



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness



National Collaborating Centre  
for Environmental Health

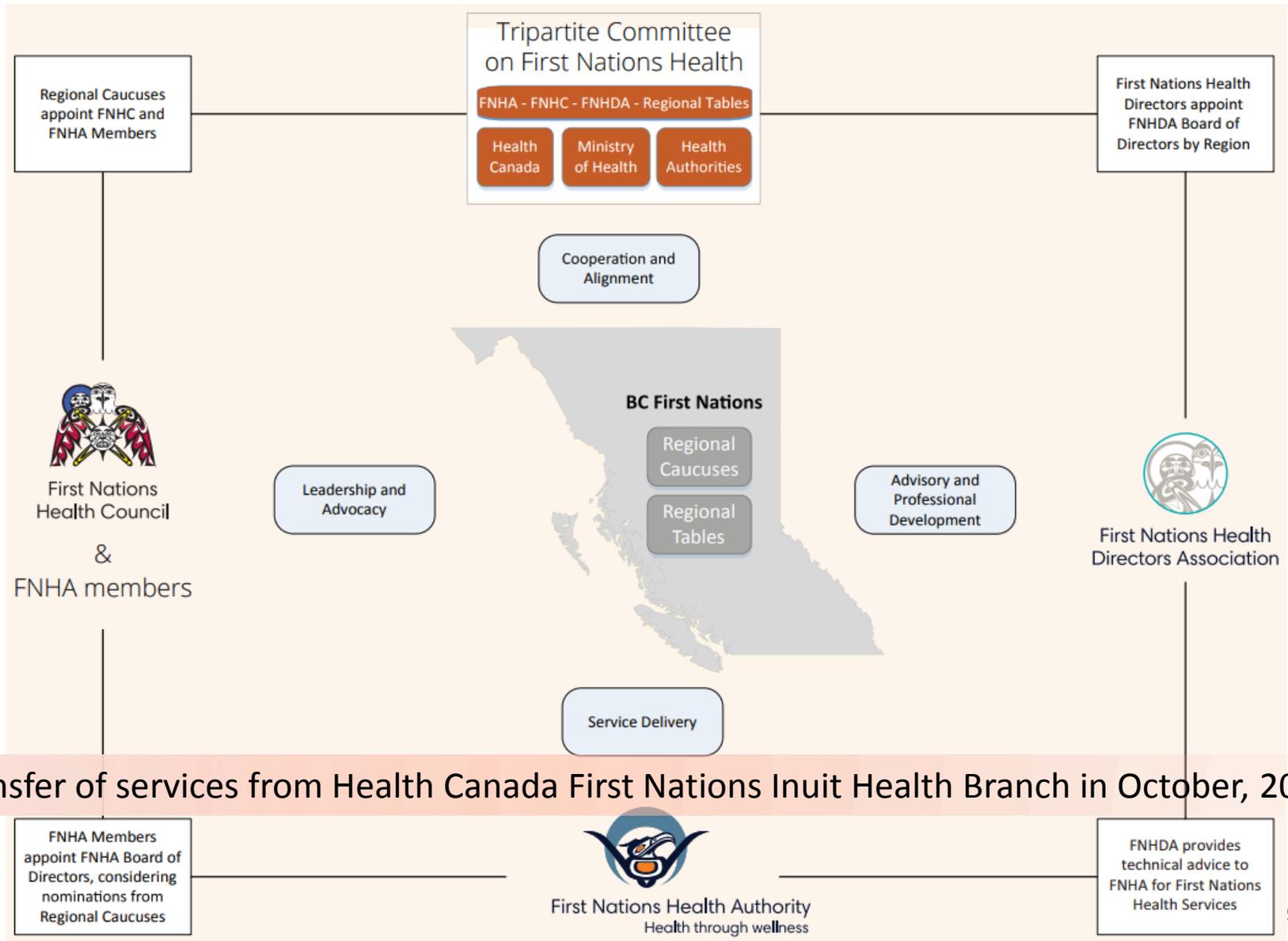
Centre de collaboration nationale  
en santé environnementale

# Community Champions and Radon Testing in First Nations Communities

*CARST 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Radon Conference*  
*April 24, 2018*

