

						
<i>AFNQL Secretariat</i>	<i>Education Council</i>	<i>Health and Social Services Commission</i>	<i>Human Resources Development Commission</i>	<i>Economic Development Commission</i>	<i>Youth Council</i>	<i>Sustainable Development Institute</i>

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MOBILIZED AROUND REAL CHANGES:
FIRST NATIONS' WELLNESS IS AT THE VERY TOP OF PRIORITIES**

Wendake, February 1st 2012 – One week after the Crown/First Nations Gathering, the Chief of the Assembly of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador, Ghislain Picard, is of the opinion that the federal government has to do more to reestablish the trust of First Nation communities. The plague of addictions in the communities must also be the top priority of Mr. Harper's government. "The First Nation leaders make every effort to ensure a better future for their population, and sometimes under precarious conditions", stated the Chief of the AFNQL. "Unfortunately, too often, the difficult situations faced by our populations are expressed by the consumption of alcohol, drugs, prescription medications, by violence, abuse, not to mention the fact of being further confronted to problems relating to the continuum of services."

It is this alarming situation of addictions amongst the First Nations which brought, in February 2011, more than 400 community stakeholders to work together and develop an action plan to curb this plague. In addition to identifying the multi-factorial problems, the stakeholders and political leaders of the communities proposed solutions that could be implemented on a short, medium and long term. "The Chiefs of the Assembly of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador have given their support to this action plan and its proposed content. Every effort will be made to curb this scourge. But we can only meet the challenge through a partnership with the federal and provincial governments, which is paramount", stated Chief Ghislain Picard.

The Chief of the AFNQL took advantage of the Crown-First Nations Gathering in Ottawa, last week, to hand a copy of the action plan to the federal health minister, the Honorable Leona Aglukkaq. Mr. Picard intends to follow up on this initial contact and make sure that the interest of the federal government will be maintained, particularly in the establishment of a detoxification center in Quebec. "The lack of a detoxification center in our region deprives the First Nations from an essential frontline service", stated Chief Picard.

Annual Wellness Day

Today, we are proud to launch officially the Annual First Nation Wellness Day. This day reminds us that each one of us can contribute in supporting proud and strong collectivities. Collective wellbeing starts with the individual.

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About the AFNQL

The AFNQL is the regional organization regrouping the 43 Chiefs of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador. For information: www.apnql-afnql.com.

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