

Tahltan Central Government Announces Creation of New Health Department

DEASE LAKE, BRITISH COLUMBIA, December 27, 2022 – The Tahltan Central Government (TCG) is excited to announce the creation of a new department. The TCG Health Department will be forged under the direction of Cassandra Puckett, who will be leading as Department Director. The Health Department will support interacting health programs that serve Tahltan community members, the complete scope of which is still to be determined. Cassandra will be working closely with the Tahltan and Iskut Bands to ensure that priorities of communities in territory, in terms of the health and wellness challenges, barriers, and gaps, are included in the planning and development of the department.

British Columbia's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' (DRIPA's) overarching purpose is to implement the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). UNDRIP states that Indigenous peoples have the right to the improvement of their health, among other things, and equal rights to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The remoteness of Tahltan Territory's communities has resulted in a lack of services in territory that are readily available to those in living in urban areas. The TCG Health Department will not only work to rectify this but will do so using a Tahltan-led approach, developing services based on the specific needs of the Tahltan people.

"The creation of the TCG Health Department is something to celebrate and something of which I am particularly proud," said Chad Norman Day, President of the TCG. "We have long been committed to focusing on improving our homeland by bringing a better way of life for all Tahltans. The TCG is working diligently through this initiative to help better the physical, mental, and spiritual wellness of our people. All of the work we do is not only for Tahltans now, but for our future generations. In establishing the Health Department alongside our other departments, we are caring for our lands and resources, but also for the overall wellbeing of Tahltans, which is absolutely essential if we want them to benefit from the services offered by our other departments. We can provide members with extra skills and training, financial and employment opportunities, and more, but without their health, they can never reach their full potential."

Cassandra Puckett, TCG's Health Director, said "Recognizing that there are unique health and wellness needs within the Tahltan Territory, the TCG responded by developing a new TCG Health Department. Guided by the Tahltan Nation, the department will work collaboratively with our Tahltan Governance, Tahltan Communities, the Health Authority, Industry partners, and the government to strengthen our ability to address challenges in a way that is holistic and meaningful to the Nation. Honouring our shared history as Tahltan people will be foundational in working towards creative and innovative ways to support health and wellness and improving health outcomes across the Nation."

ABOUT THE TAHLTAN NATION

The Tahltan Central Government (TCG) is the administrative governing body of the Tahltan Nation and is the representative government of the Tahltan Nation with respect to the inherent and collective Aboriginal title and rights shared by all Tahltan people. The Tahltan Nation's Territory spans 95,933 square km of Northwest British Columbia or the equivalent of 11 per cent of the province. For more information, visit: www.tahltan.org.

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