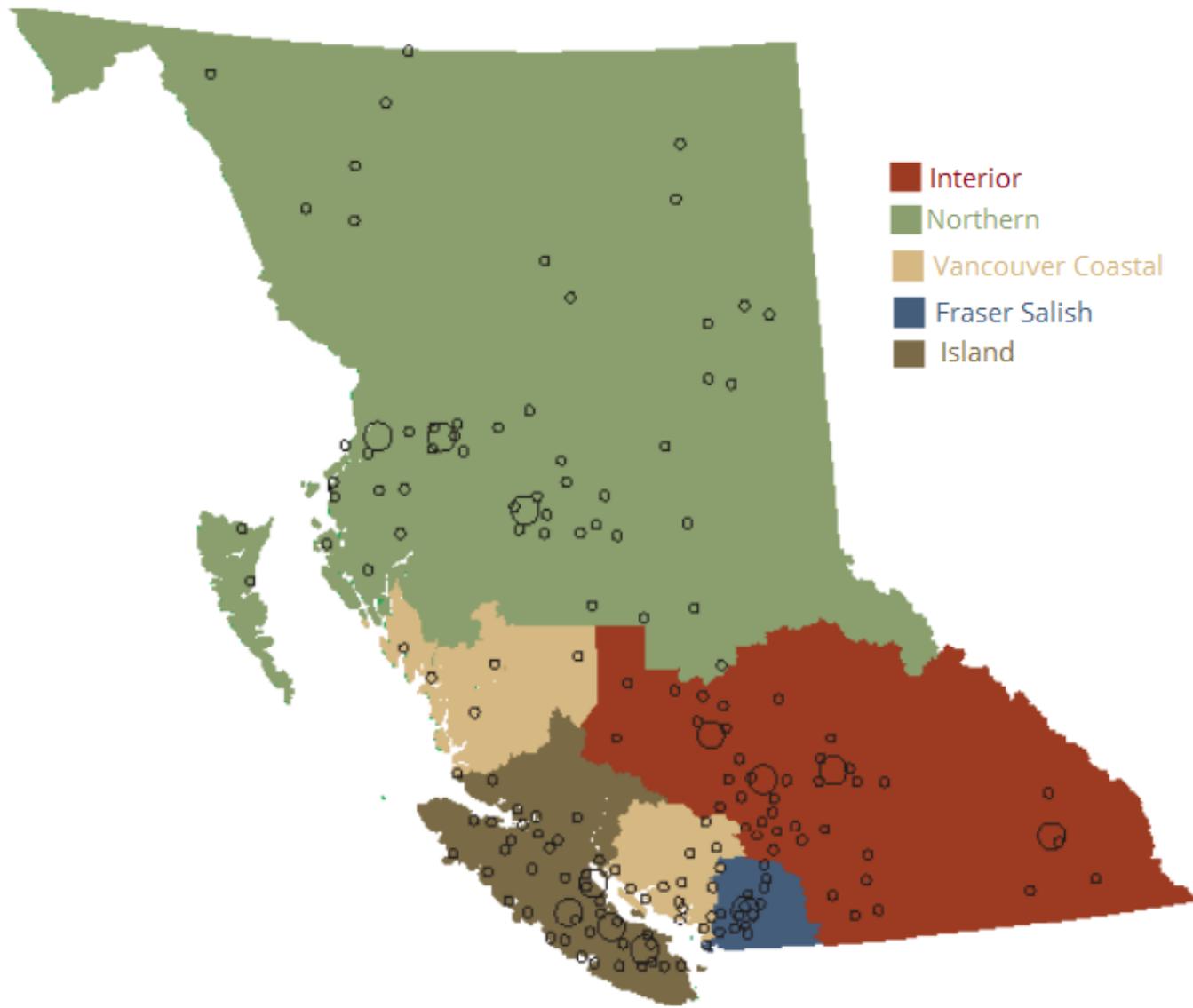
**Casey Neathway, CPHI(C)**  
Interior Regional Manager  
Environmental Public Health Services  
First Nations Health Authority

