

2002 - 2007

Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc.



5th Anniversary

Forging Ahead



It is indeed an honour to extend warm wishes on behalf of myself and our fellow citizens of the riding of Churchill, on the 5th anniversary of Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc.

I would like to thank the Four Arrows Regional Health Authority, the organizers of Garden Hill, St. Theresa Point, Wasagamack and Red Sucker Lake for all their hard work and progress they have made. We all know this area needs a strong voice to demand the healthcare funding we need and good people to spend that money wisely. Healthcare leaders from our communities have provided exactly that.

I encourage all of you to hold on to your dreams and never place limits on your own potential. But most importantly, I encourage our youth to look to those role models in their lives and community who provide mentorship and who can enlist you to be active creators in shaping your communities, your nation, your future. To dream, to discover who you are and look to your future with hope and plans in the noblest goal of this wonderful gathering.

Together, we'll forge ahead with getting the health services our people need, right here in our region. I wish everyone a great gathering, strong faith to continue our push forward and good health in the coming year.

Congratulations.

Meegwetch.

Tina Keeper,
Member of Parliament for Churchill

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Purpose

The Purpose of this publication is to reflect on the initiatives and accomplishments of the Four Arrows regional Health Authority Inc. since it's beginning in 2002. The following pages provide brief descriptions of past initiatives and accomplishments, present developments and include photos.

Front Cover

Design and Layout of the front cover was by Byron Beardy. Staff Photos courtesy of McDougall Photography. All other photos were taken by FARHA staff members at the various events in the past 5 years.

In Memory

Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc. would like to dedicate this 5th Year Anniversary publication in Memory of former Board members;

Mr. Ambrose Wood
St. Theresa Point First Nation

Mr. John H. Harper
Red Sucker Lake First Nation

**Oberon Munroe,
Chairperson
Garden Hill First Nation Health Directorate**



On behalf of the Board of Directors, I bring greetings. I am currently the Chairman of the Board and have held this position for the past four years. I am proud to say that I am one of the original founding members of the organization and have served on the board since its inception back in 2000. During this time, in our growing years, the Board and staff have faced many challenges but due to the commitment of all, the Island Lake region is now beginning to see the changes. As more and more people are becoming aware of whom we are, as Four Arrows Regional Health Authority (FARHA), the more successes we are having in bringing health programs into our communities. I still stand behind my belief that working together and supporting each other, is still the best model for our region.

We continue to see many opportunities for the region and we will continue to strive for better health conditions for our people by not being satisfied with what we are allowed, funding wise, but continuing to look for other programs and services that will fit into our communities. This process, at times, can be consuming but, as the regional health organization, we feel it is our responsibility for our people to make every effort to find and secure as many programs and services as possible.

Looking into the next five years, I anticipate FARHA growing into a health organization that will be a model for not only Manitoba, but for Canada. We are very unique in Manitoba as no other region has a regional health authority and we have been approached by other First Nations on how we came about. This shows us that we are doing something right and something that is important and needed for the people.

As we celebrate our 5th Anniversary, I would like to, at this time, extend my sincere thanks and congratulations to the Executive Director for his ongoing commitment to the people and the organization. Mr. Wood has proven to be a strong leader and this is shown through his staff and their support of the four community's health services.

Finally, I would like to thank our leadership, councilors, local Health Authorities and citizens of Island Lake for your continued support and patience as we continue to grow and develop. As in the past, I pledge that we will continue to work in line with our mission statement to ..."strive to improve health conditions and health services in the Island Lake Region".

Congratulations and looking forward to the next five years.
Happy 5th Anniversary.

Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Board Members



Eila Knott
Councillor
Wasagamack First
Nation



Edward Flett
Councillor
St. Theresa Point First
Nation



Matthew Harper
Councillor
Red Sucker Lake First
Nation



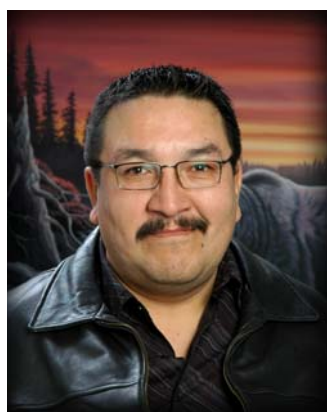
Linda Fiddler
Councillor
Garden Hill First
Nation



**Chief
Ronald Harper**
Wasagamack First
Nation



Fred Harper
Health Director
Red Sucker Lake
Health Authority



Robert Flett
Health Director
St. Theresa Point
Health Authority



Ambrose Knott
Health Director
Wasagamack
Health Authority

Past Board Members

Health Portfolio Chiefs

Chief Cornelius Wood
Chief Jerry Knott

Red Sucker Lake

John H. Harper
Doreen Harper
Eli Harper
Lester Harper
Brian J. Harper

Wasagamack

Jerry Knott
Ernie Harper
Alex McDougall
Jimmy Knott
Ronald Harper
John James Harper

St. Theresa Point

Ambrose Wood
Hazel Harper
Robert Wood
Elvin Flett
John Peter Flett
Alex Wood
Ernie Mason

Garden Hill

Jack Harper
Cathy Monias

Mission Statement

The Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc. has been given the responsibility by the four Chiefs of the Island Lake Tribal Council Inc. to; “Attend to all matters that affect and support the health conditions and services of the four Island Lake communities”.

The following Mission Statement was adopted by the Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Board in October of 2003:

As a regional organization created and governed by the four Island Lake First Nations and working and working cooperatively with their community health services, we strive to improve health conditions and health services in Island Lake.

