

Signing of Regional Protocol brings Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiyag Child and Family Services one step closer to Designation

By Kelly Marsden
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Beausoleil First Nation, ON – On September 28th, Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiyag Child and Family Services (DBCFS) reached another exciting milestone with the signing of the revised Protocol Concerning the Delivery of Child and Family Services. This is the first time that DBCFS is a signatory to this agreement. The signing of this protocol signifies the renewed commitment between the seven First Nation communities, DBCFS and the five Children’s Aid Societies in that jurisdiction to continue to work cooperatively when child welfare concerns arise within one of the First Nation territories (which also extends to members who live outside the First Nation community).

The revised regional Protocol was endorsed by all seven First Nation communities and the five Children’s Aid Societies after a consultation process.

The seven First Nation communities are as follows:

- The Chippewa First Nation of Beausoleil
- The Chippewa First Nation of Georgina Island
- The Mississauga First Nation of Alderville
- The Mississauga First Nation of Curve Lake
- The Mississauga First Nation of Hiawatha
- The Mississauga First Nation of Scugog Island
- The Pottawatomi First Nation of Moose Deer Point

The 5 Children’s Aid Societies are:

- Durham Children’s Aid Society
- Highland Shores Children’s Aid
- The Kawartha Haliburton Children's Aid Society
- Simcoe Muskoka Child, Youth & Family Services
- York Region Children’s Aid Society

About Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiyag Child and Family Services

DBCFS is a child and family services agency that delivers culturally appropriate child welfare services to First Nation children and families. DBCFS is actively working towards achieving Designation under the Child and Family Services Act as a

mandated child welfare authority for the seven First Nation communities within their catchment area.

About the Regional Protocol

This strength-based Protocol will result in the improved delivery of child and family services with respect to First Nation families while at the same time honouring First Nation families and culture and respecting the CAS mandate. Already a successful document for 10 years, the renewed version will guide the CASs and First Nation communities through the transition period towards the Designation of DBCFS. To quote from the Protocol, “This document is forged between two separate and distinct groups with differing philosophies and approaches coming together to understand and develop a protocol that both respects these different entities and allows each to operate in unison to provide child welfare services.”

Speaking on behalf of the five CASs involved in signing the renewed regional Protocol, Jennifer Wilson, Executive Director of the Kawartha-Haliburton Children’s Aid Society said, “the child welfare system supports an agenda for sustainable Aboriginal and First Nations, Metis and Inuit child welfare services. This revised Protocol is an important next step in the transition of DBCFS towards designation as a mandated Child and Family Services Agency. The parties involved continue to work together to build a relationship based on respect, equality and trust while ensuring that culturally-based support services are provided to children, youth and their families within the 7 Central East First Nation communities.”

An incredible amount of expertise, time and collaboration went into the renewal of this document. The exceptional and experienced team that worked tirelessly on renewing the Protocol over the last six months included three First Nation and three CAS representatives.

The committee members were:

- Shannon Crate, BSW, MSW
Native Child Welfare Coordinator
Georgina Island First Nation
- Amber Crowe, B.A. Hon., J.D.
Executive Director
Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services
- Lisa McDonald, BRE, BSW, MSW
Protocol Consultant
- Clem Nabigon, B.A. Hon., LLB
Legal Counsel
Durham Children’s Aid Society

- Sharon Pendergast, BA, BSW
Senior Service Manager – FNMI Unit
Simcoe Muskoka Child, Youth and Family Services
- Ivan Peters, BA, BSW
Director of Services for Families
York Region Children’s Aid Society
- Mary Robertson, SSW
First Nation’s Child Welfare Protection Worker
Curve Lake First Nation
- Kathryn Wilson
Administrative Assistant
Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services

This outstanding team’s hard work and efforts have resulted in this strong, functional and living document that will continue to provide child welfare services to our First Nation children and their families.

“As Chairperson of the DBCFS Board of Directors, I could not be more proud of the positive relationship that we have built with the Children’s Aid Societies and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.” Said Hiawatha First Nation Chief Greg Cowie. “With the help of this new Protocol, we will continue to work together to build stronger communities and a healthy environment for our children to grow.”

Contact

If you would like to know more about the Child and Family Services Protocol, please contact:

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The entire group of Chiefs and Children's Aid Society Executive Directors posing in front of beaded medallions of each Clan.

From left to right:

- Susan Carmichael, Executive Director of Simcoe Muskoka Child, Youth & Family Services
- Collette Prevost, Executive Director of York Region Children's Aid Society
- Mark Kartusch, Executive Director of Highland Shores Children's Aid Society
- Chief Roland Monague, Beausoleil First Nation
- Chief Barron King, Moose Deer Point First Nation
- Chief Kelly LaRocca, Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
- Chief Greg Cowie, Hiawatha First Nation
- Julie Bothwell – Councillor, Alderville First Nation
- Amber Crowe, Executive Director of Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child and Family Services
- Chief Donna Big-Canoe, Georgina Island First Nation
- Jennifer Wilson, Executive Director of Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society
- Wanda Secord, Executive Director of Durham Children's Aid Society



Chief Greg Cowie of Hiawatha First Nation signing the Regional Protocol with Jennifer Wilson, Executive Director of Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society.



Members of the Regional Protocol Committee posing by the beaded medallions.
From left to right:

- Clem Nabigon, Legal Counsel at Durham Children's Aid Society
- Sharon Pendergast, Senior Service Manager – FNMI Unit at Simcoe/Muscoka Child, Youth and Family Services
- Ivan Peters, Director of Services for Families at York Region Children's Aid Society
- Shannon Crate, Child Welfare Worker at Georgina Island First Nation
- Amber Crowe, Executive Director at Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child and Family Services
- Lisa McDonald, Protocol Consultant