# The History, Role, and Mandate of FNHA

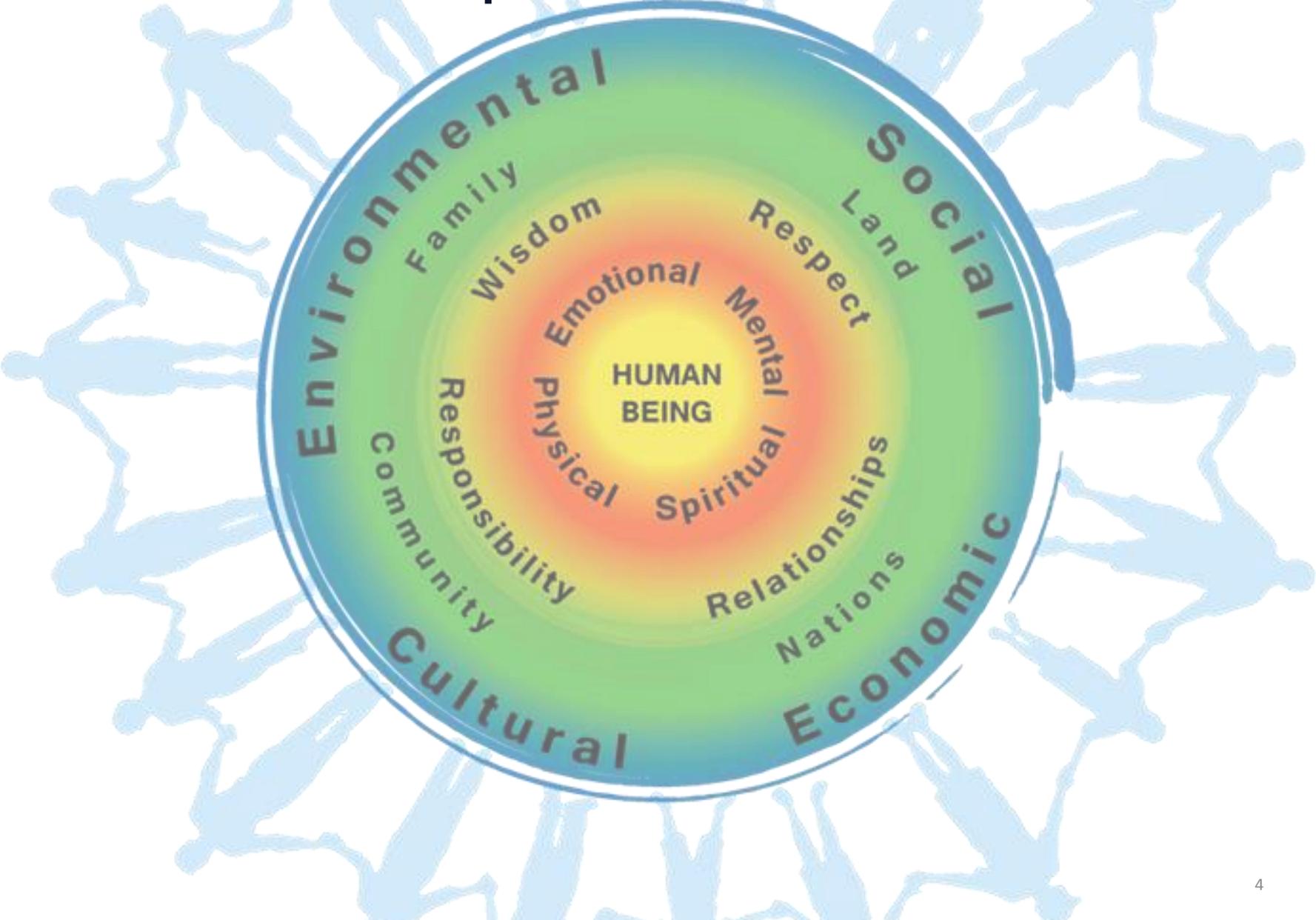


Transfer of services from Health Canada First Nations Inuit Health Branch in October, 2013

