



"Assisting member Nations achieve their goals"

HST fight not over yet!

By Sherry Huff

LONDON – It's coming down to the wire for First Nations in their opposition to Ontario's Harmonized Sales Tax. The new HST comes into effect one second after midnight, on July 1st, 2010, and is expected to cost First Nations people in Ontario millions of dollars. The new 13 percent tax combines the five percent GST with the eight percent PST and if not changed, will wipe out the First Nation point of sale tax exemption.

The main objection to the HST is its violation of inherent Aboriginal and Treaty rights, says Grand Chief Randall Phillips of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians. "We are Nations; we entered into Treaties to share this land. We never agreed to be subject to the Crown's taxes," he says.

The HST was first announced during the 2009 provincial budget. The provincial and federal governments then entered into a new tax agreement, paving the way for the HST. It will be administered like the GST, requiring First Nations to pay the tax, unless the goods purchased are delivered to the reserve by the vendor.

The reality for First Nations is that most of their every day purchases would be subject to the HST, adding a total of 13 cents

to every dollar spent. However, previous studies on the HST in Ontario have failed to accurately measure the impact the tax would have on First Nations. AIAI's Deputy Grand Chief, Chris McCormick says that's why AIAI pushed for a First Nations' economic impact study. "We needed

a study to clearly show the effect the HST would have on First Nations people, because despite claims by the Ontario

government, we knew this new tax would have a significant impact," says Deputy Grand Chief McCormick.

Dr. Fred Lazar, an economist who holds his Ph.D. from Harvard University and now works at the Schulich School of Business at York University in Toronto, was hired to carry out the study. Dr. Lazar looked at the average in-

HST expected to cost First Nations people millions....



Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians' Grand Chief Randall Phillips leads the outcry against the HST at a rally in front of Queen's Park, in Toronto. (Photo: S.Huff)

the first year, with increases in following years. "This is money our people simply don't have,

about the HST. Grand Chief Randall Phillips says this exclusion clearly violates the Crown's duty to consult, a right upheld and affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada. "First Nations have the right to be consulted and accommodated throughout this process. It is Ontario and Canada's legal duty to consult us whenever a government decision impacts on our rights," he says.

To its credit, Ontario has indicated it supports the continuation of the point of sale tax exemption. However it blames the federal government for refusing to

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"We never agreed to be subject to the Crown's taxes..." AIAI Grand Chief Randall Phillips

come for First Nations people and the projected increase in costs of goods. He found that the new imposed tax will end up costing First Nations in Ontario between \$85-million and \$121-million in

as we continue to be among the poorest in this country," says Deputy Grand Chief McCormick.

Despite the major impact, First Nations were never consulted or included in any discussions

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Welcome to the First Edition of the AIAI Times!

Shekoli and hello...

I want to welcome all of our new readers to the first edition of the AIAI Times. This newsletter is designed to help us communicate with our Member Nations and their citizens. AIAI has been in existence, as a political organization, for over 41 years. Our mandate is to provide support and assistance to Member Nations in a variety of different ways, all in support of Treaty and Aboriginal Rights. As Grand Chief, I was elected two years ago. The Grand Chief position is chosen by representatives from each of member

nations at the annual general assembly every (3) three years. Over the past two years, I have found this to be an extremely busy position. Government continues to lay challenges in front of us regarding access to education, employment and training, social services initiatives, child welfare and child care, as well as the many issues relating to the protection of Rights. In the next year, we at AIAI hope that our enhanced communication tools, like this newsletter, will provide an avenue for all of our citizens to enjoy a greater op-

portunity to learn more and understand the issues that First Nations are faced with. I welcome you to the new "AIAI Times".

Grand Chief Randall Phillips,
Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

We're on-line too!
Check out
our NEW website!!
www.aiai.on.ca

From the Office of the Grand Chief

Shekoli and Hello,

Welcome to the first edition of our new newsletter...the AIAI Times. Our publication will provide information on a variety of different issues that affect our Member Nations as well as those throughout Ontario and Canada.

As Grand Chief, my role is varied. In my position, I am re-

dealing with First Nations issues. I would like to take this opportunity to outline some of the more important issues that the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI) has been monitoring.

The most controversial issue remains the implementation of the new Harmonized Sales Tax

“The most controversial issue remains the implementation of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST)...”

quired to meet with officials who represent government such as ministers and bureaucrats. I also meet with various business leaders and representatives from organizations.

In the past few months, both the federal and provincial governments have been very active in

(HST) in Ontario and the impact it will have on First Nations people within Ontario. The provincial government announced this new tax last year, with a start date of July 1, 2010. The new tax is a combination of the existing Provincial Retail Sales Tax (8%) and the Federal Goods and Services Tax - GST (5%). It will be imposed on all people within the boundaries of Ontario.

