA

Read how our project graduate student, Danielle Atkinson is assisting the MNA, through Shining Mountains to evaluate the cultural appropriateness of Dried Blood Spot testing and creating Métis-specific assessment tools for person-centred support services.

Evaluation, evaluation! Rachel is busy supporting communities to conduct evaluation, and is supervising our graduate student and new research assistant!

A small group of knowledge holders in Métis language and culture, including the MNA elected Vice-President, Dan Cardinal; Raye St. Denys, a Métis community speaker and D&S team members met at the MNA office in December to translate the English names of the items for the cart included on the assessment tool into Cree-Michif. It was a difficult task, but all contributed to the success of the day, which resulted in a final draft that was developed for piloting. The final version will be approved and decisions made on how it will be shared by March 31st.

Introducing our Graduate Student, Danielle Atkinson



Danielle is a Métis student in the final year of her Master of Public Health (MPH) at the University of Victoria. She has been working with the DRUM & SASH team since May of 2018. For her thesis, Danielle has partnered with Raye St. Denys and Kandace Ogilvie from Shining Mountains Living Community Services, an Aboriginal Service Agency located in Red and lead for the D&S MNA

partnership. Raye and Kandace have been leading the development of a unique Métis-specific assessment tool, which will help Métis individuals living with or affected by HIV and other STBBI to assess their overall health and wellbeing and identify areas in which they need support or services. Danielle has been writing about the process of developing this tool. She has also led the evaluation of dried blood spot testing, piloted in partnership with AHS and PHAC, to offer testing for HIV, HCV, HBV and syphilis at two Métis community events. Danielle administered surveys that she developed in partnership with Raye and held gathering circles to seek feedback from Métis people about the process of receiving dried blood spot testing. She also will be interviewing the dried blood spot testing providers to gain their perspectives. Danielle and Raye have submitted abstracts to present at the Canadian Association for HIV Research (CAHR)'s annual conference in Quebec City in May, 2020.

Introducing our Postdoctoral fellow, Rachel Landy



As a postdoctoral fellow with DRUM & SASH, Rachel is working to develop a framework for Indigenous Implementation Science, which will be used to assess the DRUM & SASH activities. She is also working with DRUM & SASH communities to develop tools and strategies to evaluate the DRUM & SASH activities within each community. In addition, she is supervising Danielle Atkinson's public health practicum placement, as Danielle gains further research experience and skills with DRUM & SASH. Rachel also works with Nicole Quigley, our research assistant funded through the CTN sub-study, to look at urban and rural contextual factors associated with access to HIV, HCV, other STBBI and related mental health services.

Attention all DRUM & SASH team members

WE will be arranging calls with each of you in March-April to provide an opportunity to respond to questions and update your project participation preferences. We need you and your experience!

Our DRUM & SASH website (drumandsash.ca) is up and growing in content. We have a calendar, and welcome team members, organizations and community members to forward event dates related to health and wellness, particularly around HIV, Hep C and STBBIs.

We also welcome feedback on our website and newsletter!

Contact Us:



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Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA)

Challenging Stigma - Providing safer and culturally appropriate harm reduction and STBBI-related services

D&S community partners, staff from HIV Edmonton, representative from an Indigenous organization and D&S team members gathered in Edmonton for a 2-day training event hosted and facilitated by staff from CPHA. In the words of the participants:

"I found it helpful to take the time and plan out how we could implement the anti-stigma training in our own communities."

"The resources are phenomenal!"

D&S team members are supporting our communities to revise the CPHA resources for use in their communities to address stigma that was identified in the Community Readiness assessment they each conducted. The workshops will begin with the on-reserve and Métis service providers and will then be delivered to others in the community. For more information about CPHA and stigma training, you can contact Laura Bouchard lbouchard@cpha.ca or go to <https://www.cpha.ca>.

Thank you to our partners and funders:

