

**From:** [Roberts, Edna](#)  
**To:** [Hunter, Karen](#); [Barnes, Joanne](#); [Power, Colleen \(HCS\)](#)  
**Subject:** copy for your files, Thanks  
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**Attachments:** [Response letter to Chief Ghislain Picard.pdf](#)

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Title : Response letter to Chief Ghislain Picard



Government of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Office of the Premier

April 6, 2016

Ghislain Picard  
Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL)  
250, Place Chef Michel Laveau, Suite 201  
Wendake, Quebec G0A 4V0

Dear Chief Picard:

Thank you for your letter of March 15, 2016 in which you inquired about child protection and health services in Innu First Nation communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

With respect to health services in the two communities, the Province provides primary health care services, supplemented by First Nation and federal resources dedicated to community and secondary health. In an effort to maximize the efficiency of the parties' efforts, the Province participates in the Innu Round Table (IRT), a federally-funded Innu-led trilateral roundtable, which was established to address community health and healing initiatives for the Innu of Labrador.

Primary health services are delivered by the Labrador-Grenfell Regional Health Authority (LGH), including in the town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the closest urban centre to both of the two Innu communities. LGH is keenly interested in the continuous enhancement of health care services for all residents in Labrador, including Innu residents. On February 26, 2016, the Chief Executive Officer and other senior LGH executive officials met with senior Innu representatives from Natuashish and Sheshatshiu to discuss health issues in an open and respectful way. LGH strives to work collaboratively with Aboriginal partners in a culturally respectful manner with a goal of maintaining strong communication and collaboration between health services that are delivered by the Innu First Nations and those delivered by LGH. And at all times, LGH strives to ensure that its officials deliver primary health care programs and services in a manner that is culturally appropriate and respectful.

The Department of Child, Youth and Family Services (CYFS) is responsible for the delivery of child protection services in all communities in this province, and works very closely with the Innu leadership and their staff to improve services on behalf of children and families in their communities. Through the IRT, Working Relationship Agreements were signed in 2015 between CYFS and each of the Mushuau Innu First Nation and Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation, which are focused on improving service coordination and planning to strengthen cultural considerations, wherever possible. Moreover, on March 7, 2016, a meeting took place between Labrador Innu leadership, Government's Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services, Minister Sherry Gambin-Walsh, and other senior Government officials, where many issues of common interest were discussed, several of which are currently being addressed.

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I recognize there is still much work to be done. As in many other jurisdictions, Aboriginal children in this province are significantly over-represented in child protection caseloads and more needs to be done to support Aboriginal communities. I am encouraged by the Government of Canada's commitment to increase funding to Aboriginal communities in the recent federal budget. You may also be interested to learn Newfoundland and Labrador is one of the few remaining jurisdictions where the federal government has not implemented the Enhanced Prevention Focused Approach to federal funding of child and family services. Minister Gambin-Walsh recently wrote to the federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, to confirm my Government's continued support for EPFA funding for the First Nations of Newfoundland and Labrador. My government will continue to work with First Nations leadership and the federal government to secure this funding.

Minister Gambin-Walsh has also recently written to Minister Bennett, regarding the inadequacy of federal funding for protection services to children on-Reserve. Although the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador works diligently to provide child protection services equally to all areas and all residents of the province, historically INAC's approach to funding does not account for the full costs of provision of services on-Reserve. The Province has filled this gap to ensure these children receive needed supports and services and my Government has approached the federal government to consider fully funding on-Reserve child protection services in this province.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to ensuring ongoing opportunities are available to engage Aboriginal leadership on issues in their communities. Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Sincerely,



**DWIGHT BALL**

Premier  
MHA, Humber-Gros Morne  
Minister Responsible for  
Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs

cc: Grand Chief Anastasia Qupee  
Deputy Grand Chief Simeon Tshakapesh  
Chief Gregory Rich  
Chief Eugene Hart  
Marjolaine Sioui, General Director, FNQLHSSC  
Ms. Yvonne Jones, MP - Labrador  
Honourable Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services  
Honourable Dr. John Haggie, Minister of Health and Community Services  
Mr. Tony Wakeham, CEO, Labrador Grenfell Health