AIAI and other First Nations leadership continue to challenge the imposition of the HST on our people. Member of AIAI's Chiefs Council have expressed their concern and anger about this new tax. In Ontario, the current tax policy provides an exemption at the point of sale for First Nations people. This policy changes with the HST, eliminating the point of sale exemption July 1, 2010.

There have been several attempts to convince the Ontario government to reinstate the point of sale exemption; however, we have been unsuccessful to date. As a matter of fact, AIAI made presentations to standing committees for the Ontario government, the federal government and the Senate. We presented an alternative that would have secured our point of sale exemption; however this was rejected by each and every committee. In fact, not only was this legislation passed by both the federal and provincial legislatures in record time (8 days for both), both had specific instructions not to entertain any amendments.

The provincial and federal governments entered into an agreement called the CITCA (Comprehensive Integrated Tax Agreement). Under this Agreement, there is no reference to maintain the tax exemption for First Nations people.



ASSOCIATION OF IROQUOIS AND ALLIED INDIANS' GRAND CHIEF, RANDALL PHILLIPS

Ontario has maintained that they support the First Nation point of sale exemption, but blame the federal government for eliminating the current practice. The federal government has maintained that it will be responsible for the implementation and collection of the HST, and it will do that in accordance with existing processes. That existing process only calls for tax exemptions IF the product or service is delivered to the First Nation territory.

To date, the federal government refuses to meet with First Nation leadership and the Ontario government to resolve this issue.

“(Canada)refuses to meet with First Nation leadership and the Ontario government to resolve this issue”

At this time, the Ontario Government and the Chiefs of Ontario have entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The MOA calls for Ontario to continue to support the First Nations position and to work together to bring the federal government to the table to maintain the point of sale exemption. On May 27, elected Chiefs will meet to discuss their next steps, including a potential law suit.

First Nation communities within

AIAI and across Ontario have spoken out about the elimination of the point of sale exemption. Many have participated in a number of protests and expressions of concern across the province. The protests will continue until there is a satisfactory resolution.

Another important issue we have been involved with is the Ipperwash Inquiry Priorities and Action Committee (IIPAC). The IIPAC membership consists of First Nation political representatives from AIAI, three other Provincial Territorial Organizations, as well as Independent First Nations. In conjunction

with the political table, IIPAC has a technician's table which deals with the technical aspects of some of the recommendations. The Premier of Ontario,

Dalton McGuinty has accepted all the Ipperwash Inquiry recommendations on behalf of the provincial government.

The recommendations were categorized into 8 areas, and a specific table was created for each.

One of the most important recommendations was the creation of a separate Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. The Ministry's main mandate is to ensure bet-

AIAI TIMES

The AIAI TIMES is a quarterly publication of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI). The views expressed are not necessarily the opinion or the political position of AIAI.

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Stolen First Nations children set to sue Ontario government

by Trina McGahey, Social Services Director

Toronto – It's become known as the 60's Scoop and the government of Canada could be held accountable for a child welfare policy in Ontario that many see as nothing short of an attempt at 'cultural genocide.'

An Ontario Superior court judge is now deciding if a multi-million dollar class action lawsuit can proceed against the Government of Canada. The case stems from the 1965 Canada-Ontario Child Welfare policy. That policy, in place in Ontario until 1985, resulted in the apprehension of approximately 16-thousand First Nations and Metis children across the province who were placed in the care of non-aboriginal adoptive or foster homes.

The lawsuit alleges the federal government committed "cultural genocide" by stripping aboriginal children of their aboriginal identity and placing them into non-aboriginal



AIAI Grand Chief Randall Phillips attends a support rally for survivors of the 60s Scoop, at Queen's Park in May. (Photo: T.McGahey)

foster and adoptive homes.

Two survivors of the 60's Scoop are bringing the case forward. Marcia Brown is a member of the Temagami First Nation, and Robert Commanda has ties to the Dokis and Garden River First Nations. They both claim they were not only stolen from their families without just cause, but that they were also systematically denied the opportunity to preserve their identity. They grew up without ever knowing their true family or community.

They also say they were denied any reasonable opportunity to maintain any connection with their traditions, language, customs, heritage and culture.

Brown and Commanda are asking to court to allow them to be representative plaintiffs, representing a large number of people who have a common experience and seek the same judicial remedy. The lawsuit is seeking \$85,000 in damages for each claimant. If the case is allowed to proceed, the

lawsuit could total \$1.36 Billion. A decision from the judge is expected by this August.

The lawsuit has the unanimous support of Chiefs in Ontario. Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians Grand Chief Randall Phillips stood with Brown and Commanda at a rally held at Queen's Park April 29th. Grand Chief Phillips holds the Child Welfare file for the First Nation Chiefs in Ontario. He told the crowd that, "this is just one more example of how governments have failed to act in the best interests of our children. It's time Survivors of the 60's Scoop were given their day in court. They deserve retribution and proper compensation."

