First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health

Centre de collaboration nationale en santé environnementale

ommunity Champions and Radon Testing in First Nations Communities

CARST 7th Annual Radon Conference
April 24, 2018

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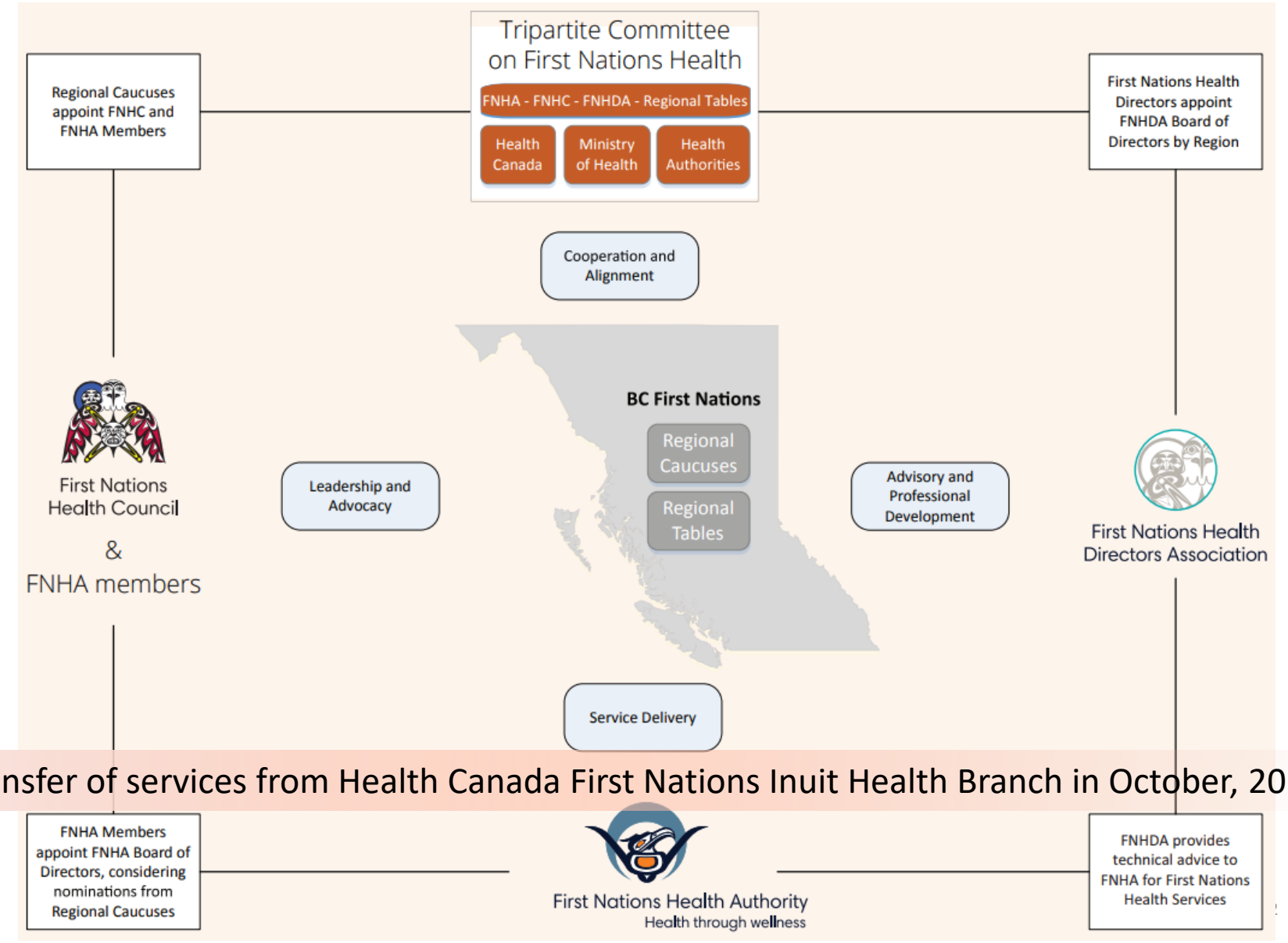
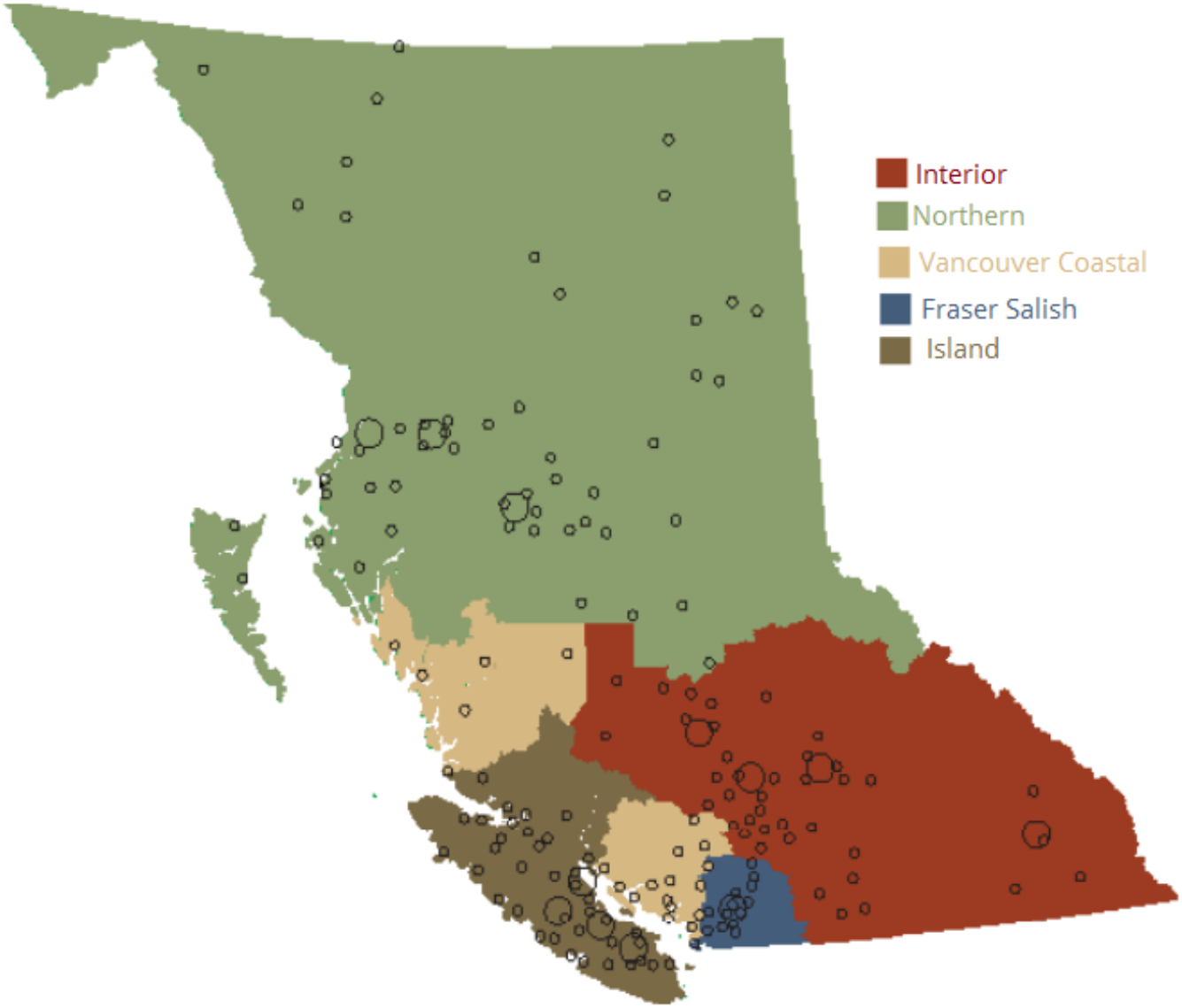
Environmental Public Health Services
First Nations Health Authority

