
Assembly of First Nations

Assemblée des Premières Nations



March 25, 2011

Greetings, Friends and Colleagues:

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) would like to acknowledge and congratulate the Vision Institute of Canada for their leadership in promoting the vision health of Canadians, and particularly for their initiative to declare 2011 Aboriginal Vision Health Awareness Year. Vision health is an important element of general health that can affect the quality of life for children, youth, adults and the elderly, and this is particularly true for the First Nations people in Canada.

With the continued high rates of diabetes amongst the First Nations population, First Nations citizens with diabetes are 25 times more likely to experience vision loss and blindness. Without proper intervention and prevention aimed at First Nations, this vulnerable population runs greater risk for vision loss. Additionally, First Nations citizens experience various barriers to accessing prevention methods and vision health services, which also contribute to poor vision health in our communities. However, much of the vision health issues of First Nations people are preventable through strong efforts for health education, healthy lifestyles, proper nutrition and adequate access to quality vision care.

Thankfully, strides towards developing awareness are starting to be achieved through initiatives such as the 2011 Aboriginal Vision Health Awareness Year. Let this commemorative year shed much-needed education and awareness on the improvements and attention needed for the vision health of Aboriginal people in Canada.

The AFN supports the 2011 Aboriginal Vision Health Awareness Year and encourages First Nations communities to get involved in this initiative by accessing and utilizing vision health and prevention information available from the Vision Institute of Canada.

Respectfully,

Shawn A-in-chut Atleo
National Chief