Management Philosophy

By Tribal Council resolution in 1999 and by subsequent management arrangements, the Board of Directors of the Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc. has been delegated full responsibilities to govern Island Lake regional health services and as such is the employing authority. The management of personnel has been assigned, by the Board, to the Executive Director.

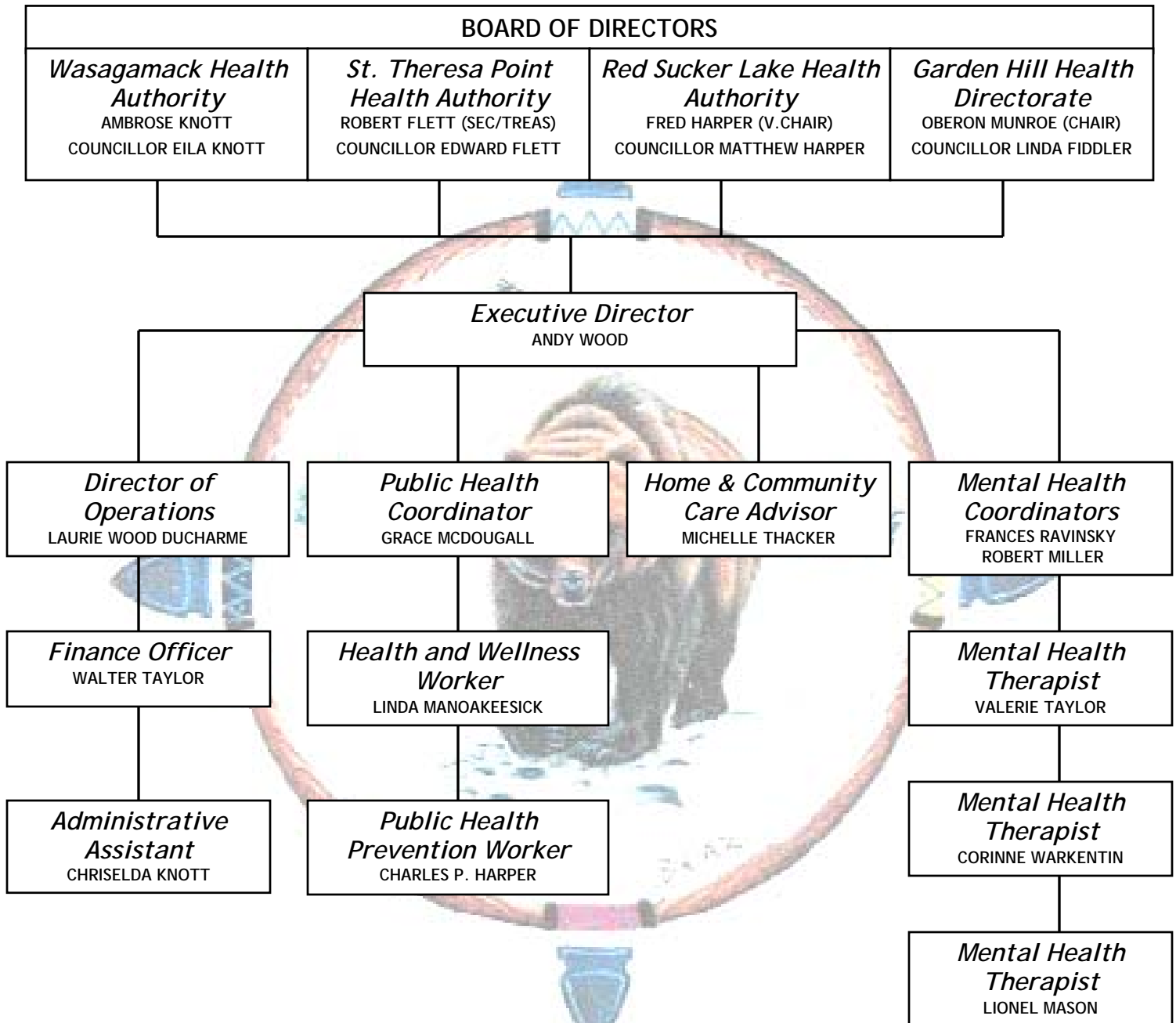
It is the intent of the Board and Management to create and maintain a working environment where:

- All staff are valued for their contributions;
- Teamwork and support of colleagues is a normal practice;
- All people dealing with the organization, whether visitors or clients, are respected and treated courteously;
- Staff work hard and effectively to achieve the goals of their positions and the organization.

It is expected that personnel policies and management actions will always strive to balance the need for work productivity with the personal and family needs of staff. It is also expected that these personnel policies will support policies in place in the four communities' health services, while at the same time specific differences will be acknowledged and respected.

These policies are to be accessible to staff, management and the Board at all times and all parties are encouraged to propose change to them as a need for change is identified. Final interpretation of policies will be the responsibility of the Executive Director, but the Board will act as an appeal body should any staff member feel the policies are being improperly administered.

