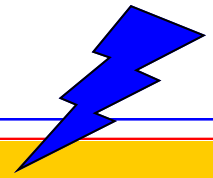


# Action Item #7



June 14, 2024

## **Issue:**

To be healthy, people with disabilities require health care that meets their needs as a whole person, not just as a person with a disability. Most people with or without disabilities can stay healthy by learning about and living healthy lifestyles. The development of a plan is necessary to provide a strategic direction for FNRC to meet the needs of clients and the staff that support them.

## **Background:**

Information consistently documents that people with disabilities as a group experience worse health than the general population. People with physical and cognitive disabilities are more likely to experience early deaths, chronic conditions, and potentially preventable secondary conditions. For instance these individuals s generally have higher rates of diabetes than the general population. Unfortunately, the information, practices, and resources needed to support a healthy lifestyle are not easily available for most people with disabilities. Many health care providers do not address health and fitness in people with disabilities. Community resources are still inaccessible for too many people with disabilities, and support staff tend to need additional support to achieve and maintain a healthy life. In short, people with disabilities have a greater need for services that support healthy lifestyles and choices.

With the Board Policy developed, FNRC will begin promoting healthy lifestyles curriculum intended to provide support staff with the skills and general health information appropriate for women and men with disabilities, in an interactive and easy to understand format. The wellness plan would establish an evidence Based curriculum to support the effectiveness of the program. The plan would also address informational campaigns at day programs, accessing community health activities through social recreation options, meal planning and cooking demonstration supports from regional center food pantries, and more.

Policy Statement: **Everyone has the right to live a full and meaningful life. This requires having essential tools, information and support necessary to make healthy choices and promote wellness. At Far Northern Regional Center, we expect services provide value, enhance and protect health and wellbeing. This policy provides the foundation for developing activities, modifying services, policies and practices to support the health and well-being of the Far Northern Regional Center community.**

## **Action Requested:**

The FNRC Board of Directors approve the new Wellness Policy Statement in an effort to make wellness an integral part of everyday life for the individuals we serve. Once developed, regional center staff will institute procedures that can be utilized to enhance services that can directly and indirectly address wellness in the daily activities of living. Such procedures can include requirements for new program descriptions and can encourage existing programs to enhance their services to include improve outcomes for individuals receiving their services. FNRC will develop a 2 year pilot program to improve wellness activities, for up to 50 clients living in Supported Living Services and for an additional 40 clients receiving Independent Living Services. Individuals participating in the pilot program will be followed to determine the effectiveness of the program for up to 5 years.