# FNHA Regions



# First Nations Perspective on Wellness



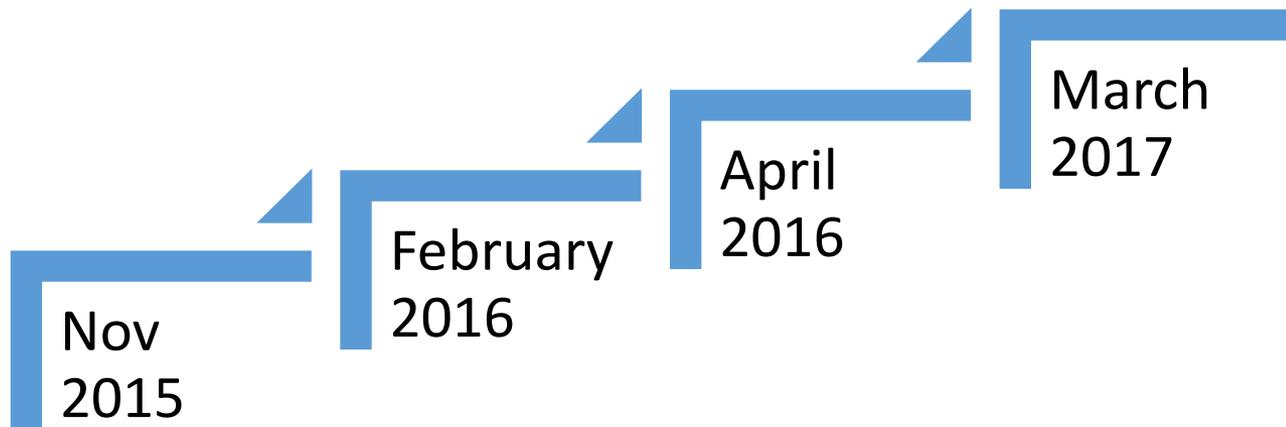
# First Nations Perspective on Wellness

**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

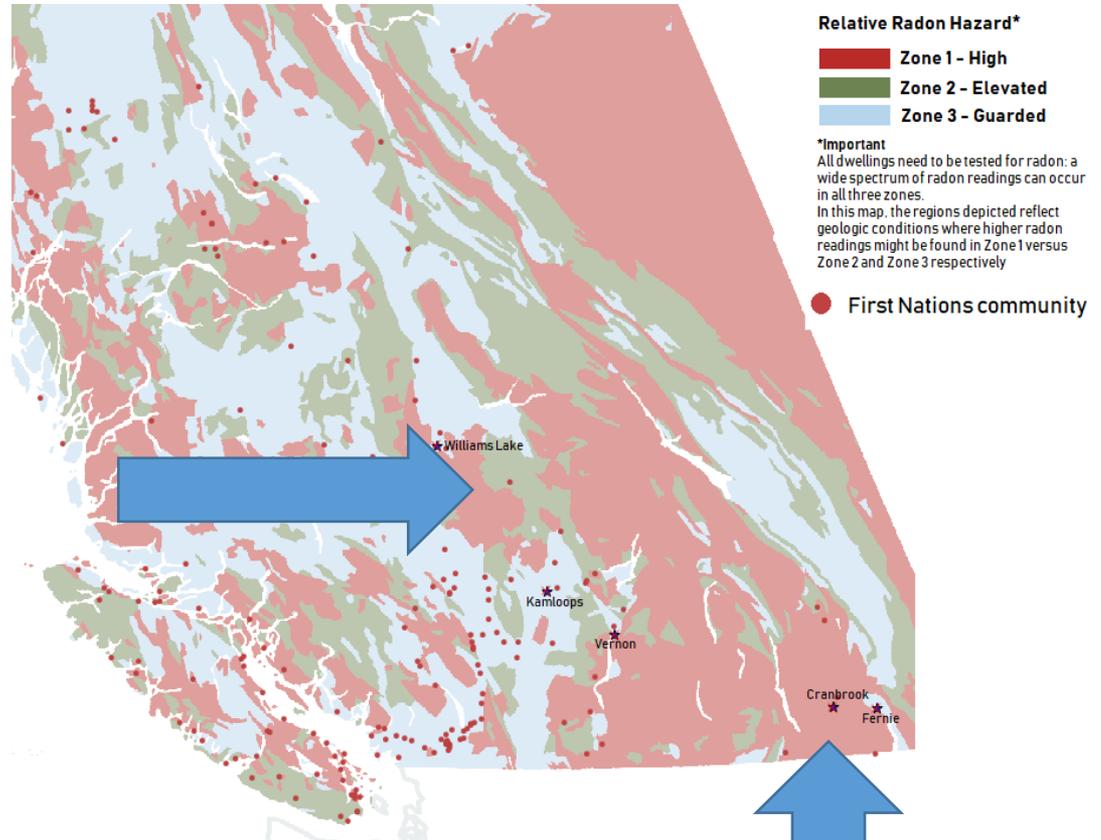
- Previous high results
- Radon potential map