Organization Structure



Chronology

- **February 1999:** Fifteen people serving in the health field from all four Island Lake First Nations meet for two days in a planning exercise aimed at strengthening community and regional health services. They conclude that the four First Nation health services working together cooperatively would be better than the past practice of each community working on their own. The notion of creating a “Four Arrows Regional Health Authority” is conceived at this meeting.
- **January 2000:** Four Chiefs pass a Tribal Council Resolution formally sanctioning the Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Board as an eight person Board of Directors. Two Board members from each community are appointed by each First Nation’s Chief and Council.
- **February 2000:** Inaugural Board meeting of Four Arrows Regional Health Authority is held. Elvin Flett from St. Theresa Point is elected as first Chairman.
- **June 2000:** Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) on Health is signed between four First Nations, Government of Manitoba and Government of Canada. The Health Directors of the four First Nation community health services and the Executive Director of Four Arrows R.H.A. are appointed to the Joint Health Governance Working Group (JHGWG), along with provincial and federal government representatives. The job of the JHGWG is to oversee the work of the M.O.U. and more specifically to work on establishing regional dialysis and regional hospital services in the Island Lake area.
- **September 2000:** The “Health System Review for the Island Lake First Nations”, produced by the University of Manitoba Northern Health Research Unit and commissioned by the four community health services and Four Arrows R.H.A., is publicly presented.
- **December 2001:** Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc. is incorporated under the provincial Companies Act.
- **January 2002:** A five year regional Health Transfer Agreement (including retroactive payments to November 1, 2001) is signed between Health Canada (FN&IHB) and the Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc. following months of negotiations and planning.
- **June 2002:** M.O.U. (including JHGWG) is extended for an additional two years as approved by four Chiefs, Government of Manitoba and Government of Canada. Work thus continues on building interim regional dialysis centre in Garden Hill and future Regional Primary Health Care Centre.
- **October 2002:** Four Chiefs decide that location of future Regional Primary Health Care Centre (includes hospital, 24/7 medical emergency services, permanent dialysis facility etc.) will be at the site of the future road/airport to be built between St. Theresa Point and Wasagamack.
- **April 2003:** Four community health services and Four Arrows R.H.A. begin responsibilities of delivering Public Health Nursing services and Home and Community Care services (at 100% funding level). These milestones were achieved following months of collective work, planning and negotiations at the regional and community levels.

- **December 2003:** Island Lake Regional Primary Health Care Centre proposal is completed and unanimously approved by JHGWG.
- **July 2004:** Island Lake Regional Primary Health Care Centre Inc. (later re-named Neewin Health Care Inc.) assumes responsibilities for development and governance of future Regional Primary Health Care Centre and interim dialysis centre in Garden Hill. Board is composed of 60% community and regional First Nation representatives and 40% federal, provincial, non-First Nation and University representatives.
- **January 2005:** Island Lake citizens begin receiving dialysis services at interim Renal Health Centre in Garden Hill.
- **February 2006:** Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc. assumes responsibility for Mental Health Therapy services following months of collective regional/community planning and negotiations. Mental Health Therapists begin providing services in all four communities, with supervision being provided by Four Arrows R.H.A.
- **September 2006:** Four Arrows R.H.A. and four community health services are selected by Assembly of First Nations as one of three national First Nations Public Health System pilot projects.
- **November 2006:** Negotiations with Manitoba Health, Health Canada and University of Manitoba are nearing completion to have a half-time Medical Officer of Health join the regional/community Island Lake Public Health team and as support to the Public Health pilot project.
- **November 2006:** Dispute resolution process (now at Health Canada Assistant Deputy Minister level) is nearing conclusion. Goal is to attain approximately \$300,000.00/year in Public Health Nursing funding going back to fiscal year 2003-2004. If this dispute resolution is successful, current and retroactive funding will be distributed to the four community health services and Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc. on a previously agreed percentage basis. The dispute resolution processes in Health Transfer Agreements were initiated after discovery that a future funding commitment made by First Nations & Inuit Health Branch officials during Public Health Nursing Transfer negotiations was not kept.

Four Arrows Health Services Transfer Agreement Renewed

The Board of Directors of the Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc. recently signed a new agreement with Health Canada extending their funding and service contract until November 1, 2011. The initial and original five year Health Services Transfer Agreement began in November 2001. Executive Director Andy Wood said: "This agreement provides our regional organization with its largest and most stable funding support and enables us to continue to support the community health services in Red Sucker Lake, Wasagamack, St. Theresa Point and Garden Hill. Its renewal was very important".

Laurie Wood Ducharme, Director of Operations at Four Arrows was a central part of the team that concluded the details of the agreement with Health Canada, Manitoba Region officials. Ms. Wood Ducharme expanded on the five month discussions with Health Canada which produced the final agreement. "Initially we were told that there would be no funding increases because Health Canada's policy was only to sign agreements with First Nation organizations that were 'cost neutral'. However, we did our own research and proved to them that over our first five years air transportation costs to our communities had increased 22% whereas our Health Canada funding had only increased by 1.5%. As a result we were able to secure a modest funding increase."

Although the renewed agreement in place for the next five years produces some much needed stability to Four Arrows, the Board and senior staff are not standing still. Discussions continue at both provincial and federal government senior levels to further amend the Health Transfer Agreement to have a part-time Medical Officer of Health join the Public Health Team. Additionally, discussions are now at Health Canada's Ottawa level to review the Public Health Nursing component of Health Transfer funding dating back to April 2003 at both the regional and community levels.

Andy Wood
Executive Director
“Forging Ahead - 2007”



As executive director for this very phenomenal organization, I am very pleased, on behalf of all our board members and staff to bring you greetings on this very joyous fifth anniversary celebration of your regional health organization.