The History, Role, and Mandate of FNHA

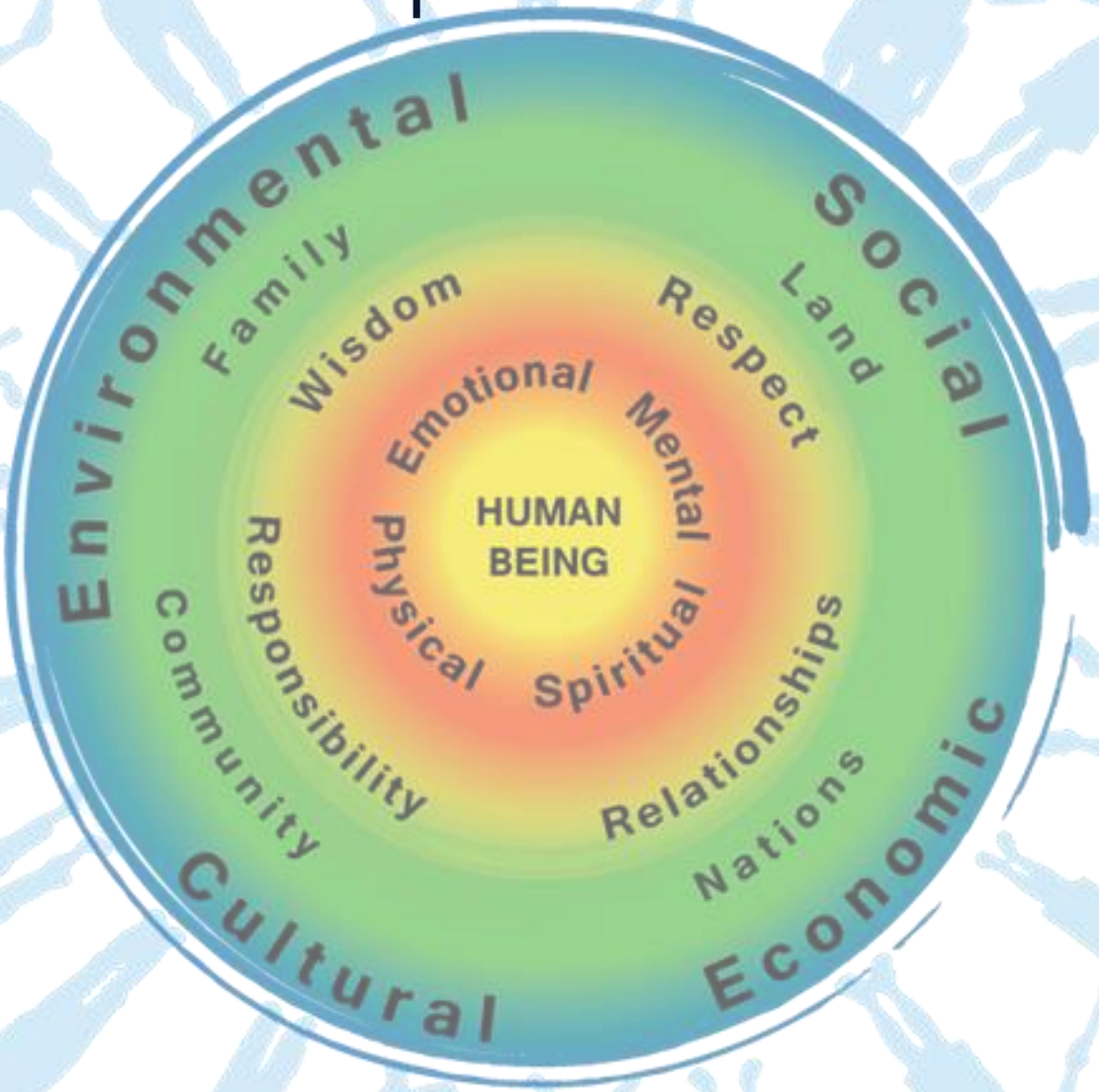


Transfer of services from Health Canada First Nations Inuit Health Branch in October, 2013

