

CBHSSJB response to “Letter of
Concern” by Eric House, published in
The Nation magazine December 17,
2015

What is happening with the Nishiiyuu Department? The work of Nishiiyuu is the first key stage into the health and healing of our Cree Nation.

- Nishiiyuu Department is here to stay. The Department is growing in size and importance every year.
 - Nishiiyuu's main role is to support the implementation of Cree helping methods within Eeyou Istchee.
 - A Nishiiyuu conference with the Elders was held during the week of October 19th, 2015
 - The feedback from the conference is being used to guide the development of Nishiiyuu.

Why did we put a non-native as interim Executive Director of CHB where were our Cree people?

- In the life of the organization, both native and non-native interim and permanent Executive Directors were hired.
- The Board of Directors appointed the senior manager who has the best qualifications to provide effective interim leadership during a transition period, including several years as Director of Chisasibi Hospital.
- Recruitment of a permanent Executive Director is done by a hiring committee consisting of representatives of the Cree Nation Government, the CBHSSJB, and the Ministry of Health and Social Services of Quebec. The hiring committee interviews candidates and makes a recommendation to the Board of Directors. The choice of ED is approved by the Board of Directors.

Along with non-native people, why are consultants or people with no experience, in the culture of the Cree, being placed into directorship or management positions. Without this first-hand experience and understanding of the Cree people's world these appointments will always misguide or not understand the full needs of the Cree people?

- Every effort is made to recruit JBNQA Beneficiaries to management positions. For example, most recently, Cree professionals were hired for the positions of Director of Chisasibi CMC and Director of Mistissini CMC.
- Through the Cree succession program, promising employees are placed on a management track, and the Staffing policy of the CBHSSJB gives priority to qualified JBNQA Beneficiaries. But there is a shortage of qualified professionals for certain jobs, as was demonstrated at the 2013 Roundtable on Cree Capacity. In recruitment of non-natives, and the hiring of consultants, previous experience in working with the Cree is a major asset.

How is accountability been practiced for the non-implementation and non-integration of traditional methods in all programming within the Cree world for the implementation of Cree Policy?

- At the request of the board, an Act Respecting Health Services and Social Services for Cree Native Persons is being revamped with the intent of integrating traditional methods within the law.
- Currently, the Act doesn't allow the use of Cree Helping Methods within the organization
- Liability issues need to be considered.

Why are our Cree people expressing inadequate services for Montreal and Val'dor within Cree Patient Services? Food services within Espresso and foster homes? Lodging in Espresso and foster homes in Montreal and Valdor? Travel? Escorts?

- CBHSSJB is well aware of the complaints and as a result is implementing an improvement plan with 3 major components:
 1. Transportation. Major improvements have been put in place for the greater comfort and safety of Cree patients who have to travel out of territory, including
 - implementation of an Air Charter in October 2015, in partnership with Air Creebec
 - streamlined emergency medevac procedures in February 2016
 2. Lodging
 - Every formal and informal complaint about lodging has been taken into consideration in the current strategy. Through public tender the CBHSSJB is seeking a single place where all Cree patients and escorts can be lodged in Montreal, with a service agreement in place to ensure that standards are met. Enforcement of cleanliness and courtesy standards will be rigorous.
 3. Meal service
 - To improve the quality of food service for Cree patients in Montreal, a nutritionist will be overseeing the meals and be present on location at the centralized lodging.

Why are the youth intervention services a growing concern as a questionable process, within the Cree Health Board, by the Commission? Youth foster care? Youth helping plans where are they?

- The Board of Directors has overseen the implementation of major improvements to Youth Protection in the last 3 years, under the leadership of the DYP, Robert Auclair. As a result, in June 2014 the Quebec Human Rights Commission has closed their investigation and commended the CBHSSJB on its progress and current strategic direction.
- With regard to foster homes, Guidelines to provide a Safe Environment for Children in Eeyou Istchee have been developed.

Where are the family interventions to help the Cree people?

- First line services including psychosocial interventions with children and families are offered based on an integrated approach.
- Family therapy is available under Mental Health Services. Chisasibi is only community with a full-time psychologist.
- 205 CBHSSJB staff received training in Family Group Conferencing, which is an option for supportive services for children/youth and families in each community.

Why are the CHB employees expressing stressed work conditions?

- Working in the health sector is stressful, but there are no indicators showing that the CBHSSB employees are more stressed than other regions of the health network
- The CBHSSJB is a unionized workplace with excellent compensation, working conditions and benefits.
- Local services work best when there is a stable of team of people in place over the long term. One factor contributing to stressful working conditions is high turnover. As the Grand Chief has repeatedly said, we need to work together with partners to inspire and support youth to pursue their education.

Where is the capacity building for this sector?

- The Cree Succession Plan is a program is a system to fast-track employees who have management potential, but who might have gaps in their education or experience. Through the CSP the Cree Health Board supports these individuals to achieve their goals and is helping to develop the next generation of Cree leaders.
- In addition to running a dedicated program to prepare Cree nursing graduates for their licensing exam, the Cree Nursing Integration Program has created jobs for Cree nurses who have completed their education and licensing, but who still lack the hands-on experience needed to work in the more challenging conditions of remote communities, where nurses sometimes have to make decisions that normally would be made by doctors. Through the program, Cree nurses can come back home sooner and get started on their career.
- Furthermore, at least \$2M is being invested annually for training and capacity building within the organization, of which approximately \$900,000 was budgeted in social training 2014-2015 and \$700,000 for 2015-2016.

Where is the Special Needs Services?

- Support for children and adults with disabilities is a lifelong challenge for many Cree entities. Special Needs Services is being restructured to better meet the current and future needs of the Cree Nation.
- Currently range of services is available to individuals with disabilities, including MSDC day programs, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Homecare, Speech Therapy and help seeking grants and benefits for things like adapting the home to be wheelchair accessible.
- This is an area where regional and local partnerships are essential. A plan is being developed and consultation with the Local Directors and other key stakeholders.
- Once the consultation is completed the plan will be presented to the Board of Directors, and subsequently resources will be allocated.

People are not given enough answers and reports are done only to the CHB BOD but not to the Cree people.

- The CBHSSJB shares information about what is happening on its website www.creehealth.org and its [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Soundcloud](#) accounts. It responds to media enquiries from [CBC North Cree radio](#), [Maamuitaau](#) and [The Nation](#) magazine on a regular basis.
- Summaries of Board Meeting minutes <http://www.creehealth.org/board-directors/board-meetings>
- Annual Reports <http://www.creehealth.org/annual-reports>
- Elected Community Representatives on the Board of Directors can be invited to give updates to Chief and Council. It is a major part of their role to act as a link to bring community concerns directly to the Board of Directors and Executive of the CBHSSJB.
- CBHSSJB Chair provides a major update to the Grand Council of the Crees Annual General Assembly every August.
- A Regional General Assembly will be held April 12-14, 2016 in Waskaganish.