Survivors of the 60's Scoop wishing to participate in the class action lawsuit are encouraged to leave their contact information with Jeffery Wilson from Wilson Christen Barristers LLP, Jeffery@wilsonchristen.com or telephone 1-866-360-5952.

From the Office of the Grand Chief...cont'd

ter working relationships with First Nations and to ensure the recommendations are implemented. Throughout Ontario, First Nations have been actively involved with the Ontario government regarding the imple-

AIAI has also been granted "interested party status" for the upcoming Canadian Human Rights Tribunal regarding child welfare funding issues. The complaint was put forward by the First Nations Caring Society and the As-

established a "Sustainability Commission," which will review and make recommendations to the government regarding funding and sustainability issues for local Children's Aid Societies.

To further our requests, the Minister of Children and Youth Services also announced that she has hired a special advisor for First Nations concerns. Former Anishnabek Nation Grand Chief, John Beaucage is that new special advisor. As this position is still relatively new, there has not been much detail yet on the specifics of the job. However we do know that Mr. Beaucage has direct access to the Minister on a regular basis.

On the federal landscape, the challenges still continue. The federal government continues to promote various legislative initiatives relating to Matrimonial Real Property, Citizenship/Membership,

endorsed the "Declaration of Indigenous Rights". This United Nations sponsored document calls for governments to accept these new principles regarding the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Canada has so far been steadfast in its reluctance to sign on this Declaration, claiming that it conflicts with existing laws and policies. Although each federal party leader has endorsed support for the acceptance of this Declaration, no formal procedure has been used to implement the declaration.

As one of the political advocates for our member Nations, we at AIAI strive to do the best we can to advance these positions. We are an "Association" of Member Nations. As such, we can only convey generic positions as we do not, and will not speak on behalf of any one First Nation community. Our Member Nations

Chiefs have been very clear that they speak for their own communities.

"First Nations have been actively involved with...Ontario...regarding the implementation of the Ipperwash Inquiry recommendations"

mentation of the Ipperwash Inquiry recommendations made by Justice Linden. AIAI continues to participate in these tables.

Let's move now to my role as the Chair of the Chief's Committee on Social/Child Welfare. I have had the opportunity to make several key presentations to government and First Nations regarding concerns around child and family welfare issues. I have been directly involved in discussions relating to social assistance and income supports, as well as child welfare supports and legislative/policy reviews, the designation of First Nation agencies, and day care/child care issues. We have pushed to establish a tripartite table (First Nation's, Ontario and Canada) to discuss a long issues list.

sembly of First Nations. This case involves the inequalities in funding that exist on reserves for children with special needs.

AIAI, along with First Nation leadership across Ontario, continue to push for a separate review of the current Child and Family Services Act, to address concerns that arise when a First Nation child and family are involved with the child welfare system. The provincial government has made two key announcements regarding the notion of a review. First, in compliance with the current legislation, a 5-year review of the legislation is automatic. This year, the focus was on compliance with the First Nations provisions within the Act. Secondly, the province

"Canada...remains the only country that has not signed or endorsed the Declaration of Indigenous Rights."

Private Land\Ownership, Post Secondary Education delivery systems and legislative issues relating to water and wastewater.

Canada also remains the only country that has not signed or

AIAI will continue to ensure that our First Nations are aware of the various initiatives (legislative or program based) and will continue to advocate based upon the protection and acceptance of our Treaty and Aboriginal Rights.

Harvard economist weighs in on HST debate

Dr. Fred Lazar is an economist with a Ph.D. from Harvard University, who now teaches at the Schulich School of Business, in Toronto. He was hired by the Chiefs of Ontario to study the impact of the HST on First Nations.

by Dr. Fred Lazar

TORONTO – On July 1 of this year, the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) will be combined with the federal Goods and Services Tax (GST) to create a Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) for Ontario. It has been well documented that when the HST is fully implemented, consumers in Ontario will end up paying \$3-\$4 billion more each year in PST. The Government of Ontario has promised a three year program of tax credits to soften the transition to the HST. However, the burden of these changes will not be borne equally by all segments of the Ontario population nor will the tax credit offset program effectively counter the negative impacts of the HST on many low income earners.

Various rationales have been advanced by the provincial government for the transition to the HST. However, in all of the debates regarding the merits and shortcomings of the government's decision one very important issue has been largely ignored. The administration of the HST has failed to account for the unique tax circumstances of First Nations citizens resident in the Province of Ontario.