FNHA Regions



First Nations Perspective on Wellness



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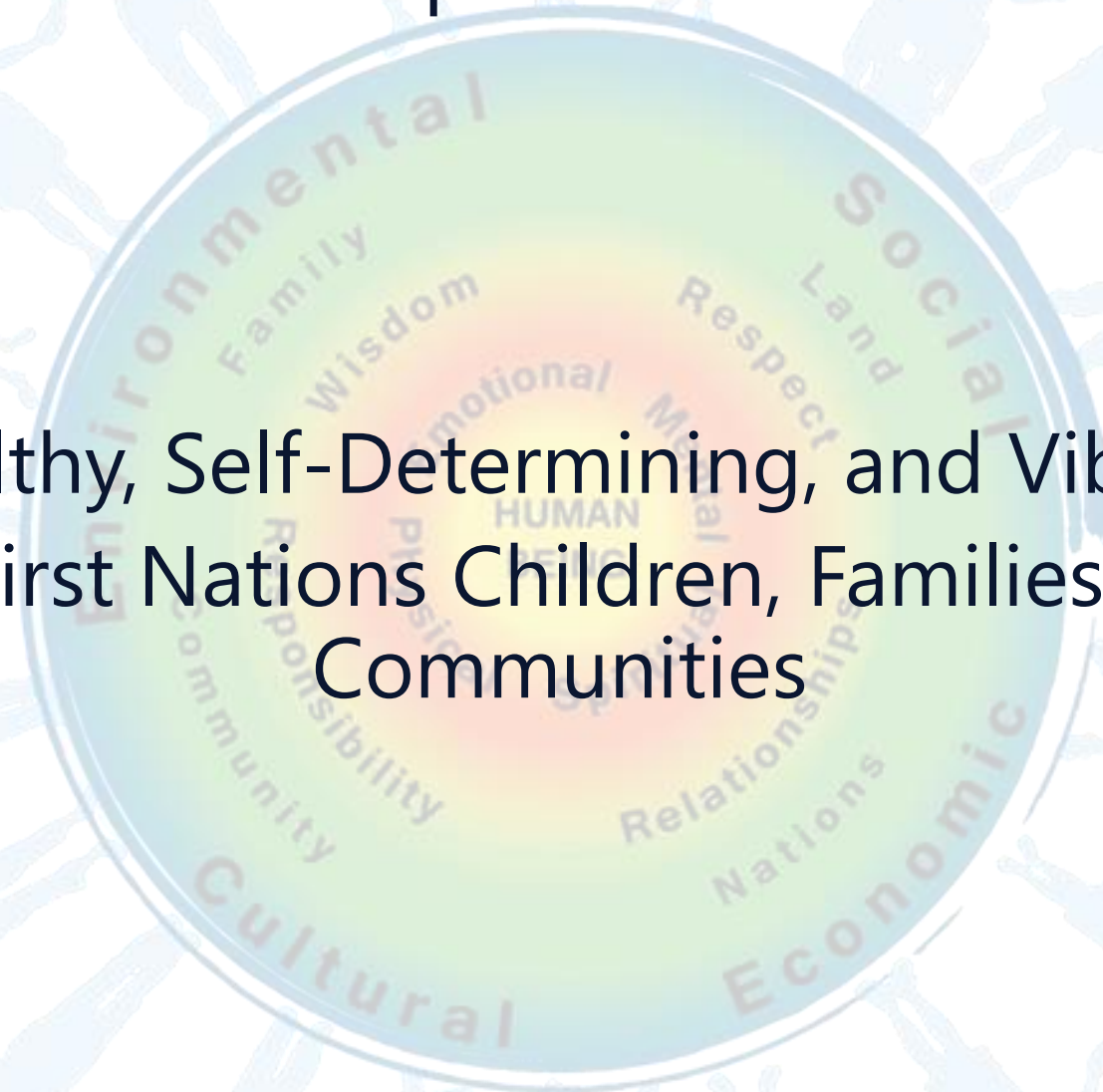
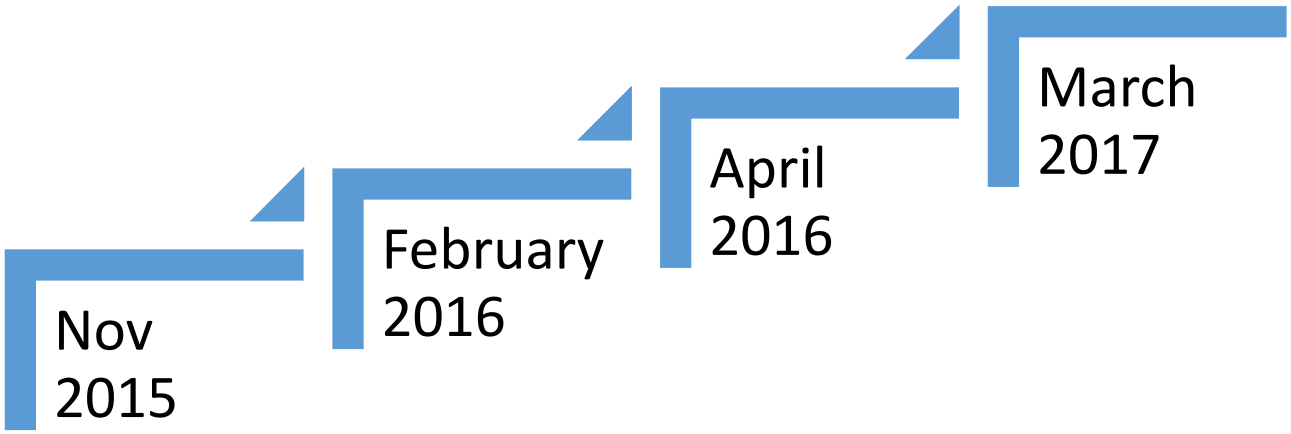


Healthy, Self-Determining, and Vibrant BC First Nations Children, Families, and Communities

BC First Nations Radon Testing: Timeline



Phase 1

- Interior Health Authority
- Health Canada grant: detectors

Phase 1: Community selection

Focus on "higher-risk" parts of the province to start

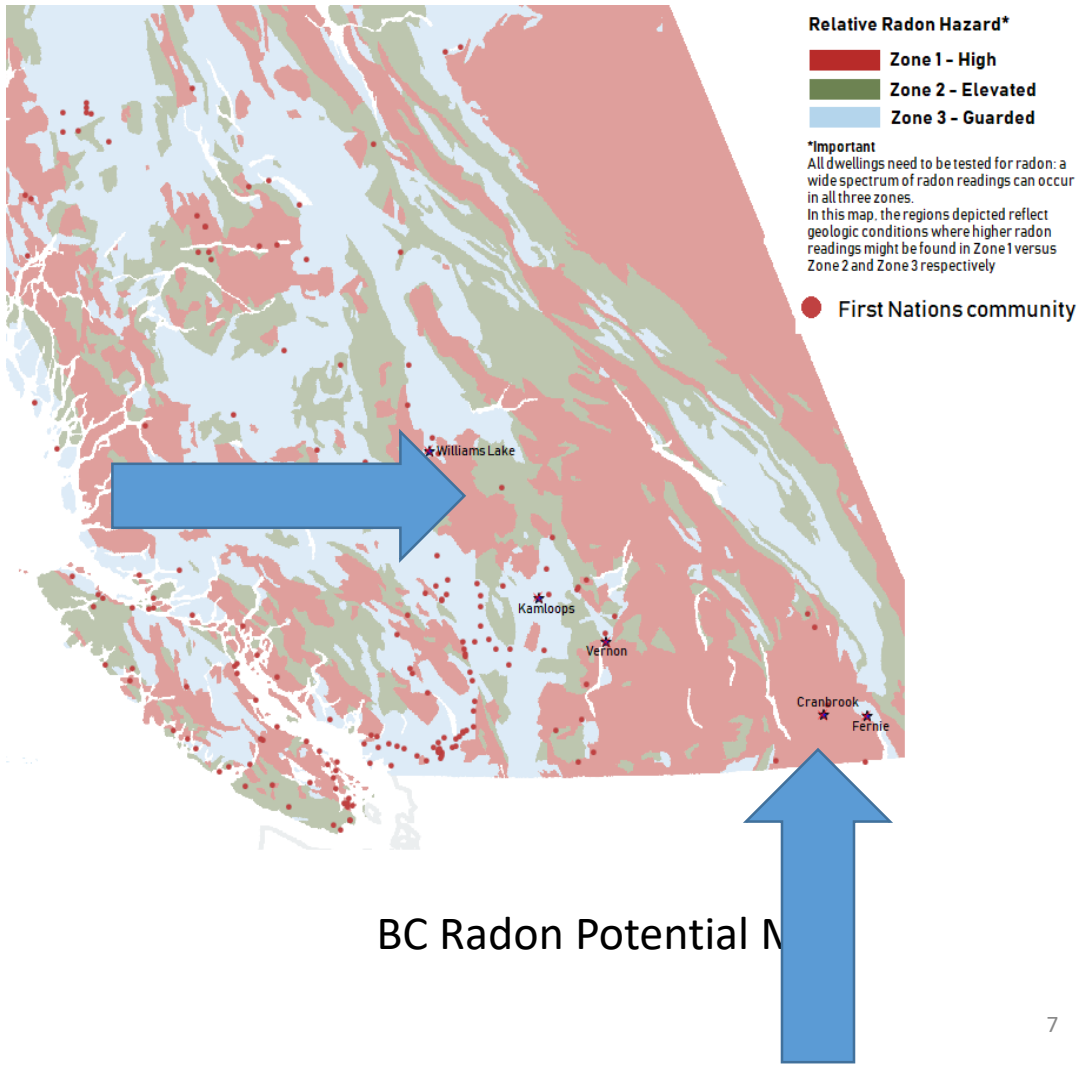
- Previous high results
- Radon potential map

6 FNs in 3 Regions

- 100 detectors

2 FNs in Interior wide-scale testing with champions

- 20 detectors



Phase 1: Identifying Community Champions

- Staff in First Nations housing, health, or administration
- Key points of contact for radon activities in community
- Communicate to residents about testing, provide education
- Deploy detectors (either independently or with FNHA)
- Secure funding for mitigation

Phase 1: Community Outreach & Education

- Educational resources part of partnership
- EHOs met with community leaders
- FNHA staff attended health fairs, community meetings, and gatherings to engage with individual community residents
- Information on results, their meaning, and mitigation provided after testing period (>91 days)

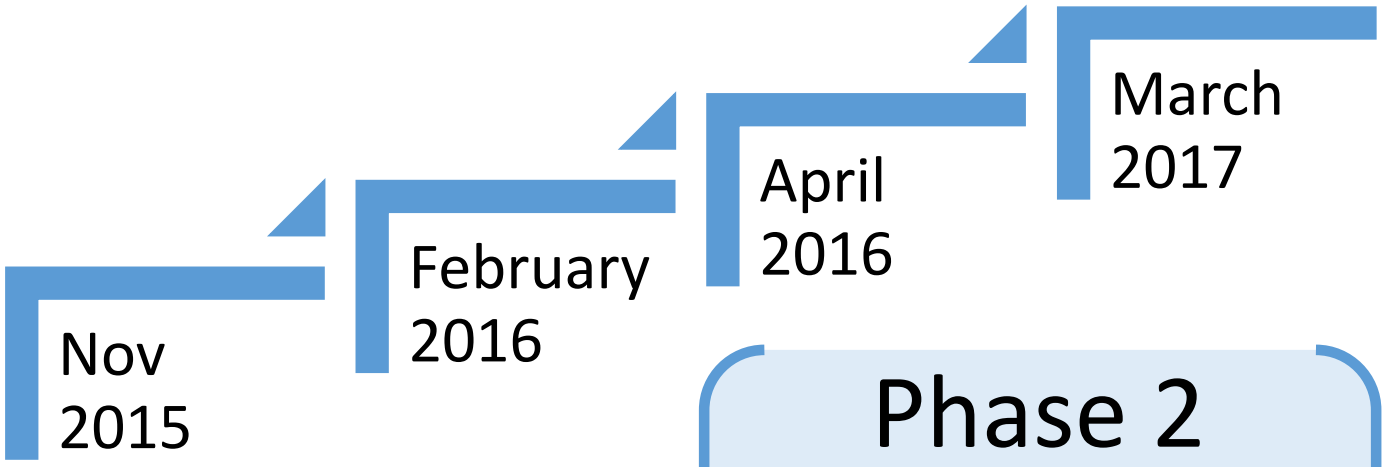
Phase 1: Radon detector placement

- Detectors placed in lowest “livable” area of the home
  - Any livable area might become an occupancy area

- Detectors deployed & collected either by FNHA staff or Community Champions

Photo credit: Indigenous Services Canada

BC First Nations Radon Testing: Timeline



Phase 2

- Continued in 2 communities from Phase 1
- More First Nations recruited

Phase Two: FNHA-purchased detectors

- Communities self-selected for Phase Two
  - Increased awareness due to outreach
- 300 detectors deployed province-wide
- 3 Interior First Nations participated in community-level sampling
  - 2 from Phase One + 1 new community
  - 75 detectors deployed in total in Interior Region

Phase One:
Funded by: Interior Health / FNHA Partnership (HC grant)

Number of FN communities: 6

Number of detectors: 100

Number of Community Champions: 2

Detector type: Radtrak 1

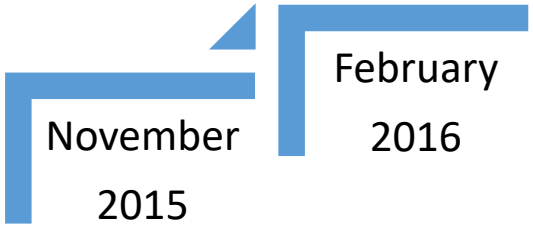
Phase Two:
Funded by: FNHA

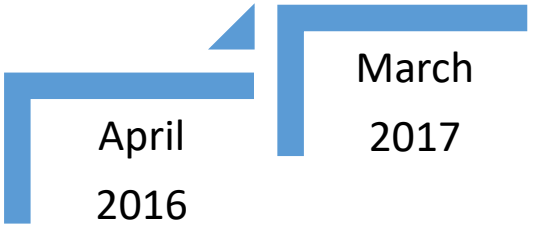
Number of FN communities: 10+ (6 in Interior)

Number of detectors: 300

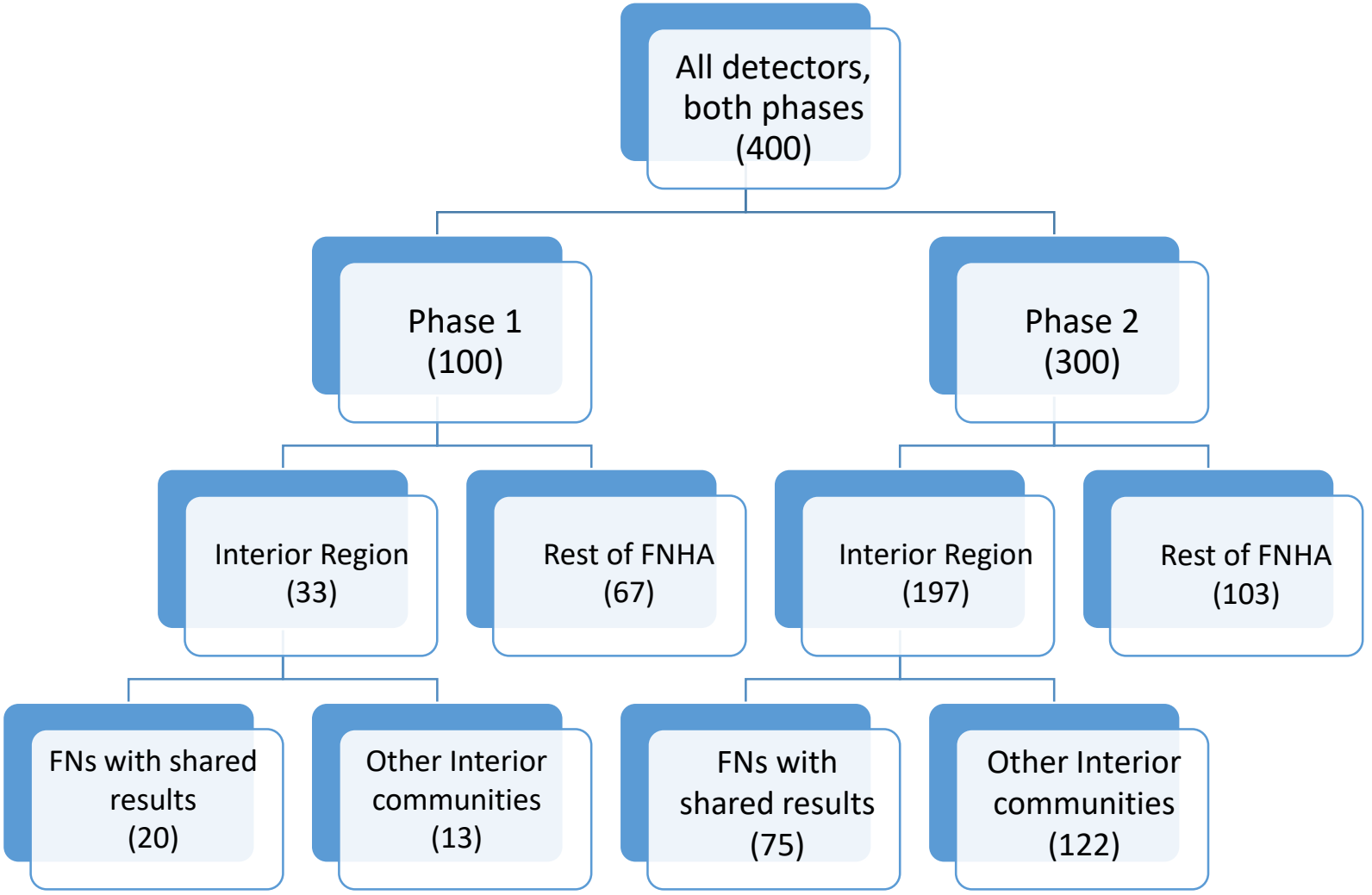
Number of additional Community Champions: 1

