

T̂SILHQOT'IN TRADITIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS REPORT



REPORT DEVELOPED FOR FIRST NATION
HEALTH AUTHORITY - 2022

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INTRODUCTION LETTER TO FIRST NATION HEALTH AUTHORITY

The information in the T̂silhqot'in Nation Traditional Wellness and Health Report contains valuable information provided by T̂silhqot'in health, governance, and wellness representatives who are advocating for the T̂silhqot'in traditional health and wellness needs, practices, and processes in the communities.

Great care and attention have been devoted to contributing thoughtful guidance and advice towards the importance of prioritizing and incorporating traditional health and wellness to daily healthcare. T̂silhqot'in Nation health and wellness thrives with this integrated approach to healthcare – it is the foundation to T̂silhqot'in peoples' vitality.

The 7 Directives of the First Nation Health Authority (FNHA) exemplify how the organization can support true and meaningful health and wellness change in communities. The act of executing a 'Community-Driven, Nation-Based' approach influenced by 'First Nations Decision-Making and Control' would ground the service delivery acknowledging the T̂silhqot'in peoples' words and wishes.

Every decision that affects the livelihood of the Nation and future generations is an important decision that requires adequate discussion and contemplation. What fits one community may not fit another and so they are autonomous. At the same time, the T̂silhqot'in Nation health department is an arm of service to the communities providing shared services that all communities require in an equitable manner.

To transform health and wellness service delivery to be truly immersed in tradition and cultural values the T̂silhqot'in Nation could achieve a precedent-setting level of service delivery. The representatives from the T̂silhqot'in have identified what is required to achieve this level of holistic health and wellness and it is further identified in this report.

The voices of the communities should guide the First Nation Health Authority on how it can best serve them.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The T̂silhqot'in Traditional Health and Wellness Report is in response to the Traditional Work project for the First Nation Health Authority. This report synthesizes interviews from the T̂silhqot'in Social Table, Women's Council, community health department staff, Health Directors, and land-based researchers, with documented reports and strategies. The documented reports include previous social cultural reports, community health plans, traditional health and wellness planning and land-based healing. All of which affirm the traditional health and wellness interests have been well documented throughout the years by both the community and the Nation.

This report further reaffirms and advances past work on the T̂silhqot'in traditional health and wellness vision and mission, and guiding protocols for working in the community and the philosophy of fair compensation practices for traditional health care.

Finally, this report aligns with several other Nation-level strategies such as 'T̂silhqot'in– A Healing Nation's Strategy For Implementing Child & Family Jurisdiction – T̂silhqot'in Ch'ih Deni Nidlin,' 'T̂silhqot'in Social Cultural Action Plan: T̂silhqot'in Ch'ih Deni Nidlin,' and 'T̂silhqot'in Ch'ih Yaltig Nanagwedeteghalt'ish.'

Community representatives reinforced that traditional health and wellness is connected to everything that the T̂silhqot'in do – it is the lifeblood that supports the physical, spiritual, emotional and mental wellbeing. This report outlines what support is necessary to both protect traditional knowledge and practices and to strengthen and support the delivery of cultural practice and healing.

Traditional practices and healing are integrated into daily activities, at gatherings or workshops. Under careful and thoughtful discussions representatives discussed that the best approach to protect traditional knowledge was to bolster traditional practices in every activity to impart cultural knowledge and practices to future generations and to those that work within the community.

The report advances traditional health and wellness work in a consolidated report with action plans for components that will identify supports necessary to advance community and Nation interests.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

While increased emergencies in the T̂silhqot'in Nation had several negative impacts to the T̂silhqot'in people, what it has made clear is that the connection to culture, lands and traditions are at the forefront of a striving healthy community. The emergencies heightened the need for traditional health and wellness practices to be strengthened, maintained, taught, preserved and conducted regularly.

While isolation and lockdowns plagued the communities, many families found solstice in returning to the land and embracing cultural activities. Throughout the emergencies a focus towards traditional and cultural activities was, at times, the only thing that the T̂silhqot'in could do while evacuated due to wildfires, in lockdown and isolated during the pandemic and through stress and loss during the unprecedented times. Many families would spend more time on the land, safely distanced, to continue to engage with others in their community. Families would set up summer camps to fish, hunt, and transfer knowledge to younger generations.

The acts of learning and practicing T̂silhqot'in traditional and cultural wellness activities enhances self-acceptance and pride, teaches self-sufficiency from living off the land, promotes healing, and balances modern medicinal practice with traditional medicine, thereby contributing to a positive quality of life.

For those that were not able to maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle, social agencies are seeking methods to provide wraparound medical supports to aid them in their recoveries, whatever they may be. Western medicine and methods should always be balanced with a good dose of traditional and cultural healing focus. For many, the goal is to move to a traditional medicinal approach – outside of the clinic, on the land, with indigenous medicines, methods, and healers.

This concept may not be new, but mainstream health services that continue to be taught and delivered in the same way impact this vision. This report attempts to illustrate what has been identified as needs and areas to be fostered moving forward. This is not an exhaustive research report but a step towards highlighting what may be necessary to support the achievement of this vision.



Background

T̂ilhqot'in - the People of the River

The T̂ilhqot'in Nation, located in the Cariboo Chilcotin, covers 6.65 million hectares (approximately 16 million acres) of land between the Fraser River and the Coast Mountains. The T̂ilhqot'in Nation consists of Tl'etingox (Anaham), ʔEsdilagh (Alexandria), Yunesit'in (Stone), T̂i DeIDel (Alexis Creek/Redstone), Tl'esqox (Toosey) and Xeni Gwet'in (Nemiah). The majority of the T̂ilhqot'in territory is rural and isolated with little access to services.

The T̂ilhqot'in Health Hub is represented by the six community Health Directors and was established in 2010. The health hub provides improved access to services through offering economies of scale. The communities can share human resources, resources, and services through the hub in a collaborative manner and provide a Nation voice to health matters. The T̂ilhqot'in are a part of the Interior Region Health Authority and by attending organized caucus meetings, provide input and direction to the First Nation Health Authority towards the development of programs and activities.

"...The T̂ilhqot'in, took a case, a long arduous case, fought incredibly hard by the Elders and communities to say 'we are a distinct nation, distinct people, and we have rights and title' – and they won that case with the Supreme Court...That is a historic community of people sharing language, customs, traditional traditions, historical experience, territory, and resources. That is a people. That is a Nation."

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond
Presentation at Assembly of First Nations
[February 9, 2021]

The T̂ilhqot'in and Traditional Practices

The T̂ilhqot'in, a unified Nation, has a deep knowledge of past history. The history, creation stories, laws, cultural and traditional practices have been taught to the many generations throughout the years. The T̂ilhqot'in exercise their cultural practices daily and strive to live a life that their ancestors did – the ʔEsggidam. The T̂ilhqot'in passionately protect their way of life.

Recently there has been increased acknowledgement that traditional health and wellness initiatives strengthen the health of an Indigenous community. Furthermore, that land-based learning is the appropriate method to transfer knowledge deepening the connection to the land in a thoughtful and purposeful way.

The First Nation Health Authority, in 2009, following their 7 health directives, established an additional health action to “support and advocate for Traditional Medicine and Practices.” The new health action was a result of unwavering feedback linking traditional wellness directly with community health.

The T̂ilhqot'in Nation has emphasized that focusing on traditional health & wellness is a priority that will, in tandem with the ‘pillars’ of reconciliation listed in the Gwets'en Nilt'l Pathway Agreement (2019), build healthy and resilient communities. In fact, traditional health and wellness directly and indirectly weaves through the Accords eight pillars of reconciliation:

1. T̂ilhqot'in Governance;
2. Strong T̂ilhqot'in Culture and Language;
3. Healthy Children and Families;
4. Healthy Communities;
5. Justice;
6. Education and Training;
7. T̂ilhqot'in Management Role for Lands and Resources in T̂ilhqot'in Territory; and
8. Sustainable Economic Base.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples have identified several Articles that affirm, reaffirm, acknowledge and recognize the urgent need to support Indigenous-led self-determination acts. Without these acts, the Nations are not growing, building or strengthening. It is a process that only the Nation can lead.