The unique relationship between First Nations and the rest of Canada is reflected in distinct tax treatment under both federal and provincial law. The administration of the PST in Ontario currently recognizes point-of-sale tax exemption for all First Nations' citizens who have a "status Indian" card. This exemption includes goods and services purchased off reserve to be self-delivered to a reserve. When the PST and the GST are combined to

HST and its administration under the same rules as the GST will impose a new tax burden on First Nations' citizens across the province of at least \$100 million in the first fiscal year, and this cost will increase steadily every year, reaching almost \$200 million in 10 years' time.

Let's put these costs into context. There is currently an income gap between First Nations' citizens and everyone else in Ontario of at least \$2.1 billion. The new HST

ing the point-of-sale tax exemption will represent less than one tenth of one percent of the Government of Ontario's projected total revenues for the current fiscal year. There is an obvious and simple solution to the financial challenges that the HST will create for First Nations. Point-of-sale rebates to First Nations' citizens should continue under the HST. Indeed, the Government of Ontario has indicated it "is in full support of, and continues to advocate for having Ontario's current administrative treatment of the First Nations' point-of-sale exemption continue after the transition to a federally administered HST." However, other than words, it has done nothing else to ensure that this will be the case.

It makes no sense from an economic or a political perspective, to raise tax rates for First Nations' people, many of whom fall below low-income cutoff levels. The removal of the point-of-sale tax exemption for First Nations' citizens will make First Nations less competitive which remains one of the single largest challenges to economic development for many challenged communities. Both the federal and provincial governments have displayed a concerning disregard for First Nations in Ontario. It's high time that their interests received proper consideration.

The HST further increases the financial gap between First Nations citizens and the rest of the Ontario population

form the HST, the federal government will assume administrative responsibility for the new tax and has indicated that it will apply the same process used to administer the GST. Under the GST framework, the point-of-sale exemption will no longer be available to First Nations citizens. While the distinction between these two administrative practices may seem minor, the effects for First Nations will be considerable.

As a result of the change from the PST to the HST, First Nations will be faced with significant new sales taxes far in excess of those which will be borne by the rest of the province. The move to the

tax burden will be approximately 5% of this amount further increasing the financial gap between First Nations citizens and the rest of the Ontario population. At an individual level, these changes have the potential to significantly decrease the household income of First Nations families living in Ontario. This will result in less financial capacity to pursue educational opportunities and an increased reliance on social services amongst some of the poorest populations in the province. These challenges might be justified if the benefits to the province were greater. However, the income that will be generated by remov-

New Batchewana health centre opens soon!



Construction of Batchewana First Nation's new \$4-million health centre is nearing completion. Several programs are expecting to move into the new 15,000 square foot facility in June, with an official opening in September. The building, located on the Rankin Reserve, will house the Batchewana Health Department, Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Nogdawindamin Child and Family Services, and the Northshore Tribal Council – Aging-At-Home Strategy. (Photo: A.Syrette)



Batchewana's new health centre follows the community's vision of returning to traditional medicinal practices. The building's outdoor timber dome structure will be part of the centre's teaching lodge. Traces of copper have been placed throughout the building. Copper is seen by the Anishinabek as being a protective medicine, which will provide a safe and clean environment for healing. (Photo: A.Syrette)



Tyson Schuyler, 12, from the Oneida of the Thames First Nation is this year's new Youth Bowling Canada 10 Pin National Champion. (Photo: S.Huff)

National bowling champ

LONDON – He's only 12 years old, and a little shy, but Tyson Schuyler can throw a mean bowling ball. This young fellow from the Oneida of the Thames First Nation is this year's Youth Bowling Canada (YBC) Tenpin National Champion. Tyson travelled to Montreal with his father and step-mother this spring to compete against the country's best young bowlers. But Tyson took it all in stride. "I practice every Saturday morning for three hours," he says. He's a member of the bowling club at Bowlerama Royale in London. Tyson has had a love for bowl-

ing ever since he was a toddler, according to his father, Keith. "He had this toy bowling set, and the sound of a plastic ball smashing some pins was all you could hear in the house," says Keith. Today, Tyson's family works hard to ensure he gets to his practices and competitions. They've been busy holding various fundraising activities, like spaghetti dinners back in Oneida. As for what's next for Tyson, he says with a lot of confidence, that since he's won the nationals, it might be time to think about competing on an international level. Way to go Tyson!