Detector type: Radtrak 1





Number of detectors deployed



Results from Both Phases

	# of kits deployed	% of kits collected	% Below 200 Bq/m^3	% 200 to 600 Bq/m^3	% Above 600 Bq/m^3
Phase One	20	95	72	28	0
Phase Two	75	97	88	11	1
Total	95	97	85	14	1

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Mitigation

- ~30% of on-reserve homes >200Bq/m^3 mitigated (as of now)

- Some funding available for some homes through Indigenous Services Canada
  - Needs to be obtained through band
  - Administrative process
  - Not guaranteed

- 1 First Nation funded mitigation of homes where ISC funding not available (as of now)

- Community Champions
  - identify funding
  - submit applications
  - follow through with mitigation

Program Characteristics Leading to Success

Giving Support and Gaining Trust

- Meet with community, support champions, deploy & collect
- FNHA accompanied by FN staff

Capitalizing on Administrative Opportunities

- Housing inspections part of EHO work
- Training for FNHA staff
- Documentation at organizational level

Program Characteristics Leading to Success

Identify & Leverage Community Champions

- Knowledge & trust of community
- Advocate for testing
- Work within community
- **Leaders in success of program**

Economics

- Detectors through grants & partnerships
- Ordering in bulk for lower cost & easier distribution
- Mitigation funding through ISC or band

Program Characteristics Leading to Success

Engaging the Community

- Access to homes
- Attend meetings, health fairs, gatherings
- Work planning with FN leadership
- Make people feel comfortable

Impediments and Barriers

Financial Barriers

- Band funding
- ISC funding
- Resident funding

Lack of trained mitigators

- Improper work done
- Difficult access in remote FNs
- Travel increases costs

Individual beliefs

- No interest in testing
- Concerns about capacity
- Assume low Rn levels

Moving Forward

- Ongoing outreach & engagement
    - Goal of 100% of communities with testing
- Ongoing sampling
    - 1400 detectors ordered in FY 2017-18
    - ~ 75% of Interior Region First Nations have done some sampling
    - Island Region starting community-wide sampling program using lessons learned from Interior

Moving Forward

- Explore linkages between FN housing and radon levels
  - survey of housing conditions & construction
- Testing for daycares in First Nations communities
  - FNHA and IHA worked together to come up with protocol for on-reserve facilities
- Testing for schools in First Nations communities
- Testing for unlicensed Head Start programs (AHSOR)

Moving Forward

- Work with “Respecting Tobacco” team to include radon risk information
- Support First Nations and individuals to become C-NRPP certified testers and mitigators
  - Explore holding training courses in First Nations communities
- Identify any additional barriers and opportunities

Acknowledgement

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Production of this presentation has been made possible through a financial contribution from the **Public Health Agency of Canada**.

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