This is an opportune time to remind ourselves and to reflect that this organization was a dream that was borne out of a sharing session between fifteen very caring individuals who shared a vision of unity and a desire to work together to improve “health conditions and health services in the Island Lake Region”. These fifteen people are all past health directors, board members and health technicians from the four communities, who participated in a planning session, called the P.A.T.H. session, (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope.) on February 22, 1999 at St. Theresa Point. We wish to honor and acknowledge these following people: from St. Theresa Point, John Peter Harper Jr., Marcel Mason, Ernie Mason, Ann Marie Flett, George Flett, John Peter Harper Sr., Elvin Flett, from Garden Hill, Maggie Flett, from Red Sucker Lake, John H. Harper, Matthew Harper and from Wasagamack, Alex McDougall, Percy Harper, Peter Harper Jr. and Nordreen Mason. (Note: there was a fifteenth person however our records are not clear on who it was)

Two of these very important people have since passed on and we wish to dedicate this anniversary publication to their memory including one of our past board members who passed on while still in the performance of his duties. In memoriam, the late John H. Harper, from Red Sucker Lake, the late John Peter Harper Jr. and the late Ambrose Wood, from St. Theresa Point, who in their own special ways contributed to the ongoing efforts to bring “minoayawin” (wellness) to the people and communities of Island Lake.

The start date for the organization has been a rather peculiar task to determine as we are faced with the initial planning session of February 1999, the formal recognition by Tribal Council Resolution of January 17, 2000 and the official signing of the Health Services Transfer Agreement with First Nation and Inuit Health Branch in January 2002. Unofficially, the concept of “one people - one community” living and working together has been in existence as far back as we can remember or ever since the First Nation people settled in Pus-kwo-na-ko-seenk (Island Lake); the planning session of February 1999 only served to re-enforce that concept. Officially the organization and the government signed this partnership and health transfer agreement to commence January 2002, and this has been the date that we are acknowledging to mark our 5th year anniversary.

A lot has transpired within this 5, 6 or 7 year period and we are pleased that we are marking this anniversary of our journey to wellness or as our theme states “forging ahead”. The following is but a small tribute to our work, our successes, our challenges and we are optimistic that we will be continuing to accomplish great things in our search and journey towards “mino ayawin”.



Laurie Wood Ducharme Director of Operations

Welcome to our 5th year commemorative booklet. This idea came up at one of our staff meetings, to develop a booklet that would show the people an idea of what Four Arrows has been doing for the past 5 years. But as they say “time flies when your having fun” and it has been a wonderful five years, not only for Four Arrows in general but for myself as well. I feel very fortunate to have made this milestone and I am looking forward to the next five years where I believe major leaps and bounds will made.

But to start off, I would like to thank our Executive Director, Andy Wood, for his continued guidance and wisdom in his endeavor to bring better health care into the Island Lake region. Also would like to thank the staff who without the team effort, we would have not been able to achieve the accomplishments we have made throughout the years. I would also like to thank all the past staff and Board members who have also put their dedication and commitment to our goal and vision. I would to thank Alex McDougall and his staff at Neewin Health Care for their continued support and Finally, I would like to thank Clarence McDougall. Even though he’s technically not a Four Arrows staff, he has worked with us off and on for the past 5+ years dealing specifically with urban transition and without him, a lot of our people who have had to relocate to the city for various reasons would be lost. Plus I would like to thank past staff and board who work will always be appreciated, as well as our guidance we have received from our leadership. Last but not least, I would like to extend a very big **Thank You** to our advisor, Mr. John Robson.

I am looking forward to the next five plus years with great enthusiasm, in particular to our recently approved national pilot project with Public Health. This area is so vast and so complex that we feel very lucky to be one of three pilot sites in Canada to be chosen and also with that our area will be representing Manitoba. This is something to be very proud of and we are going to do our very best to make Island Lake stand out from the others. The other project which is making big headways these past couple of years in our Gardening Project. Linda Manoakesick has been very beneficial in getting this off the ground and she welcomes any suggestions and ideas to help this “grow” (no pun intended). The Food Buying Project is also another major initiative that we are taking on and again we are always open for suggestions, ideas and comments. As I have stated, our office is your office and our doors are always open to comments and suggestions.

Yours in health and wellness,

Regional Public Health

Grace McDougall R.N. , Coordinator

Public Health in the Four Arrows Regional Health Authority has been transferred from First Nations & Inuit Health Branch since April 1, 2003. Prior to this, negotiations were in process since inception of Four Arrows Regional Health Authority in February 1999. During this time, numerous meetings between the First Nations Inuit Health Branch and the Four Arrows Regional Health Authority. Agreements were signed and transfer occurred.



The Public Health program is divided into different areas.

Communicable Disease Control: Immunizations, Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV/AIDS, T.B. and other communicable diseases.

Healthy Mom & Baby: Pre-conceptual care, prenatal care and postnatal care, FAS/E, CPNP (The Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program)

Healthier Lifestyles: Diabetes, Nutrition, Active living

Healthy Schools & Healthy Children

Healthy Environments

Injury Prevention

Tobacco Reduction

All the programs work together and individually to improve the health of the community as a whole.

Since transfer occurred, nurses have been hired to run the programs in the communities with the exception of Red Sucker Lake. Garden Hill was to be servicing Red Sucker Lake on a bi-weekly basis. This was added to the agreement to include Red Sucker Lake in the transfer.

There have been a numerous difficulties in hiring nurses, because of the nursing shortage and the difficulty to draw experienced nurses to work in isolated communities and to relocate to the north. At present, there is no full time Public Health nurses in Garden Hill although there has been ongoing recruitment for nurses. There is 1 full time nurse in Wasagamack and 1 full time nurse in St. Theresa Point. In Garden Hill, there is a public health nurse that visits the community to assist in the immunization program on a casual basis.

In the local Health Authorities, there are workers in place that are a part of Public Health. Some of these programs have been transferred previously. These include the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, Diabetes and injury prevention. The newest program that is included is the Tobacco Strategy although this program will be ceasing at the end of March 2007 because of budget cuts by the government.

