



Sept. 24, 2024

## **BCAAFC's Response to the Canadian Medical Association's Apology**

Victoria, B.C. — The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) is encouraged by the Canadian Medical Association's (CMA) historic apology to Indigenous peoples and was pleased to attend its announcement on September 18.

To prepare for the apology, CMA reviewed 150 years' worth of archives that revealed multiple accounts of systemic and ongoing anti-Indigenous racism. The accounts included the implementation of the Indian hospital system, medical experimentation, and forced sterilization among others.

In response to these findings, CMA issued an apology stating their strong support of Joyce's Principle, which aims to guarantee all Indigenous Peoples the right of equitable access to all social and health services. CMA also committed to work in partnership and reciprocity with Indigenous Peoples to create and implement a ReconciliACTION plan. The National Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (NAFC) has confirmed that they will be one of these partners.

"CMA's apology is an important first step, and BCAAFC looks forward to supporting the changes that need to come through collaborative hard work," said Leslie Varley, Executive Director of BCAAFC. "The partnership between CMA and NAFC will help ensure CMA becomes the leading ally organization in the health sector."

BC Friendship Centres provide safe spaces for Indigenous people to heal from traumas caused by systemic and ongoing racism, and their efforts to connect Indigenous people to better health care are rooted in cultural safety, accessibility and equity. BCAAFC will continue to support Friendship Centres with this work, advocate on their behalf, and hold organizations like CMA accountable.

### **Learn more:**

To read the CMA's apology, visit <https://www.cma.ca/our-focus/indigenous-health/apology-harms-indigenous-peoples>



**BCAAFC** | BC Association of  
Aboriginal Friendship Centres

For more information about Joyce's Principle, visit

[https://principedejoyce.com/sn\\_uploads/principe/Joyce\\_s\\_Principle\\_brief\\_Eng.pdf](https://principedejoyce.com/sn_uploads/principe/Joyce_s_Principle_brief_Eng.pdf)

### **Supports and Resources:**

This content can be triggering and harmful. Please reach out to the following resources if you are in need:

- The Indian Residential School Crisis Line: Provides 24-hour crisis support to former Indian Residential School students and their families toll-free at 1-866-925-4419.
- Hope For Wellness Helpline: Professional counsellors who can offer 24-hour culturally appropriate support in English, French, Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut. Available through online chat or phone: 1-855-242-3310 or [hopeforwellness.ca](http://hopeforwellness.ca).
- Tsow-Tun Le Lum Society: Call their toll-free crisis line at 1-888-403-3123 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. on weekdays and between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on weekends and holidays.
- Suicide Crisis Helpline: Call or text 9-8-8 (toll-free) to access 24-hour trauma-informed and culturally appropriate suicide prevention crisis support.

**BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres**

551 Chatham St | Victoria, BC | V8T 1E1 | [www.bcaafc.com](http://www.bcaafc.com)  
(Office) 250-388-5522 or 1-800-990-2432 | (Fax) 250-388-5502