Substantiated Need

Indigenous people face several inequities such as residential school impacts; food insecurity; overcrowded living and unsuitable living standards; racism and discrimination in the health care system; educational barriers and underemployment. The World Health Organization has identified “that the social determinants can be more important than health care or lifestyle choice influencing health...[and that social health determinants] account for between 30-55% of health outcomes.” The Nation is addressing the social determinants in a holistic nation building process, knowing that the health outcomes rely on an intertwined complex approach. Not one issue can be addressed in isolation.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada recommended 8 Calls to Action specifically regarding health and several recommendations that support the overall holistic health of a community. The Calls to Action are aimed at recognizing past harms and seeking reconciliation while focusing on the health outcomes for Indigenous people. Past harms have caused intergenerational trauma leading to deep and traumatic wounds that forced and infliction to feel ashamed of language, culture and traditions. T̂ilhqot'in Nation building has integrated traditional health and wellness into all areas of self-determination but required careful strategic planning that continues yearly.

The CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal), a peer reviewed medical journal, in the article Indigenous-led Health Care Partnerships in Canada stated that “Canadian physicians receive minimal training in preventive medicine — including cultural, spiritual, psychological, social, historical, political and community-specific aspects of Indigenous patients’ needs.” Furthermore that, integrating traditional medicine and indigenous knowledge into western medicine has not been easily implemented but should be an approach for future practice. The lack of training to address cultural needs is a limitation to appropriate care for Indigenous patients.