HIV-AIDS prevalence on the increase for Aboriginal people

by Elly Antone,
HIV-AIDS Educator

LONDON – AIAI’s AIDS program focuses on prevention, awareness and education. In providing education I am available to set-up education/information displays, speaking engagements, coordinate training for community workers, and as well as develop resources for distribution at community events. AIAI’s AIDS program is part of the Ontario First Nations HIV-AIDS Education Circle, which is often referred to as the ‘Circle’. The ‘Circle’ consists of an HIV-AIDS Educator/Coordinator and a First Nations Person living with HIV-AIDS from each Provincial Territorial Organization and Independent First Nation. Collectively

tion displays at various events. As of December 2008, the Estimates of HIV Prevalence and Incidence in Canada published by the Public Health Agency of Canada’s Centre for Communicable Disease and Infection Control announced that Aboriginal people continue to be over-represented in the HIV-AIDS epidemic in Canada, (see figure 1). At the end of Dec 2008, the number of people living with HIV-AIDS was estimated to be 65,000, an increase from the 2005 estimate of 57,000. Of those, it’s estimated that between 4300 and 6100 are Aboriginal people (or First Nations) living with HIV-AIDS. New infections among Aboriginal persons is estimated at 300-520

Category	2005	2008
Estimated number of People living with HIV-AIDS (including those unaware of their status - 26% or 16,900)	57,000	65,000
Estimated number of Aboriginal People living with HIV-AIDS	4,200 (3,500 - 4,900)	5,200 (4,300 - 6,100)
Estimated number of new infections among Aboriginal Persons	290 (240 - 340)	410 (300 - 520)

Figure 1.

we provide a support system for each other, develop resources, organize an annual Youth HIV-AIDS Training workshop, and set-up information and educa-

a year, making the new infection rate among Aboriginal persons about 3.6 times higher than among non-Aboriginal persons. The mode of transmission for

newly infected Aboriginal persons is 66 percent injection drug use (IDU), 23 percent heterosexual relations, nine percent men who have sex with men (MSM), and two percent men who have sex with men and use injection drugs (MSM-IDU), (see figure 2). This compares to the 2005 rates which found 63 percent IDU, 24 percent heterosexual relations, 11 percent MSM and two percent MSM-IDU.

Mode of HIV transmission among Aboriginal People	2005	2008
IDU	63%	66%
Heterosexual	24%	23%
MSM	11%	9%
MSM-IDU	2%	2%

Figure 2.

A fault in this report is that Ontario and Quebec do not collect ethnic data so it is difficult to determine the full impact of HIV-AIDS on Aboriginal persons. According to the 2006 Census data, Ontario and Quebec account for 29.9 percent of Canadians who self-identify as Aboriginal.

The Ontario HIV Epidemiologic Monitoring Unit, based out of the University of Toronto, produces an annual surveillance report including data on HIV diagnoses, reported AIDS cases, HIV-related mortality and the results of statistical modelling. According to this report there were 26,630 HIV-infected people living with HIV in Ontario as of December 2008. The main route of transmission was MSM at 15,070, HIV-endemic at 4,880, heterosexual

contact at 3,920, and 2,760 identified as IDU or unknown modes. However, it is known that the rates for HIV-endemic and heterosexual have increased since 2003 by 62 percent and 41 percent respectively. In 2008 alone there were about 1,620 persons newly infected, with 25 percent attributed to women. Again, since Ontario does not collect ethnic data it is not known how many Aboriginal (or First Nations) people have been infected.

Tentatively scheduled for summer 2010, the Responsible Gambling and HIV-AIDS programs are organizing a Wellness & Balance Conference. The workshops will focus on living a healthy and balanced lifestyle and promoting healthy communities based on traditional teachings and the power of colour in healing and energy. This knowledge and education will promote a better understanding and reduce the stigma experienced by people living with gambling problems and people living with HIV-AIDS.

Oneida nurse wins national recognition

Christi Poulette says she’s simply “found her place”

by Sherry Huff

LONDON – Christi Poulette’s talents as a nurse are being recognized by her community and the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, with the announcement that she’s won a national award of excellence in nursing. Poulette works for the Oneida First Nation Health Centre, where she is the nurse-in-charge. Nominated by a co-worker, Poulette was humbled by the honour.



Christi Poulette is the recipient of the 2010 Award of Excellence in Nursing. It’s an annual award issued by the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch. Poulette is the nurse-in-charge at the Oneida First Nation’s Health Centre.

“It was kind of surreal for several weeks after I first found out that I had won,” says Poulette, who made her way to collect her award in Ottawa with one of her two daughters on May 14th.

Poulette didn’t start out knowing that nursing would be her calling. She first entered a career in law enforcement and became a police officer in Kingston, where she lived with her two girls, who are now 11 and 14 years old. She decided to make the switch as a way to work back in her community. So, she enrolled in nursing school, with a lot of help from her family, especially her sister. “They’re very supportive,” she says.

For some, jumping from policing to nursing might not seem a natural fit. But Poulette says just the opposite. “Nursing is a lot like policing, because you’re still helping people every day,” she says.

The best part of her job now is when she gets to work with the Elders. She says it doesn’t seem like work at all, because she gets to help people feel better, and visit. She says she loves listening to their stories. “They’re always telling me things that happened years ago, especially stories about my parents and grandpar-

ents. It’s great,” says Poulette.