All the programs work together to improve the health of the First Nations people in our communities through education, awareness and demonstration. The Public Health Program also works in partnership with the Nursing Stations to improve health. The more education and awareness the community has in caring for themselves, the less the need will be for treatment.



Linda Manoakesic
Health & Wellness Worker

The Public Health Team meets on a quarterly basis to give updates in their individual programs. This is also a time where some professional development is made available. This is necessary for the nurses to be current for their positions to be carried out effectively. In the Four Arrows Regional Health Authority, the Regional Public Health Coordinator, ensures that the Public Health Programs in all the communities are running effectively. This means that all the necessary actions have to be in place. This also means attending various meetings of the different areas, for example, Manitoba First Nations CPNP Advisory Committee and The Manitoba First Nations Diabetes Committee. These are only a few of the First Nation committees in different areas of Public Health. These meetings provide current updates on the various areas, which are important to the program.

Many activities are carried out to ensure that all the community members are given the opportunity to gain awareness and education. Examples of the Diabetes Program activities are in the winter months, a Regional Diabetes Conference is held in one of the Island Lake communities. This conference is made up of various activities and learning opportunities to learn about Diabetes and how it affects us as First Nation people. This year, the Diabetes Conference was held in St. Theresa Point. The conference was held at the High School so that the message and education could also reach the youth as well as the adults of the community. This also gives us an opportunity to learn how to deal with and how to prevent the disease.

In the summer, a diabetes camp is held for kids, which takes place at the Old Post. This passed year has been the 6th year that we have held the camp. The first camp was started by Bertha Flett, Pat Urrutia (Harper), Pauline Wood Steiman, Linda Manoakesick and Lynn Berrenger (Nutritionist) and we have been working with the communities to continue the camp that is very rewarding to our children. This camp is for approximately 12 – 15 children from the Island Lake area. Many children who have attended this camp, have enjoyed the experience and have learned a lot about Diabetes. Even though many do not have the disease, they do have predisposing factors to getting it and they are experiencing the effects by living with family members who have the disease. We are trying to prevent them from getting this diabetes. In order for the camp to occur, the Four Arrows Regional Health Authority has fund raising events throughout the year. Without the fundraising events, the Diabetes Camp would not take place.

In the gardening project, Linda Manoakesick has been working very hard with Mark Dourn on this project. Last year we had an increase in the number of gardens from the year before. Gardening is a very rewarding activity. Not only is it a good physical activity, it is a good way to save money by growing your own nutritious vegetables!!

In the most recent happenings, the Integrated Diabetes Service Delivery project, headed by the Manitoba First Nations Diabetes Committee, is currently being housed at the Four Arrows Regional Health Authority office in Winnipeg and has been confirmed to be housed at this office until the end of March 2007. Discussions are still underway on where they will be housed after this date but we are hoping they will stay. Two coordinators have been hired by MFNDC. These two coordinators are Caroline Chartrand and Connie Kuzdak. These two nurses will be working on setting up the diabetes service delivery project that will be providing services to all the First Nations communities in Manitoba in the near future.

The Public Health program, concentrates on prevention, education and awareness. This way, the people of our First Nations will be on the road to better health for ourselves and our children.

WE INVENT NOTHING. WE REDISCOVER

Submitted by Four Arrows Healing and Wellness Team

Frances Ravinsky and Robert Miller: Coordinators

Valerie Taylor, Lionel Mason, and Corrine Warkentin: Mental Health Therapists

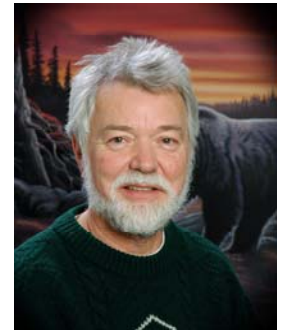


Francis Ravinsky

To all our families and friends in the Island Lake region, greetings from Four Arrows Healing and Wellness Team: We are so pleased to have the opportunity to celebrate with you the fifth anniversary of our regional health organization. Because the Healing and Wellness team joined Four Arrows two years after it was formed, we missed out on the excitement that comes with forming a new organization. But we have certainly not been bored during our team's three years of operation. We have had many exciting and hope-filled experiences, along with the many challenges that the work of healing and wellness brings. We have welcomed all the experiences that have come our way - these experiences are our teachers and we are grateful for them.

The Principle of Rediscovery: A while back, there was an exhibit in the Winnipeg Art Gallery of a French sculptor, Auguste Rodin, who created art during the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Many people of his time were shocked by his sculptures; they looked so different from the art of his contemporaries. While his sculptures are no longer shocking, it was still quite an emotional experience to walk into the Art Gallery and be surrounded by so many huge and powerful images of the human experience. But what was as, or even more, striking, were the words that Rodin used to describe his work: **"I invent nothing, I rediscover"**.

How interesting that Rodin's words mirror one of the important principles that guide the work of our team. We believe with all our hearts and minds that the gifts and resources that will bring healing and wellness to the Island Lake region do not need to be invented. They have been here forever and only need to be fully rediscovered. Guided by the principle of rediscovery, we reflect on some of the steps that our team have taken, with the support and guidance of our Board and Administration, that honour the gifts from within.



Robert Miller

Mental Health Therapy Program: We took an important step one year ago when we assumed responsibility for the delivery of the Mental Health Therapy program. In partnership with workers from all four of the Island Lake First Nations, we hired three Aboriginal therapists. In so doing, we acknowledged our capacity to care for our own people by walking with them on their journeys towards recovery.



