

- NOTICE -

To: The Pabineau First Nation Community

It brings the Chief and Council great pleasure to announce that the official "Grand Opening" of the Pabineau First Nation Community Health Center is scheduled for 1 PM, Wednesday, August 17th, at the Pabineau First Nation Community Health Center facility. A number of dignitaries, Health Canada staff, members of the Regional Health Authority, and the entire Pabineau First Nation community are invited to attend this monumental community event.

The Chief and Council and Health staff are very proud to have shared in the development of the concept, design, construction, aesthetics, and opening of a facility that will play such a vital role in the future of our beautiful community. As a community, we can all take pride in the opening of this beautiful facility which will stand for decades as a testament to our commitment to improving the physical, mental, and spiritual health of our community members.

It is now a well-documented fact that aboriginals residing in First Nation communities throughout Canada face higher rates of disease and are exposed to greater unnecessary health risks than the non-aboriginal Canadian public. The statistical variances between First Nation aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians are startling. For example, in terms of life expectancy, First Nation people are 5 to 7 years lower than national average. The First Nation infant mortality rate is 1.5 times higher than the national average. The First Nation suicide rate is 2.5 times the national average. First Nations aboriginals are 8 times more likely to contract tuberculosis, 5 times more likely to contract Hepatitis A, and 7 times more likely to contract chlamydia than other Canadians. Twenty-nine percent of First Nation water systems are labelled as "high risk."

The vast gap between the health status of aboriginals and non-aboriginals exists for numerous reasons. The most common over-arching explanation cited by health professionals is that First Nation people are less likely than other Canadians to receive the health care they require. To change this, our vision as Health Service providers must be to build effective, efficient, responsive, culturally sensitive, accountable, and sustainable First Nation health systems in an effort to improve the health status of all members of the Pabineau First Nation community. The work of raising the health status of our families to that of the average Canadian (and better) will be challenging, but it is my expectation that, as a community, we have the capacity to rise to this challenge.

The Chief and Council look forward to celebrating the official opening of the Pabineau First Nation Community Health Center with you next Wednesday, August 17th. A small lunch and snacks will be served during the afternoon festivities. We look forward to seeing you there.

Chief David Peter-Paul