Poulette says the most challenging aspect of working as a nurse in her home community, is working with people who are hurting, physically, emotionally and spiritually. “Our people have been through a lot and I just want to help them feel better,” says Poulette. But sometimes she says, it’s hard to get the answers people are looking for.

But at the end of the day, Poulette loves her job. When you ask her why she loves it so much, she simply replies, “It’s my place.” It appears people in Oneida agree and they’re happy Poulette has found her place back home among her people.

If there’s a great story in your community, contact us, toll-free 1-888-269-9593



Stay in the loop! Check out our new website www.aiai.on.ca

Quitters win big in challenge to butt out!

by Carolyn Doxtator, Health Promotions Coordinator

LONDON – One of the big highlights at AIAI’s Health Promotions department has been the “Save Your Lungs, Save Your Life!” Smoking Cessation Challenge. Cancer Care Ontario’s Aboriginal Tobacco Program provided the incentive and AIAI responded with the objective to motivate our member Nation smokers to butt out!

We partnered with Ontario’s “Driven to Quit” Challenge with the goal to reduce the number of smokers in our AIAI membership communities, leading to an improvement in overall health. Our project team consisted of Brandy Cornelius, who assisted with the proposal development, and Karen Elijah and I working as workshop facilitators.

Participants were required to stop smoking for the month of March with the help of a buddy. Information sessions were held at AIAI for the association’s

staff, as well as in six AIAI communities; Batchewana, Delaware, Hiawatha, Mississaugas of the New Credit, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, and Oneida. Participants were given a carbon monoxide (CO) monitor test to show the high levels of CO in their blood, because of heavy smoking. Every session was different, with questions, comments, stories, and tips. Everyone seemed to have a good time.

For first prize, we provided a Nintendo Wii System, FIT Board Plus, and an extra controller. Second prize was a \$315 gift card from Canadian Tire for a new bicycle. All participants were given the Nike N7 Native running shoes for their active participation, even if they weren’t able to quit for the full month. Out of 44 participants, 24 people successfully quit smoking for the month of March! A total of 14 grand prizes were awarded, two at each site. This project was a tremendous



“Save Your Lungs, Save Your Life”

Three happy participants from Hiawatha First Nation! Left to Right are: Cole Shearer, Laura Shearer and Loni Thomson. Congratulations you guys!!

August Elder’s Gathering set for Point Pelee Park

By Valerie George, Health and Social Advisory Board Coordinator

LONDON – Mark your calendars for our upcoming Elders Gathering coming up on August 24, 25 and 26, 2010. This year, the Gathering is being hosted by the Caldwell First Nation. As they don’t have a specific land base yet, they’ve developed a good relationship with Point Pelee National Park, which is where the Gathering will be held. It is hoped that there will be a lot of participation from the Elders of each member Nation community.

This year’s theme for the Elder’s Gathering is “Watering Our

Roots To Nurture Our Future”. We are once again fundraising, as this event is constantly challenged financially. This year, there will be a Walk-A-Thon, Saturday, July 17th, and a Charity Golf Tournament, Wednesday, June 30th. Watch for further information as it becomes available.

Aside from the Elders Gathering, the Board will continue to work on issues in the areas of health, social services and the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy, at the usual quarterly meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for July 15, 2010,

success and we were extremely happy that 24 people were motivated enough to stop smoking for the month of March. I’m told that some of them have continued to be

smoke-free! We commend all of the participants who had the courage to try to become a healthier person by stopping smoking, eating better and becoming more active.

Rapport building workshop a success

by Julia Hill, Health Policy Analyst

TORONTO -- The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians hosted a successful forum on Rapport Building with our communities and health service providers! We had a great turnout with participation from professional health associations, Public Health Units, First Nations Inuit Health, along with health representatives from AIAI’s communities.

This forum gave our communities the opportunity to raise concerns about access to health services directly with the service provider and/or funder. Presentations were also made by service providers/funders on their involvement with First Nations and the discussions that followed were helpful in providing clarification to all parties.

Overall, this forum set the foundation for creating a health network for future collaboration towards our common goal of improving First Nations access to health services!

in the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation community.

If you ever have an issue that requires attention, you can contact your specific community Board members (refer to H/SAB, AGA Report) and a request may be is-

sued to AIAI to place the issue on the meeting agenda. Doing so ahead of time helps staff to research and prepare information for discussion at the meeting.

AIAI pushes for separate healing and wellness initiative

LONDON -- The Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy (AHWS) is experiencing some growing pains, as First Nation groups in Ontario continue to push for a more culturally specific strategy for their communities. The move would see a separate strategy developed to address the unique healing and wellness needs of First Nations people who live on-reserve.

