



September 30, 2021

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Statement on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

On Canada's first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the Canadian Association of Community Health Centres (CACHC) commits to advancing awareness of and meaningful progress on the 94 calls to action within the Truth and Reconciliation report.

We acknowledge the intergenerational pain and suffering caused by residential schools and other systemic forms of racism and oppression of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people -- past and present -- that are rooted in our country's legacy of colonialism.

CACHC humbly acknowledges our role and responsibility in advancing reconciliation, and that our Association is still in the early stages of fulfilling that role and responsibility. The staff and Board of Directors of the Association commit to this journey, working in partnership with our members and other partners.

On September 30, CACHC staff will be engaged in a day of education, learning, and dialogue regarding how to advance our commitments and responsibility over the months and years ahead. This will be an ongoing process.

As the federal association for Community Health Centres and community-based primary health care, CACHC also underscores the need for progress in public policy and investment across our country -- by federal, provincial, and municipal governments -- to achieve fair and lasting resolution for Indigenous communities within health and social service sectors.

We recognize and honour the leadership of Indigenous-led Community Health Centres across the country who have provided a framework for wholistic, multi-sector approaches to health and wellbeing, rooted in traditional teachings and cultural practices, that are both by and for the community.

As we continue to work towards ending health inequities, it is our responsibility at CACHC to use our platform to support and amplify the voices of those within Indigenous communities who have been doing this work for generations, including Indigenous-led Community Health Centres.



As part of our commitment to advocating policies and investments that advance “Indigenous health in Indigenous hands”, including further federal, provincial, and municipal government support for Indigenous-led Community Health Centres, we wish to highlight several relevant calls to action within the Truth and Reconciliation report:

- 18) We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law and constitutional law, and under the Treaties.
- 19) We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.
- 20) In order to address the jurisdictional disputes concerning Aboriginal people who do not reside on reserves, we call upon the federal government to recognize, respect, and address the distinct health needs of the Métis, Inuit, and off-reserve Aboriginal peoples.
- 21) We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority.
- 22) We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients.
- 23) We call upon all levels of government to:
 - i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the healthcare field.
 - ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities.
 - iii. Provide cultural competency training for all health-care professionals.
- 24) We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

CACHC commits to reporting to our members and partners on our further action steps and progress over the months ahead, and to developing mechanisms through which we advance the calls to action within the Truth and Reconciliation report as a more meaningful part of the ongoing collective engagement and work of our membership.