Corrine Warkentin

We took another significant step when we began to include in our work, in addition to individual therapy, the use of the sharing circle as a healing resource. We are grateful for the work of the *Aboriginal Healing Foundation* (AHF) programs for inviting residential school survivors and their families to participate in circles. Through this work, we know that our people have been able to break silence, and in so doing, let go of some of the misplaced shame they have carried for far too long. It has been a privilege for our team to build sits with our Island Lake friends and family members in a circle, we rediscover the power of the circle to release the natural healing gifts of laughter and tears for our use. Each time we sit together in a circle, we rediscover the capacity of our people to share and receive each other's life teachings.



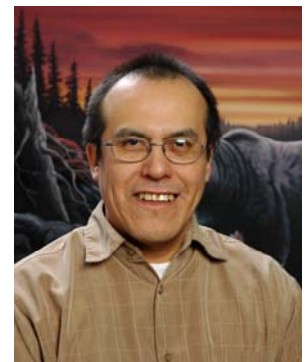
Valerie Taylor

Creativity as a Healing Resource: Another step we have taken has been to recognize art and the creative spirit as a healing resource. The two Creativity Gatherings at Old Post in the summers of 2005 and 2006 were important experiences for our team. These gatherings reminded us of the capacity of the Island Lake artists to share their gifts of art with patience and generosity. The elder artists that joined us at these gatherings were particularly accomplished mentors. But we know that offering opportunities for people to express their creativity once a year is not enough. And so we are excited about the new partnerships we are forming with Creatively Working Groups in each of the Island Lake communities. Through these partnerships, we look forward to developing and delivering art-based programs throughout the year.

Again, the use of art for healing and wellness is not our invention. The creative spirit has been a strong force in the Island Lake region forever. It is just a matter of rediscovering its full potential as a healing resource. There are many people in our communities who have never lost sight of this truth and we so look forward to learning from them.

Ma-mow Widjiitowin: One more step that the Healing and Wellness team has taken that warrants attention is the re-introduction of quarterly regional meetings for the Wellness Managers and Mental Health workers. Once again, this was not our invention. In his past role as Regional Coordinator of the *Brighter Futures Initiative* (BFI) program, Andy Wood invited workers from each of the four communities to gather together to share common concerns and to celebrate accomplishments. Because the Wellness Managers reminded us of how valuable these meetings were, we have re-instated them. The outcome, we believe, has been a growing sense of trust and partnership, as well as an expanded understanding of the importance of *ma-mow widjiitowin*. At these meetings we have shared laughter and tears. In so doing, we have opened our hearts. We have also shared our thoughts and ideas about healing and wellness approaches that can best suit the needs of our communities. In so doing, we have opened our minds.

Hollow Water's Journey: As our circle strengthens, we reach out to others to join us. At our last regional meeting in Jan. 2007, we invited Sharon Klyne, a member of Hollow Water First Nation, to join us. For a full day we learned about the journey that our brothers and sisters from Hollow Water have been on for the past 20 years to eradicate from their community the painful reality of sexual abuse. One of the important teachings we received from Sharon is that everyone - women and men, girls and boys, youth and elders - can be invited to participate in the work of recovery, and that this hard and courageous work can be done in a respectful rather than shaming way.



Lionel Mason

The Healing and Wellness team is also inviting into our circle a number of people and organizations who use art for healing, and as a tool for building healthy communities.

As our partnerships strengthen and widen, we continue to rediscover the need to honour the deep ties that connect us all, and to relearn the wisdom that comes with recognizing and gathering together all of our many gifts.

Spirituality as a Guiding Force: Finally, we would like to share with you our team's growing commitment to making sure that spirituality is brought from the edges into the centre of our work. For at the beginning and end of all of our reflections comes the rediscovery that healing and wellness work is, by its very nature, sacred.

We hope this review of our team's efforts gives you a sense of our hopes and vision. We look forward to the work ahead, and to our growing partnerships. We also look forward to our times together when we can put the work aside long enough to celebrate. This is one such an occasion.

SPECIAL PROJECTS and SPECIAL EVENTS – 1999 to 2007:
“Doing whatever needs to get done.”

Over the course of the first years of operation, Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc. had the opportunity to organize and coordinate some special projects and events. Some of these projects have had funding while the majority of the special events have had to rely on our partnerships with community and other regional organizations and fund-raising activities to be able to host these special events. These include the following:

Regional Diabetes Conference – St. Theresa Point
Regional Diabetes for Kids Camp – Old Post

In 2000, while still under the auspices of the Island Lake Tribal Council Health Programs, Pauline Wood Steiman, working with Hazel Harper and Charlene Mason of the St. Theresa Point Health Authority organized the first ever Regional Diabetes Conference in the area. Ever since then, our Public Health Team of Grace McDougall, Linda Manoakesick and the local Diabetes working team and workers have continued to organize this annual event which is focused on education, prevention and awareness of diabetes. This year's conference was the seventh and was termed a success, despite transportation difficulties due to the lack of winter road access between the communities.

During that same year, Pauline, Pat Urrutia, Bertha Flett, Lynn Bendinger and Linda Manoakesick launched a project that was aimed at teaching children-at-risk about diabetes and how to stay fit and healthy. The Regional Diabetes Camp for Kids has grown by leaps and bounds and future camps will require some measure of pre-registration as the participant numbers and interest have become too much to handle and the work associated with hosting the event has multiplied. The working groups are still thrilled about the projects and these events will continue as long as the communities feel that they are serving a purpose.