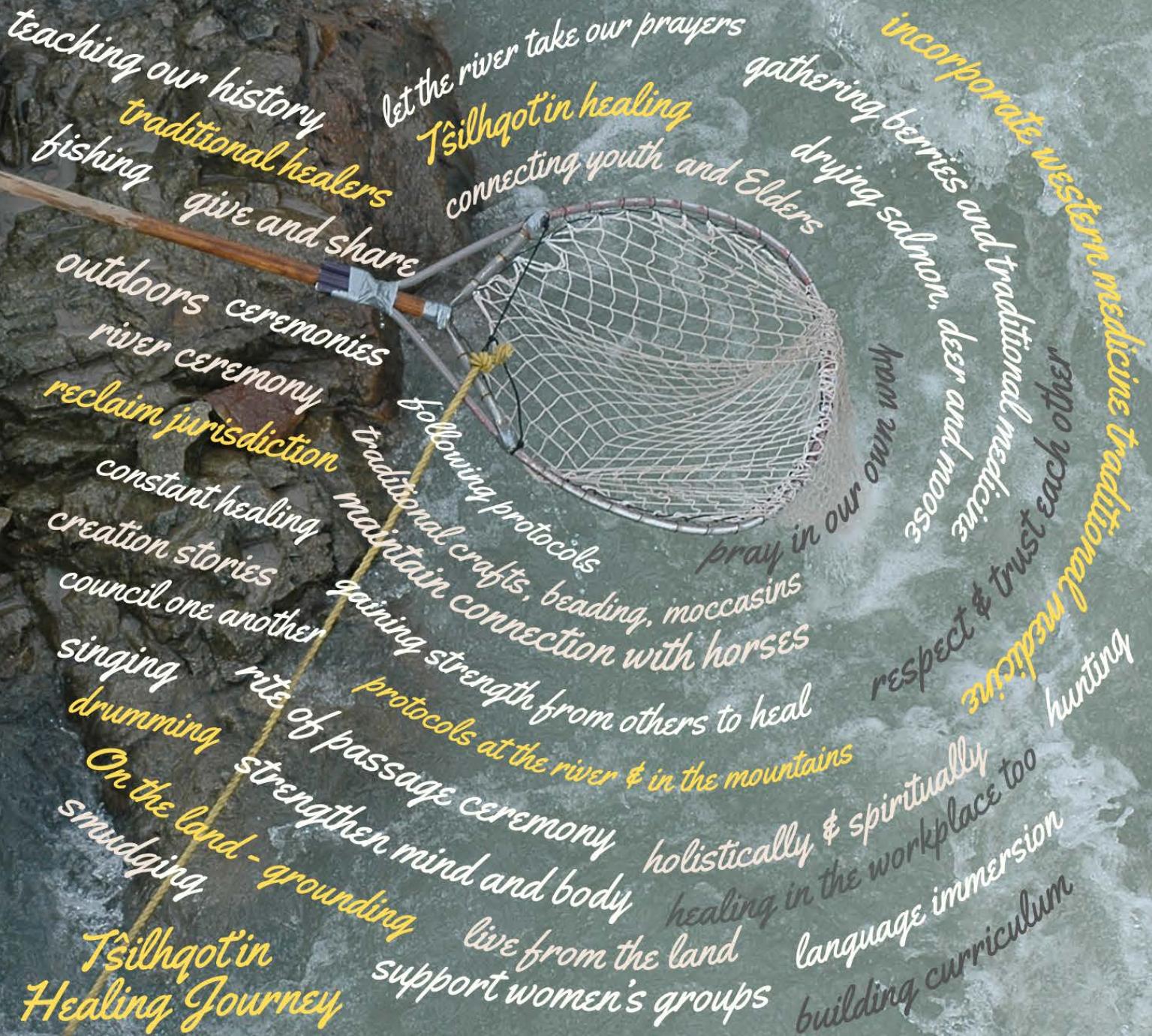
Furthermore, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond's investigative report *In Plain Sight* outlined findings from over 9000 consultations, that within the B.C. Healthcare system there was widespread systemic racism to Indigenous peoples. Recommendations further concluded that with governance by Indigenous peoples there should be comprehensive efforts to improve cultural safety and humility within the health services, regulators and education. Indigenous peoples have been marginalized and provided sub-standard care in the B.C. Healthcare system.

The *T̂ilhqot'in Healing Journey* is the path that the T̂ilhqot'in have embarked upon to address the social inequities, past harms and integration of traditional and western medicine. The *T̂ilhqot'in Healing Journey* is a lifelong journey to practice, protect, learn and teach traditional activities. The community is the driver to future health success, but resources are necessary to achieve their vision. Healthcare is a basic human right and the T̂ilhqot'in have outlined their requirements that will build a foundation of success.

T̄SILHQOT'IN

The 'River People'

TRADITIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS



teaching our history
traditional healers
fishing
give and share
outdoors ceremonies
river ceremony
reclaim jurisdiction
constant healing
creation stories
council one another
singing
drumming
smudging
T̄silhqot'in
Healing Journey

let the river take our prayers
T̄silhqot'in healing
connecting youth and Elders
gathered berries and traditional medicines
drying salmon, deer and moose
incorporate western medicine
prayer in our own
from who
respect & trust each other
hunting

following protocols
traditional crafts, beading, moccasins
maintain connection with horses
gaining strength from others to heal
protocols at the river & in the mountains
rite of passage ceremony
strengthen mind and body
live from the land
support women's groups
holistically & spiritually
healing in the workplace too
language immersion
building curriculum

CHAPTER 2 - T̂ILHQOT'IN TRADITIONAL WELLNESS VISION & MISSION

In 2018, the T̂ilhqot'in Nation engaged in traditional land-based healing strategic planning and the participants conceptualized the vision, mission and values of traditional wellness. This was further adapted and refined through the engagement to develop this report.

T̂ilhqot'in traditional health and wellness encompassed a blend of activities that support a balanced approach to strengthening the mental, physical, spiritual and emotional wellbeing of their people.

