



**Nisga'a Lisims Government**

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**NISGAANATION.CA**

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To: Members of the Nisga'a Valley Health Authority

**RE: The Purpose and Goal of the Proposed Bylaw Amendments**

I am pleased that you are being provided with the enclosed members' meeting notice and proposed amendments to the Nisga'a Valley Health Authority's bylaws. This represents a step towards Nisga'a Lisims Government's goal of improving the delivery of your health services.

In short, the members' meeting will allow you an opportunity to amend the Nisga'a Valley Health Authority's bylaws to provide Nisga'a Lisims Government with more direct authority over health services and an increased role in the delivery of those services.

These amendments are proposed in response to the ideas and issues that you and other Nisga'a citizens have raised with representatives of Nisga'a Lisims Government, and were developed on the basis of information we obtained through an extensive health system review and recent health status survey.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a summary of why these amendments are being proposed, what they will change, and how you can help us make these changes.

**A) The Need for Change**

Nisga'a Valley Health Authority was incorporated in 1984, and has delivered health services to Nisga'a citizens since that time.

However, much has changed since 1984. The number and complexity of your health services has increased, and the population of the Nisga'a Nation has and continues to grow. The Nisga'a Final Agreement also came into effect during this time. Our treaty and associated agreements recognize Nisga'a Lisims Government's authority over Nisga'a health services and its obligation to provide these services.

Despite these changes, Nisga'a Valley Health Authority's structure remains the same and its relationship with Nisga'a Lisims Government remains limited.

In 2015, the members of Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a proposed that Nisga'a Lisims Government undertake an extensive review of how your health services are delivered, aimed at identifying issues and their causes, proposing ways to address them, and most importantly, responding to the concerns that you and other Nisga'a citizens have raised.

Since then, Nisga'a Lisims Government has performed internal reviews, and retained external health consultants with decades of experience to perform an extensive health system review and health status survey. You may have spoken to our health consultants or participated in their Nisga'a health status survey.

The result of this work is that Nisga'a Lisims Government now has a comprehensive understanding of health issues to be addressed now and in the future. It also now has a baseline of the Nisga'a Nation's health status on which to set health targets, all with the goal of improving the delivery of your health services and the health outcomes for all Nisga'a citizens.

The enclosed bylaw amendments are being proposed by Nisga'a Lisims Government as a result of our health system review. These amendments are, however, only the first of many actions and goals which will come out of our recent work.

### **B) What are the Proposed Amendments to the Bylaws?**

One of the issues identified in our health system review was that the internal structure of Nisga'a Valley Health Authority needs to be updated to respond to the changes that have occurred over the last number of years with our health services and within our Nation.

Because Nisga'a Valley Health Authority is a society incorporated under the provincial *Society Act* (now the *Societies Act*), these changes can only be implemented by amending Nisga'a Valley Health Authority's bylaws.

Accordingly, Nisga'a Lisims Government has proposed the following amendments to the Nisga'a Valley Health Authority's bylaws with the goal of addressing the following issues:

1. To change the membership structure of the society by making the Nisga'a Nation as represented by the Nisga'a Lisims Government Executive the sole member.

This change is proposed to ensure that Nisga'a Lisims Government has a more central role, and more direct authority, over the delivery of your health services. Nisga'a Lisims Government has the authority and obligation to provide Nisga'a health services under our treaty and associated agreements. To date, however, it has elected to provide these services through Nisga'a Valley Health Authority. The current relationship between Nisga'a Lisims Government and Nisga'a Valley Health



Authority is a contractual one only and limited to the terms of that contract. This type of relationship does not provide Nisga'a Lisims Government with the direct authority required to take steps Nisga'a Lisims Government determines are necessary to represent the health needs of the Nisga'a Nation. Because of Nisga'a Lisims Government's role as the government of all Nisga'a citizens, it is best placed to utilize the powers as the sole member on the Nisga'a Nation's behalf. In this role, Nisga'a Lisims Government can more easily implement health policies it develops, work with our treaty partners in coordinating the funding and delivery of your health services, and directly ensure the society functions to the benefit of all Nisga'a citizens. This amendment is proposed with these goals in mind.

2. To change the composition of the board of directors of the society and manner in which they are selected.

The Nisga'a Nation has an obligation to provide a wide range of health services, and many health services are delivered to Nisga'a citizens across the province and the country. These health services are complex, represent a sizable portion of Nisga'a Lisims Government's annual budget, and require working relationships with physicians, nurses, hospitals, provincial ministries and health authorities, and federal departments, to name a few. Nisga'a Lisims Government's health system review identified that the Nisga'a Valley Health Authority's board should be composed of directors who are best placed to provide strategic guidance to the society in this modern, complex environment, and have qualifications to address the society's needs as they change over time. The proposed bylaws therefore expand the qualifications of who can be a director of Nisga'a Valley Health Authority, so that there is not a specific residency requirement and so that a minimum of two of the three to five directors must be Nisga'a citizens. The goal is to ensure that individuals with specific expertise have the opportunity to sit on the board. The proposed bylaws will also change the manner in which directors are selected. Currently, five directors are elected and one is appointed by Nisga'a Lisims Government. The amendments will empower the Nisga'a Lisims Government Executive to appoint all directors to the board. This change will ensure that the board is composed of individuals with the appropriate mix of education, experience and knowledge of health care and our needs, in order to best guide the society for the benefit of all Nisga'a citizens.

The proposed amendments will also update the bylaws to ensure they meet the legal requirements to transition Nisga'a Valley Health Authority from the old *Society Act* to the new *Societies Act*, a step which is required to be taken under provincial law in order for the society to continue.

**C) What is Your Role in Making these Changes?**

Along with my letter, you, as a current member of Nisga'a Valley Health Authority, have received a notice to attend a members' meeting and a copy of the proposed bylaw amendments.

If you attend this meeting, you will have the opportunity to vote on whether to amend the society's bylaws to implement the changes summarized above.

As discussed, these amendments to Nisga'a Valley Health Authority's bylaws were developed by Nisga'a Lisims Government after an extensive review of our health system and in response to the ideas and issues you and other Nisga'a citizens have raised with representatives of our government.

I therefore look forward to seeing you at the members' meeting, and ask that you vote in favour of amending the bylaws to implement this first step towards improving our Nisga'a health services.

Sincerely,

**NISGA'A LISIMS GOVERNMENT**



Eva Clayton  
President