6 FNs in 3 Regions

- 100 detectors

2 FNs in Interior wide-scale testing with champions

- 20 detectors



BC Radon Potential Map



## **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

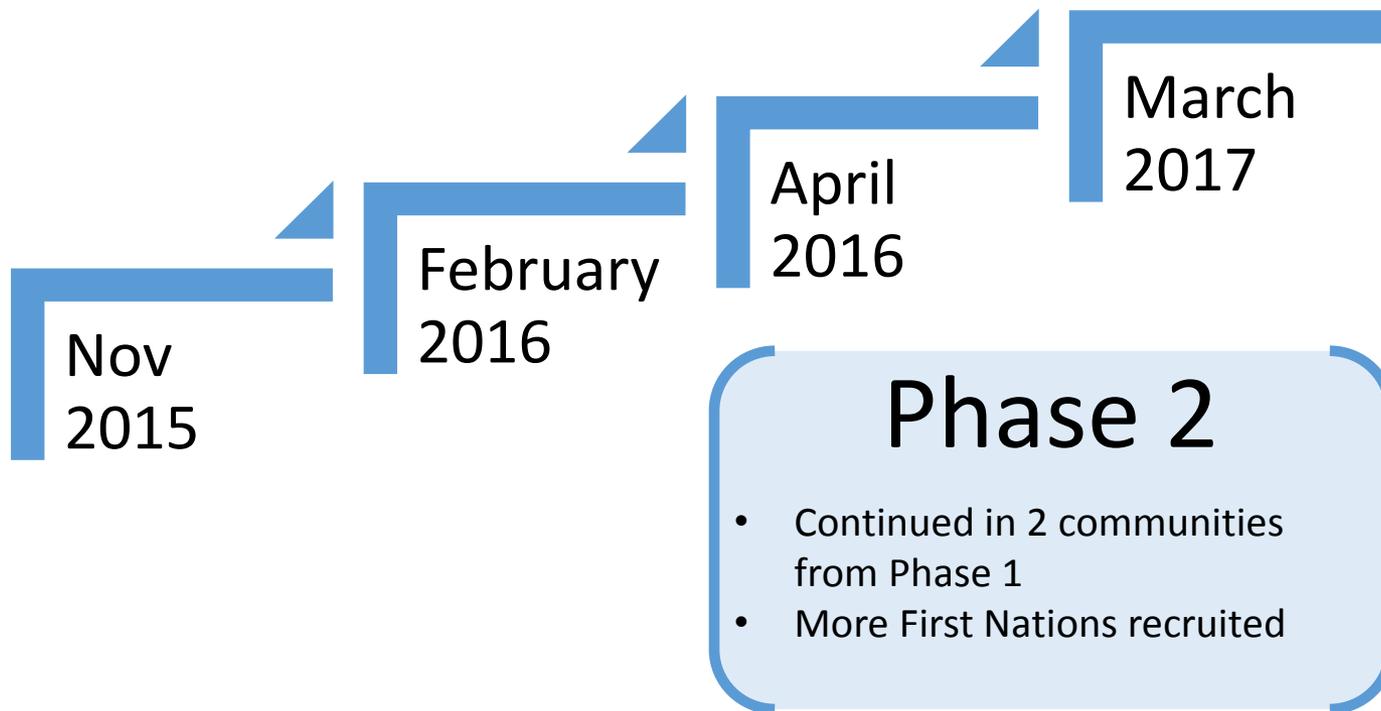
- Detectors placed in lowest “livable” area of the home
  - Any livable area might become an occupancy area
- Detectors deployed & collected either by FNHA staff or Community Champions