VISION

To have a thriving T̂ilhqot'in population robust in traditional medicine, healing and cultural practices enhancing the application of western medicine

MISSION

The T̂ilhqot'in exercise traditions on the nen (land) in a daily manner.

Through honouring our traditions and knowledge keepers we will ensure that valuable cultural teachings of T̂ilhqot'in language, cultural protocols, laws and practices on the nen (land) will reinforce the ʔEsggidam way of living

*"Our wealth is our culture, our spirituality and our connection with the lands and resources that sustained us."
Nenqay Deni Accord (2016)*



CHAPTER 3 - PROTOCOLS FOR WORKING WITHIN THE T̂SILHQOT'IN NATION

RESPECT

- Respect for the history, customs and protocols of the T̂silhqot'in people
 - Conduct yourself in a manner that honors the people
 - Ask community protocols and follow them before going to the community
 - Follow the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) as a minimum standard
-

CONFIDENTIALITY

- A fundamental element of trust begins with keeping clients' sensitive information confidential
 - All staff working in healthcare with the T̂silhqot'in have legal, ethical, and contractual obligations to protect information and to not disclose or use information about the clients or people in care
 - Seek additional external health supports when necessary to support individual need for confidentiality
-

JURISDICTION

- Acknowledge the unceded T̂silhqot'in territory, self-determination and jurisdiction of the Nation
 - Recognition that the T̂silhqot'in Nation and the communities have the right and competence to govern their own people based upon traditional laws and modern knowledge
-

CARE & CONSIDERATION

- Appreciate that there is healing happening in the communities and that all health care practices should be entered into delicately and with mindful thought since everyone is interconnected
- Enact immediate after-crisis debriefing with requested and approved healers and support
- Know that multiple traumas and emergency events have occurred in the Nation and therefore wrap around supports are necessary





VALUES

RECLAIMING JURISDICTION

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE
TRANSFER

DEVELOP WRITTEN
KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES

CELEBRATE SUCCESS
IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE

FOOD SECURITY

LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

HOLISTIC APPROACH

PROTECT THE LAND

AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY PLANS
WITH SHARED NATION GOALS

EQUALITY

MUTUAL RESPECT & TRUST

LAND-BASED HEALING



CHAPTER 4 – HONOURING TRADITIONAL AND HEALTH SUPPORT WORKERS

Supporting Traditional Healers, Community Health Staff and Cultural Workers

The gravity of challenges that traditional healers, community health staff and cultural workers have encountered throughout the years takes a toll. These issues were difficult enough prior to the pandemic and wildfires. Frontline workers have experienced compounded stress, burnout, illness, and depression.

What are the supports for traditional healers, community health staff and cultural workers? Often their health and wellness take a backseat, and this will only result in an impact to the community.

As vital resources to the community, more care is necessary to care for those that help support the T̂silhqot'in Healing Journey.

Advancing the Traditional Healers' Work

Appropriate compensation for traditional healing was a complex matter with a fluctuation of responses. It was noted that some traditional healers would not accept money for their services but covering expenses such as meals, travel and accommodations and a traditional gift would be acceptable. Asking the healer how they want to be paid is a respectful process. The delivery of healing and services must be reciprocated with respect of also knowing what the individual may need and meeting the needs of the individuals as well.

It was acknowledged that a traditional healers' work cannot be limited to normal business hours. The healer is along with the people on their life journey as they continue to provide support and blessings to people in need outside of when they see them in person. Healing depletes the body energy.

There was discussion focused on paying traditional knowledge keepers and language speakers rates that were comparable to those with academic or professional degrees since they are imparting the cultural knowledge that will enhance self-determination. There was sentiment that healers required a role in the community office and that they could support several initiatives daily.

Nevertheless, due to budget constraints to deliver a wide range of services and the need to standardize pricing, the T̂ilhqot'in organizations have a set daily rate for traditional healers. The next step to this process is to develop policies and procedures that can be standardized for use across the T̂ilhqot'in organizations. This can help standardize and support equitable compensation to healers.

