



## **Report to Senior Inter-ministry Steering (SIMS) Committee- Dec. 4, 2014 Highlights and Areas of Focused Attention**

### **Poverty Reduction Task Force – Partnering to End Poverty**

- ❖ Addressing poverty continues to be a priority area of focus for the Northeast RIC. Issues such as housing, barriers to employment and education continue to be identified for people in the northeast including parents of young children.
- ❖ The Northeast RIC and the Poverty Reduction Task Force hosted the *Partnering to End Poverty* forum in Tisdale October 16, 2014 utilizing a Community Initiatives Fund grant. According to participant evaluations, we achieved the forum goals of raising awareness of how poverty affects all; consulting community and first voices to identify emerging issues and opportunities; and; highlighting successful community initiatives addressing poverty.
- ❖ Forum presenters included: Helene Johnson, Area Director for Eastern Region II Métis Nation; Dr. Julie Kryzanowski, Medical Health Officer, Saskatoon Health Region; Joanne Havelock and Lisa Workman, Regina, Poverty Free Saskatchewan; Sheri Fengstad, Myrna Soonias, Kathleen Copeland - Poverty Reduction Task Force, Elder Emma Pelly – Cumberland House
- ❖ Panel presenters highlighting partnerships included: Kinistin Saulteaux Nation and North East School Division; North East Supported Employment Program and Parkland Coop; Nipawin Oasis and Women in Trades; Cumberland College counsellors and students.
- ❖ To enhance partnerships with business, municipal government, faith communities, First Nations, aboriginal and Métis organizations and help sustain momentum of the successful Poverty Reduction Task Force, the RIC applied for a grant to support a part- time Partnerships to End Poverty coordinator. We were recently informed that we received \$25,000 from the Community Initiatives Fund.

### **Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime - Community Mobilization Initiative**

- ❖ Nipawin Hub has held weekly meetings since September 2013 with more than 39 cases closed to date. Hub progress evaluations completed by the agency participated indicated increased communication leading to positive outcomes for individuals and families.
- ❖ The Melfort District Planning Committee and the city of Melfort established a steering committee early in 2014 and have spearheaded a Hub in Melfort. Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime is currently conducting training sessions in Melfort. The group expects to begin weekly Hub meetings in January.
- ❖ Tisdale is also exploring the development of a Hub and service providers have had three meetings to date to determine capacity to address issues of imminent risk through a Hub.

### **Early Years**

- ❖ The Northeast RIC in partnership with the 0-3 Years Early Childhood Task Force, and continue to work with community and human services to improve outcomes for our youngest

citizens. The RIC has identified the need to measure and monitor progress toward our goal of improving outcomes and is exploring approaches utilized by other RIC regions. The 0-3 Years Early Childhood Task Force and community services continue to supporting parents to be the best through a number of ongoing and new “Boots on the Ground” initiatives. In addition, the Kids First Community Developer is connecting with the Regional Obstetrics and Maternal Health Program and Primary Health Care Provider Teams to seek opportunities enhance outcomes for young children. The 0-3 Early Years Task Force hosted a conversation with pediatrician Dr. Baard in November. Dr. Baard was very candid in his description of the effects of poverty on the health of children describing high rates of dental caries and dental surgery, nutrition deficiencies and a prevalence of skin disorders in young children affected by poverty.

- ❖ In October Health Canada has temporarily agreed to support early childhood intervention services to children and families living on First Nations reserves. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada ceased funding for intervention services in June. Northeast Early Childhood Intervention program are now able to reinstate services to 68 children between 0-5 years affected by developmental delays. The Health Canada agreement expires March 31, 2015.

### **Challenges and opportunities in our region**

- ❖ The lack of financial and human resources for RIC supported or led initiatives is a challenge. Community Initiatives Fund grants have helped to support initiatives such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy in the short term however, to address the complexities of poverty a long term comprehensive approach is required.
- ❖ In a rural region, dedicating a consistent committed individual to participate in Hub discussions is a challenge due to staffing. First Nations Child and Family Services agencies are unable to dedicate staff to attend Hub meetings in Melfort or Nipawin so they are absent from the team. Provincial front line workers generally provide services in more than one geographic location sometimes separated by up to 2- 3 hour drive in distance. Tisdale is very motivated to deal with situations of elevated risk through a Hub approach, however, our region does not have the human resource capacity for all agencies to meet weekly in Tisdale.

### **Provincial Challenges and Opportunities**

- ❖ The RIC is encouraged by recent announcements of legislation and strategies. The province is to be commended for announcing a Poverty Reduction Strategy in its Throne Speech. The revised Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol has been well received by the service providers.
- ❖ The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan highlights several strategies which complement the Saskatchewan Child and Family Agenda. Among the recommendations, “building on existing programs that recognize the importance of healthy families and community and positive emotional development” in particular holds promise for the work of the integrated services within our region.

**Respectfully submitted by:**

**Brenda Ives, RIC Coordinator**

**Delphine Grandguillot and Rob McKay, RIC Co-chairs**