AHWS first began delivering services to meet the healing and health needs of on-reserve and off-reserve First Nations people as well as Native women and Metis people in Ontario 15 years ago. However,

according to AIAI’s AHWS director, Carol Hill, the problem with this model is that, “not everyone has the same needs.”

AHWS, which is pronounced “Oz,” was designed to take a holistic approach to improving aboriginal health by focusing on the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and cultural aspects of our lives. It strives to ensure people have access to primary health and healing services and programs, including prevention, treatment and support which are delivered in a culturally appropriate and culturally competent way.

However Hill says in some areas, there can be two very

different approaches for how a client who lives on-reserve is supported, as opposed to one who lives off-reserve. She says there are different needs and challenges at play. Hill says for example, support workers will need different resources to help clients suffering with family violence in a First Nation community, as they may need specific help coming to terms with the residential school experience. However, under the current AHWS model, there’s one approach for all Aboriginal people, no matter what their unique needs are.

It’s this kind of challenge that is behind the move to get

a First Nations specific strategy. First Nation’s Political Territorial Organizations, such as AIAI, have been pushing the Ontario government to agree to work with them on creating the separate entity. A working group has been established to develop a plan, which will determine the pros and cons of such a model, the impacts and potential costs.

So far, Hill says the province of Ontario appears to be reluctant to entertain the idea of a separate healing and wellness strategy for First Nations. However, she says those discussions continue.

AIAI health director featured in DVD on diabetes

LONDON – AIAI's Director of Health, Cathryn Mandoka is front and centre in a new film on Diabetes produced by the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians. The film profiles Mandoka as a way to show people that with a proper lifestyle, diabetes is a manageable disease.

"I first got diabetes when I was just a girl," says Mandoka, who just celebrated 25 years at AIAI. Mandoka says there's too little information available to show people that they can still live a great life, despite having diabetes.

The film is called, "The Medicine Wheel Walk." It will be premiered at AIAI's Annual Gen-



AIAI's Health Director, Cathryn Mandoka is featured in a new film on diabetes self-care, called "The Medicine Wheel Walk." Copies of the DVD are being sent to each First Nation in Ontario

eral Assembly, being held at the Oneida of the Thames First Nation, June 2, 3 and 4, 2010. The film not only features Mandoka, but also several members of her immediate family, "The ultimate goal is to show people how to lead a good life, so we can raise the level of health within our population, ensuring we have strong children being born within the next seven generations."

Mandoka wishes to acknowledge the contributions of those who helped make the DVD possible, such as the Elders. She especially wants to acknowledge Delaware Nation Councillor and Elder Phillip Snake for his out-

look and expectations on what the DVD should be about. "He was quite vocal on the theme being Self Care and Management. We give our gratitude to "Dr. Phil" as we like to call him," says Mandoka. She also wants to give "Miigwetches" to the political leadership for their support, and to members of the Mandoka family who came for the filming.

Finally, Mandoka wishes to thank her team at AIAI, especially Brandy Cornelius and Shayna Phillips who designed the jacket for the DVD, the inside seal for the disk and the power point which was used in the filming. The power point presentations have been shown at several International Diabetes Conferences over the past two years. Mandoka says in all, making the DVD was a joy, especially knowing it will be used to help others properly manage their diabetes.

HST fight ... continued from page 1

recognize the exemption, under the current HST administration rules. It says it's up to Ottawa to give the green light to continue the exemption. But the federal government lays the responsibility at Ontario's door, by claiming the province has the authority to grant the First Nation exemption.

This back and forth has frustrated First Nations leaders. AIAI's Grand Chief says, "We've been stuck in this game of ping pong on this issue, which clearly shows neither Ontario nor Ottawa wants to really deal with this." Ontario has met with First Nations to discuss the concerns surrounding the HST. The provincial Minister of Finance, Dwight Duncan has also written the federal Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty, outlining Ontario's support of the exemption. But so far, neither side has made any effort

to change the HST tax agreement. Instead, Ontario appears to be putting more effort into dealing with the aftermath of the HST. Ontario's Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Chris Bentley recently met with the AIAI Chiefs Council in Leamington. He came acknowledging the First Nation position on taxation, yet had with a clear mandate to sell the idea of a interim tax rebate. Minister Bentley told Chiefs the rebate could be a good 'plan B' if Ontario was unsuccessful in maintaining the tax exemption before the HST takes effect July 1st.

AIAI Chiefs however, unanimously rejected the interim rebate offer. Their position is and continues to be 'no tax, means no tax.' They say by accepting a rebate, First Nations are agreeing to pay this new Ontario-Canada tax, something that clearly vio-

lates the Nation-to-Nation spirit and intent of the Treaties. Deputy Grand Chief McCormick adds that the Chiefs' position is supported by International Law. "One of the leading principles in International Law is that one sovereign cannot tax another sovereign, without their consent," he says.