As traditional healing and the delivery of traditional services is incorporated into most nation building activities the funding needs to increase.

CHAPTER 4 - PROMOTING CULTURAL WELLNESS

The People

Promoting T̂ilhqot'in cultural wellness includes making advancements to improving the quality of life. Numerous improvements to the physical infrastructure in communities are required to enhance the standards of living. The Nation and communities are developing plans to improve housing, establish sidewalks and lighting, update commercial buildings, bring wastewater and potable water services up to standard and add or improve recreational infrastructure. Physical infrastructure is one aspect to improving the T̂ilhqot'in well-being.

Another aspect is fully immersing traditions and culture into daily activities. Linking western and traditional medicine starts with the health departments who are the bridge between two cultures – the community and western healthcare system. This includes advocating for the T̂ilhqot'in to encourage traditional healing and activities as a baseline to health and wellbeing.

Elders, the knowledge keepers and heads of households, require immediate support. Most families care for their elders in home. However, rurality and isolated medical services can sometimes prevent the level of care necessary. Research at the Nation level to determine the viability of Elder's care homes and similar services is currently occurring.

However, the need to support Elders expands past health care. Their needs include support to perform daily activities such as shopping, shovelling sidewalks, and gathering firewood to name a few. The support towards Elders encourages a continuation of knowledge to traditional and cultural advancements.

Residential school has intergenerationally impacted how people parent. Much discussion was devoted to the need to integrate parents and families into traditional activities where parental support and guidance could be fostered. Family wellness camps also provide a safe environment for families, away from normal influences, to learn or relearn the T̂ilhqot'in culture promoting a healthy daily lifestyle.

Strengthening mental health and wellness through healing ceremonies, circles, counselling and wrap around supports is a necessity. As the pandemic resumes, there is concern over increases to mental health related issues.



Food Security

Floods, heatwaves, and wildfires have been recently more prevalent and growing each year in the T̂ilhqot'in. Climate change related disruptions have diminished traditional food supplies. The Nation has relied seasonally on berry picking, salmon fishing, hunting for moose and deer and preserving food for the winter months.

The efforts to seek food security have opened new doors to what health and wellness mean. Traditional health and wellness require adequate amounts of traditional nutrient dense food to be available to community members and that medicines are protected for future generations.

Some work has been started in each community and at the Nation level to progress food security initiatives including agricultural production, promoting local lake-based fish hatcheries, developing community gardens and greenhouses. There is a focus on teaching youth to hunt, fish, trap, gather and make medicine and preserve food but like all other cultural activities – the cost to support these initiatives require funding.

Capacity Development

There was an overwhelming emphasis on the need for traditional knowledge transfer capacity development as a method to protect and preserve traditional and cultural knowledge. Through building capacity, a protection mechanism is enforced by advancing T̂ilhqot'in learners who will pass on traditions and cultural teachings to future generations. While there are formal training and education institutions the T̂ilhqot'in have emphasised that cultural knowledge transfer aligns best with land-based teaching.

Many of the T̂ilhqot'in health-related positions are filled with external human resources. Developing future generations capacity in health in the community is paramount to advancing T̂ilhqot'in health & wellness. With the onset of a mental health crisis in the Nation and across Canada, the mental health programs are facing barriers in capacity, education, training and connecting with T̂ilhqot'in language speakers. More capacity is needed in this area.

Supporting land-based teachings should be aligned with developing written and visual curriculum that can be incorporated into lesson plans of all ages in the school system.



The Nen (land) is Healing

Discussions around how to reduce negative health impacts lead back to emphasis on land-based healing. Land-based healing and is a holistic immersion of culture and traditions on the land focusing on the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellbeing.

Land-based activities strengthens cultural revitalization at the same it supports the *T̂silhqot'in Healing Journey*. Being in nature is a clearing process that drives people to be mindful and present, grounding people. While the land and animals serve as spiritual gift givers imparting knowledge.