Regional Wellness Gathering – Garden Hill

In 1999, the Island Lake Tribal Council Regional BFI Program, working with the local Community Wellness programs organized the first Regional Community Wellness Gathering in Garden Hill to introduce the four community wellness programs and their mandates. The conference focuses on prevention and intervention and speakers present on various topics and issues which range from addictions, crime prevention, youth and teenage challenges, individual, family and community problems, and present strategies and plans on how these problems may be addressed or at least to create an awareness to these situations.

Last year's conference was postponed on two occasions and the lateness of the winter road season eventually impacted on the conference and it was cancelled. This year, the AHF programs have elected to champion this cause and are in the process of finalizing all the arrangements.

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Over the years the conference has had participation from various regional organizations and Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc. feels very fortunate and blessed to have these partnerships and support organizations who participate in this event. These partners include the Island Lake Tribal Council, Island Lake Family Services, MKO, AMC, First Nation and Inuit Health Branch, the RCMP, Manitoba First Nation Education Resource Centre, and various church and spiritual groups and other community support groups.

This year's Gathering will be hosted by the regional MKO Healing Strategy in partnership with our organization and the local AHF projects, on March 20th – 24th in Wasagamack.

Our organization would like to honor and acknowledge the following people who have been involved in this event throughout the years. From Garden Hill, Carol Harper, Bruce Flett and Julie Hastings; from St. Theresa Point, Hazel Harper and Martha Mason; from Wasagamack, John James Harper, Jerry Knott, Saulus Harper, Phyllis Harper, and from Red Sucker Lake, Brian J. Harper and Tom Keno.

Regional Youth and Elder Gathering – Wasagamack

Four Arrows Regional Health Authority has been one of the more active regional supporters of this annual event which is hosted every summer in Wasagamack and concentrates on activities aimed at closing the cultural and generation gap between youth and elders. Every summer, the community welcomes guests and visitors from the neighboring communities and moves into the bush approximately 7 km from the community for three days of workshops and cultural activities aimed at bringing the community youth and elders closer together. Sharing circles and workshops are the agenda of the day, while the evening focuses on feasting and fun activities. The highlight of each conference is a closing feast and a gift exchange between youth and elder representatives which symbolizes the exchange and sharing of ideas and teachings during the gathering.

Mind, Body and Spirit – Healing the Healer Conference

In 2005, one of our health directors and board members recognized a need to debrief and re-energize community health and resource workers after a long stressful winter, when community and regional issues and problems become overwhelming and challenging. There was a request to organize an event with a “healing the healer” concept and the “Mind, Body and Spirit” conference was born. This year 2007 will be the 3rd annual conference and all indications are that this conference will be continuing to grow every year. Special acknowledgement to Ernie Harper, a past board member and health director, who had the vision and compassion for community workers, to make his desire known and assist in the original development of this concept and to ensure that it was carried out.

Kudos also to Jennifer Wood, Laurie Wood Ducharme and Byron Beardy who have been very instrumental and capable of coordinating and organizing these conferences.

Joint Health Governance Working Group

On June 21, 2000, the four Island Lake First Nations signed an historic Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) on Health with the Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba. The job of the JHGWG was to oversee the work and goals of the M.O.U and more specifically to work on:

- Establishing dialysis in the area
- Explore the possibilities of regional hospital services
- Examine ways of helping and advocating for the urban Island Lake population.

Our organization had the honor and opportunity to host and administer this project and would like to acknowledge Fred Harper, who served as the first JHGWG Project Coordinator and then Mike Nadwidney who coordinated and completed the final stages of the project.

This project has evolved into Neewin Health Care Inc. and is concentrating on the regional primary health care possibilities and is at present being managed and directed by Alex McDougall. In addition we would like to acknowledge the following community members and government partners who have been and are on the present board, as active or ex-officio members: from FNIHB, Mr. Jim Mair, from Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Brian Gudmundson, from Manitoba Health, Loretta Bayer, from INAC, Patti Skillen, from Northern Medical Unit, Dr. Bruce Martin, from the Island Lake Tribal Council, Chief Ronald Harper, from Four Arrows RHA, Andy Wood (Chairperson), from Garden Hill First Nation, Oberon Munroe, from St. Theresa Point, Robert Flett, from Wasagamack First Nation, Ambrose Knott and from Red Sucker Lake, Calvin Harper.

Other Regional Projects or activities

2001- 2002 – Aboriginal Healing Project which organized residential school gatherings in all four communities. The following people are being acknowledged for their contributions to this project; Charles P. Harper, Valerie Taylor and Delores Beardy.

February 2006 – Youth Winter Road Walk from Island Lake to the Legislative Building to create awareness of the plight of Island Lake youth living in isolated communities who do not have the same opportunities to participate in regional and provincial events because of the high cost of living and travel out of the area. Kudos to the youth, organizers, cooks and chaperones from each of the communities. Special mention and acknowledgement to communities, schools and special friends along the winter road route who provided food, lunches, lodging, support and encouragement to our youth. These include the communities of Bloodvein, Sahgeeng and Brokenhead.

March 2006 - Manitoba Indigenous Games at Peguis, Manitoba. Approximately 250 to 300 Island Lake athletes, coaches and chaperones travel to Peguis, Manitoba to participate in the 2006 Manitoba Indigenous Winter Games. Special Acknowledgements to the Provincial Ministry of Culture, Heritage and Sports who contributed to the transportation of the athletes back to their home communities, the First Nation school bus programs and drivers and the countless organizers, coaches, parents and teachers who made this participation possible.