Photo credit: Indigenous Services Canada



# BC First Nations Radon Testing: Timeline





## Phase 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

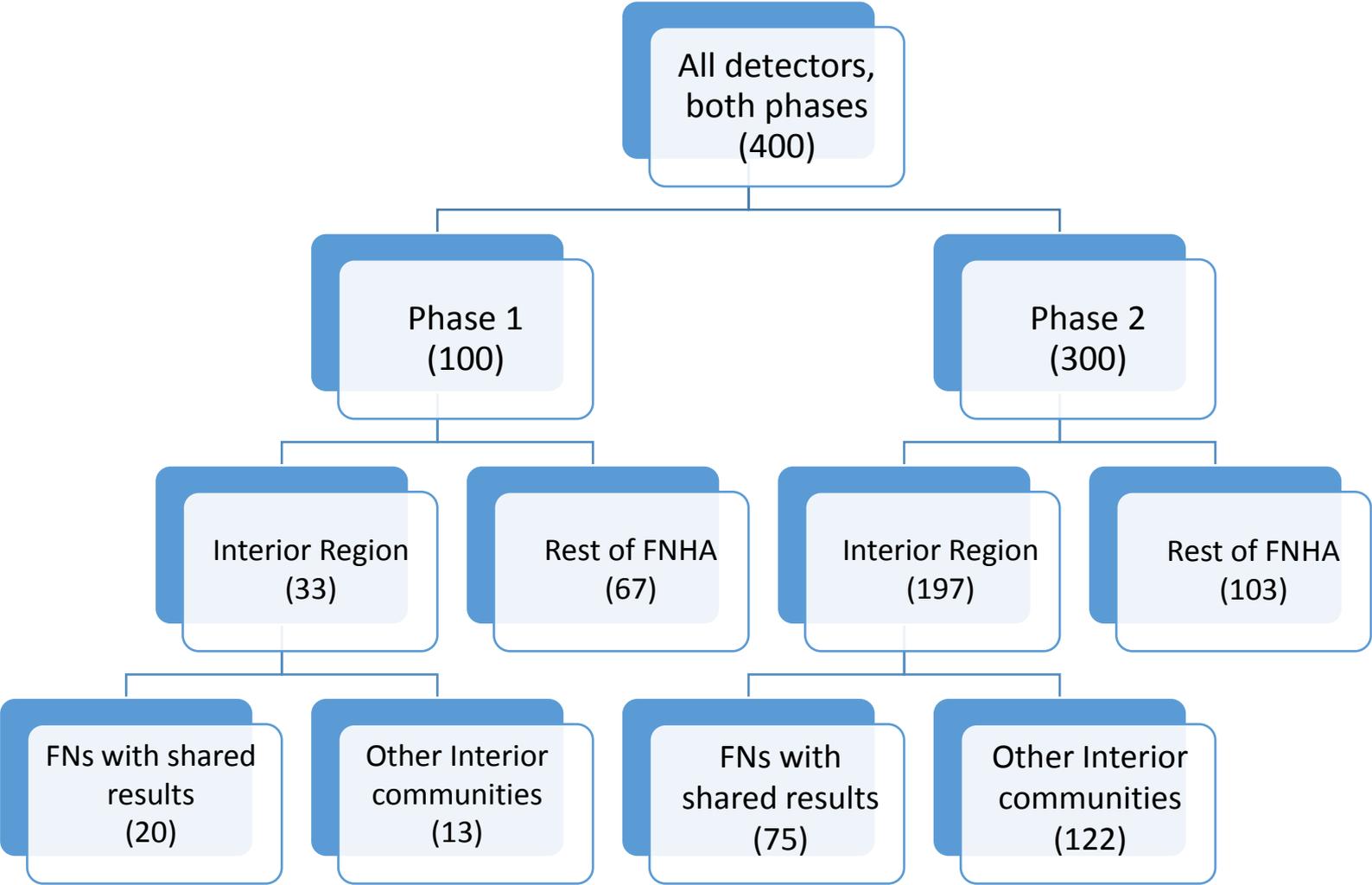
**Number of additional Community  
Champions:** 1

**Detector type:** Radtrak 1





# Number of detectors deployed





# Results from Both Phases

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



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# Mitigation

- ~30% of on-reserve homes  $>200\text{Bq}/\text{m}^3$  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

[www.ncceh.ca](http://www.ncceh.ca) || [www.ccnse.ca](http://www.ccnse.ca)

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# “Nothing about us without us”

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