The T̂silhqot'in people have been known as horse people since first contact. Equine therapy is popular in each community. The programs offer life skills, mentorship, traditional knowledge transfer coupled sometimes with mental health professionals on the land with the therapy of horses. Traditional knowledge transfer includes enhancing T̂silhqot'in spirituality through drumming, prayers, songs, sweats, ceremonies, and other rituals.

A diverse age group gains experience learning about the horses, caring for the horses, riding on traditional trails, and viewing traditional sites not otherwise accessible. Accessing and using areas in the territory that have cultural significance also advances protections over those lands.

Land-based healing including the incorporation of horse programs is invaluable, but expensive. Health departments have noted their importance to addressing several health-related issues in the *T̂silhqot'in Healing Journey* so they are constantly seeking creative methods to fund these initiatives.

Land-based healing is not limited to traditional indigenous activities. The health departments and communities recognize the need to support mainstream sports and recreation activities as well.

Cultural infrastructure on the land provides a space to perform traditional knowledge transfer, and some useable year-round. This includes traditional spaces such as arbours and gathering houses or fixtures such as dip net stands, dried meat hanging frames or outdoor cooking structures.

The T̂silhqot'in have put more emphasis into providing healthcare services on the land during gatherings or events. This begins with developing relationships with community members in a neutral environment. Providing flexibility of care supports those that do not want to go into the health clinic for various reasons.

Valuable reciprocal teaching can be done on the land – teaching healthcare professionals about the cultural activities unlocks their sense of the traditional way of life. Community healthcare clinics can seek ways to make traditional healing options available to community members in addition to western medicine as they appreciate the value to the community.

CHAPTER 6 - T̂ILHQOT'IN TRADITIONAL HEALTH & WELLNESS ACTION PLAN

Moving through the *T̂ilhqot'in Healing Journey* includes the overall goal of strengthening traditions and culture, it cannot be completed without funding. The communities and Nation through various strategies have documented their goal to work back to their traditional way of life – increasing language speakers; enhancing culture, oral history, protocols and laws; and conducting year-round land-based programs.

First Nations Health Authority Calls to Action

Increase Nation and Community Health Department funding for:

- Traditional healing services
- Elders Support to include support towards:
 - the cost of supporting day-to-day needs
 - honoraria allowance to support knowledge transfer activity
- Traditional gatherings and culturally integrated events based upon yearly community health planning needs
- Food security planning & initiatives
- Equine therapy programs



T̂silhqot'in Nation & Communities Action Plan

The T̂silhqot'in Social Cultural Action Plan – T̂silhqot'in Ch'in Deni Nidlin outlines a 3-Year Health Action Plan that specifically aligns with actions that were identified through the course of writing this report. Some actions are in addition to the broader strategies.

01

Support Traditional Healers, Community Health Staff and Cultural Workers

Goal: Ensure those that care for the people are supported

- *Develop individual wellness plans inclusive of western & traditional healing needs*
- *Incorporate traditional practices and healing into daily health office activities*
 - *Incorporate T̂silhqot'in prayers*
 - *Teaching language to staff*
 - *Showcase traditional meals*
- *Incorporate routine medicine gathering & making*
- *Participation and assistance at T̂silhqot'in gatherings to learn traditional activities*
- *Host an 'all-healers' convention*
- *Develop procedures and conduct rules for traditional cultural workers*
- *Develop after-care forms to receive feedback on satisfaction of services provided*
- *Establish a health cabinet repository inclusive of traditional medicine (i.e. pitch salve including a description and use)*

T̂ilhqot'in Nation & Communities Action Plan

02

Take Care of the People

Improve living standards in the community and contribute to a culturally-focused local economy