Despite this opposition, Ontario hasn't given up on the HST rebate as a temporary solution to the current dilemma. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) was signed by Ontario and the Chiefs of Ontario in early May to formalize a working relationship between the two, in resolving the HST issue. The MOA's rebate option is a tempo-

rary measure, until a permanent solution is found on the HST. Again, AIAI member Nation Chiefs spoke out against the interim rebate. They were the first in the province to publically raise their concerns about the harm such a rebate would do to Aboriginal and Treaty rights. The MOA does acknowledge the fundamental differences that exist between First Nations government and the provincial government about the basis of the exemption. First Nations assert that the point of sale exemption is based on their Aboriginal and Treaty rights. Ontario asserts that the exemption is based on an administrative policy. The fate of the MOA will be decided by a vote at a Special Chiefs Assembly.

Grand Chief Phillips also wishes to stress that AIAI does not condone violence. Despite the frustrations, he says it's important for people to remember their traditional teachings, which come from a place of honour and respect. One major event being closely watched is lead by an AIAI member Nation. The Batchewana First Nation is planning to set up an indefinite blockade

on the railway at the end of the month, effectively shutting down rail traffic into and out of Sault Ste. Marie. The community says the blockade will remain until the issue of the HST is resolved.

Meantime, there are early signs Ottawa may be softening on its resolve to avoid dealing with the HST problem. Just as another blockade was set to stop traffic heading to Manitoulin Island before the Victoria Day weekend, the federal government indicated it wanted to meet with First Nations and Ontario about the HST. First Nation's leaders are cautiously optimistic the meeting could lead to an acceptable solution to a problem that has united First Nations people in opposition right across this province.

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Meditating can benefit people with diabetes

LONDON -- Cathryn Mandoka, AIAI's Health Director has recently discovered the art of meditation to help people with diabetes. Mandoka has lived with diabetes most of her life and she's always looking for new and better ways to manage her disease.

This spring, she enrolled in a meditation session in London. "Wow, what an experience!", says Mandoka who adds, "you become so relaxed, you can just feel the stress leaving your body."

Since then, Mandoka has become a firm believer. She has found that meditating not only helps her relieve stress, but it has also helped her keep her blood pressure within normal range.. She says her relationships have improved, and she has had less insomnia and numbness in her feet...

"Meditation techniques work with all people. First Nations people always meditated," she says. Mandoka recalls her father meditating, "The only difference was, he meditated with his eyes open," says Mandoka.

Transcendental meditation requires a person to sit comfortably for 15-20 minutes in the morning and evening. "This makes a person rest and become relaxed," says Mandoka. She says some tribes down in the United States are using meditation in schools, to benefit their children. For more information, Mandoka says people can contact the Maharishi Institute in Ottawa, at 613-565-2030 or email ottawa@marharishi.ca.

"First Nations don't want to block roads and hold demonstrations, but when governments refuse to work with us to resolve these issues, what choice do we have?"

Grand Chief Randall Phillips

Our HST Photo Diary

A few parting shots from the various rallies organized by First Nations in the fight against the imposition of the Harmonized Sales Tax



Photos by S.Huff

Fed's continue to explore changes to Post Secondary education

by Gina McGahey, Education Director

LONDON – An audit this year by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has failed to determine student success based on the funding provided to First Nations. INAC has simply been unable to roll out the numbers. First Nations on the other hand have always had the ability to provide quality and quantity data to determine and support student success.

In order to justify the next audit in 2012, INAC is implementing an Education Information system which will collect data from Kindergarten to Post Secondary.

Within the past months, INAC and the Assembly of First Nations have established Expert Working Groups to design the system and develop a three year working plan.

The federal government is also looking at different delivery options on the Post Secondary program by 2010. This year's federal budget indicated a possible internal transfer of the program. Indian Affairs has yet to provide any details, so that First Nations can formulate their next steps. AIAI affirms its primary position that the Post Secondary program remain in First Nation control. AIAI continues to

work with Ontario First Nations in formulating the best course of action to counter any attempt by government to change this.

Earlier this spring, the federal government solicited a "Free to Learn" report on an alternative delivery option which is similar to an Education Saving Plan. This plan suggests an investment of \$4,000 for each child at birth and contributions of \$3,000 for the next seven years for a total of \$25,000.00 plus interest. A child can access this fund between the ages of 18 - 25 to cover the costs of attending college or university.

AIAI is opposed to this option

for several reasons. Firstly, it infringes on our treaty right and control of our Post Secondary program. Secondly, we believe in life-long learning and we should not be subject to an age restriction. Also, the amount provided will limit our children on obtaining higher levels of learning, such as a masters degree, or Ph.D. Lastly, we have concerns about Indian Affairs' accountability on surpluses for those who leave school early. Once again, this is a test balloon and there is no official endorsement on this option.