2004 -2007- Northern Healthy Foods Initiative – Gardening Projects. All four communities have, for the past two years, been involved in gardening projects, which are aimed at providing affordable, good quality and home-grown nutritious foods to the communities. Mark Dourn of the Provincial Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Secretariat has been working closely with the Four Arrows RHA Public Health Program's Grace McDougall and Linda Manoakesick to make this project a success. Community gardens in Island Lake have generated a lot of interest and participation and this upcoming year looks like another successful season to look forward to.

Aboriginal and Northern Affairs has also been working in partnership with Four Arrows Regional Health Authority and the communities on the study and development of a Food Buying Club, focused on bringing healthy, affordable food to the Island Lake communities. This project is very close to implementation and is winter road sensitive as equipment needs to be shipped this year.

Smoking Cessation: Four Arrows Regional Health Authority has been involved in two (2) special projects related to smoking cessation. Charles Harper had been involved in developing healthy lifestyle choices related to fitness and health and sponsored part of the winter road walk for the youth. Mike Nadwidney, has been developing a smoking cessation and tobacco comic book project, which is still in the works and is nearing completion.

February 2007 – 5th Anniversary Celebrations. During the week of February 12 to February 16, 2007, the organization's staff traveled to the Island Lake communities for a week of celebration, feasting, concerts, gospel jamborees, square dancing, visiting and good fellowship to mark the official 5th Year anniversary of the organization. Four Arrows would like to thank the following community people for their strong community support and friendship;

From Garden Hill, the entire Chief and Council who attended the community feast and also dropped in for the evening activities, Oberon Munroe and staff members, Janine Wood and Mark Munroe, community members Eddie Munroe, Pat Flett, Ronald Taylor, who helped out at the activities and the following people who cooked the food or provided ovens for cooking, home care office, health office, Ruth E. Flett, Albert McPherson, Harriet Loonfoot, Terry Harper, Virginia Fiddler, Oberon Munroe, Georgina Wood, and the High School kitchen facilities.

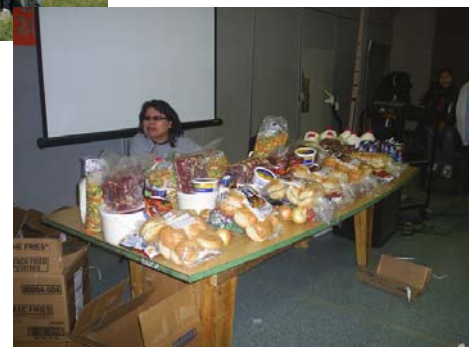
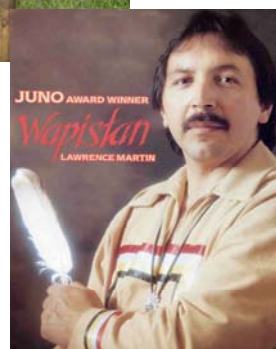
From St. Theresa Point, Councilors Edward Flett, Emile Harper, and Executive Director Hazel Harper, Health staff members Lorne and Sheila Mason, Marceline Flett and community members Philip Wood, Sonny Mason, the people who cooked the food, Martha Mason, Daniel Knott, Frances Harper, Theresa Harper, Victoria Flett, Lucille Mason and Darcy Flett.

From Wasagamack, Councilors Eila Knott, Anna Harper and Virginia Harper who dropped in for the feast, community members Floyd Mason, Donald Harper, Peter Wood, Yvonne Mason, Alex McDougall, musicians, Billy Taylor, Patrick Harper, John A. Mason, Harvey McDougall, Noel Wood and Mary Wood.

From Red Sucker Lake, Health director Fred Harper, board members Calvin Harper, Lawrence Harper and Curtis Harper, health authority staff members Ruth Harper, Tom Keno, Norbert Flett, Allison McDougall, Linda D. Harper, elder Joshua Harper, cooks, Annie Dan, Marilyn Flett, Jessie B. Harper, Evelyn Harper, Sarah Harper, Flora Harper, Eli Harper and the Wapisee River Gospel Band. There are other cooks and helpers from each of the communities that need to be thanked and acknowledged however unfortunately we do not have complete lists of names. If we have missed anyone we apologize but they know who they are and we would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to them for without their support and assistance our activities would not have been possible.

Conclusion:

Our organization has vowed to continue the good work which was started, and in keeping with our theme of 'forging ahead" we will be continuing to do whatever needs to get done, in order to improve the health and wellness of the Island Lake people. It is anticipated that within the upcoming years, Four Arrows Regional Health Authority will continue to work with the community health authorities and their programs and be a strong supporter, advocate, a partner and participant and a resource to all the local and regional activities.





RED SUCKER LAKE

HEALTH AUTHORITY

Red Sucker Lake, Manitoba R0B 1H0
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February 15, 2007

Andy Wood
Executive Director
4 Arrows Regional Health Authority
2nd Floor – 338 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dear Mr Wood,

The Elders and members of Red Sucker Lake First Nation sincerely thank you and the Red Sucker Lake Health Authority for the 4 Arrows Regional Health Authority's 5th **Anniversary Celebration** that was held at Red Sucker Lake on February 14, 2007. The Elders attending the celebration expressed their gratitude for the food and gifts that were shared at the event and for the recognition given to the participants in the Gospel Jamboree. They also said that they were grateful for being given the opportunity to celebrate the success of both the Regional Health Authority and the Red Sucker Lake Health Authority in helping our people make significant steps towards healthy lives.

We hope that the 4 Arrows Regional Health Authority continues to provide important assistance in the goal of creating healthy people and healthy communities. Thank you once again for a wonderful celebration.

Yours truly,

Clavin Harper

cc: RSLFN Chief and Council
RSLHA