- *Advance planning of Elders Care homes in communities (Alignment Health Action Plan)*
- *Expand Elders Support funds to include day-to-day needs and activities*
- *Honour our Elders and establish an Elders governance system for nation building*
- *Improve living standards in community (i.e. housing, safe sidewalks & lighting, recreational infrastructure)*
- *Develop food security plans & initiatives (Alignment Health Action Plan)*
- *Fortify food security with dedicated education towards food processing and preservation*
- *Offer parental support and guidance*
- *Strengthen mental health and wellness through healing ceremonies, circles, care, counselling and wrap around supports*
- *Recognize and reward healthy role models and successes*
- *Support and cultivate community businesses and individual entrepreneurs*
- *Celebrate all educational successes for K-12, post-secondary students and professional development*
- *Promote and build healthy daily lifestyle activities*
- *Create safe spaces for men & women to take control of their health and wellbeing*
- *Develop men's and women's groups*

T̂ilhqot'in Nation & Communities Action Plan

03

Develop Capacity & Advance Nation Building

Goal: Develop and strengthen the skills, education and resources necessary for self-government.

- *Create T̂ilhqot'in traditional and cultural curriculum (written & visual) Inclusive of traditional food & medicinal gathering, hunting, processing and preservation (Alignment – Education Action Plan & Language Culture Action Plan)*
- *Establish community member online server where T̂ilhqot'in stories, songs, traditional laws, language resources can be shared (Alignment – Education Action Plan & Language Culture Action Plan)*
- *Develop a human resources strategy that includes future employment planning for all services within each community*
- *Re-igniting Living the T̂ilhqot'in Way - getting to ʔEsggidam*
- *Advance T̂ilhqot'in Law to the Written Form*
- *Foster jurisdiction governance committees & structures*
- *Support dedicated self-determination representatives in each community*
- *Implement protections at the Nation and community-level that protect traditional knowledge & information sharing (i.e. standardize research & knowledge sharing protocols endorsed by Chief & Council as key entry point)*
- *Restrengthen service agency relationships and coordinate alignment*
- *Develop cultural competency programs for external & internal agencies working with the T̂ilhqot'in*
- *Train, mentor and support education towards the T̂ilhqot'in 8 pillars*
- *Establish dedicated roles in communities parallel to the Nation-building roles*
- *Create community plans and human resource strategies for each of the 8 pillars*
- *Invest in education (i.e. bursaries, supplemental books, tuition, living expenses)*

T̂ilhqot'in Nation & Communities Action Plan

04

Promote Land-Based Healing & Traditional Teaching

Goal: Strengthen healing, teaching and cultural revitalization practices in a holistic manner while focusing on the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellbeing.

- *Create community land-based healing and resiliency plans (Alignment Health Action Plan)*
- *Establish a Traditional Health & Wellness Committee*
- *Teach traditional knowledge, culture, language, oral history and protocols with Elders and Youth (Alignment - Language Revitalization Strategy)*
- *Construct cultural infrastructure to support learning*
- *Develop cultural teaching resources to document language and history (Alignment - Language Revitalization Strategy)*
- *Identify and protect areas of cultural significance and preserve access routes*
- *Support equine therapy programs*
- *Foster traditional activities: Hunting, Fishing, Trapping, Medicinal Gathering, Preserving traditional foods, Hide tanning, Traditional crafting*
- *Establish youth leadership program with curriculum*
- *Enhance T̂ilhqot'in spirituality and promote drumming, prayers, songs sweats, baby-naming ceremonies and all other rituals*

CHAPTER 7 - CONCLUSION

This report highlights the foundational work required to begin to incorporate traditional health and wellness systems with western healthcare systems. Some health and wellness initiatives are already being implemented but need to be fostered and strengthened. The *T̂ilhqot'in Healing Journey* is holistic, inclusive of multiple aspects of everyday life, and will require devoted resources and strategic planning to advance. The healing journey is at the heart of Nation building.

"It was almost like we went to sleep for a long time, it was a matter of someone waking us up. Our people started to pick up drums and sing... If the ancestors do not agree with our plans, they change our plans."

Elder Angelina Stump
T̂ilhqot'in Women's
Council



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