**NOTICE TO ALL SHIBOGAMA FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES:**

**From Gordon Anderson, Health Transformation Coordinator for**

**Shibogama First Nations Council**

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NAN First Nations have always asserted their right to have their own health and wellness programs and services. In order to ensure equal access to health care, the Health Transformation Process was started by Nishnawbe-Aski Nation on March 31, 2016 through Resolution 16/04 - *Call for Declaration of Public Health Emergency*. This Declaration asserted our rights to develop a First Nations health system with full access to high quality health care within our communities.

As NAN Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler has stated, “The chronic failure of the health care system for First Nations across NAN territory has left our communities in a state of crisis. Children are dying, and lives are at risk.”

In 2017, a charter was developed between the Federal government, the province of Ontario, and Nishnawbe Aski Nation that committed all three parties to a health transformation process. This process includes:

* Developing new approaches to improve access to better health care at the community level.
* Supporting the ability of First Nations communities and organizations to deliver their own services.
* Changes in policy and law to assist in the design a new health system for NAN First Nations, including realistic funding models and more control over the decision-making process at the community level.
* Removing existing barriers so that First Nations can plan, design and manage their own services.

The community participation model was developed from the feedback from Chiefs, Health Directors, Youth and Elders. It is an ongoing process for community members to share their experiences of the current system and how they would like to see it changed. Communities will identify their own priorities and will identify what support they would like to have moving forward.

As Health Transformation Coordinator for Shibogama First Nations Council my job is to work with communities to organize health transformation participation sessions and provide information on health transformation. One of the ways we are working on improving our health care system is through Community Participation.

For this to work, community consultation is essential. It is important for you to tell us what changes you would like to have in the system and how you would like to be supported in moving forward. Your views will help us identify community-led solutions to the problems you have identified.

In normal times, I would have visited each Shibogama community and talked to Chief and Council and community members about their views on how the health care system could be improved. Originally, three visits to each community were planned. Because of Covid 19 and the travel restrictions that are in place I cannot visit your Community. Your input is very important to us. We need to know your Community’s priorities and the needs and wishes of the Community so that the health transformation initiative can support your goals and any projects you think would address these goals.

Because I cannot visit each community to consult with you, we will have to use a different process. The Heath Director in each community will receive boxes of questionnaires. A person in each community will be designated to distribute a questionnaire to each adult in the community and that person will also pick up completed questionnaires. This notice will also be posted Shibogama Health website: <https://www.shibogama.on.ca/departments/health>

Please contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached by phone at 807-738-5327 or by email at gordona@shib.ca Thank you.