



BCAAFC | BC Association of
Aboriginal Friendship Centres

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres Releases ‘Urban Indigenous Wellness Report: A BC Friendship Centre Perspective’

B.C. – November 23, 2020 – On this week dedicated to national conversations on substance use – National Addictions Awareness Week – the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) released the [Urban Indigenous Wellness Report: A BC Friendship Centre Perspective](#). The report is informed by the collective experience and expertise of individuals within urban Indigenous communities across the province, and lays the groundwork for transformational change that will contribute to the health and wellness of Indigenous peoples.

“The Urban Indigenous Wellness Report is a community-based framework for achieving the actions required to improve health outcomes for urban Indigenous people,” said Leslie Varley, Executive Director of the BCAAFC, “We know there is a need for Indigenous specific mental health services, especially for youth, and these programs need to be accessible and affordable.”

The BCAAFC began work on the report in 2019 in response to the pressing mental health and substance use issues – notably the opioid crisis that B.C. has been facing since 2016 – that disproportionately affects Indigenous peoples living off-reserve and in urban areas. The need for individualized approaches to detox and treatment centres, as well as adequate aftercare and recovery supports, is also identified as a high priority.

Friendship Centres are the largest service-delivery infrastructure for urban Indigenous peoples and provide critical support for the wellbeing of individuals and families living in urban, rural, and off-reserve areas. The report provides guiding recommendations for the systemic change required in order for Friendship Centres to fully meet the health and wellness needs of urban Indigenous peoples in B.C.

“In order to improve the health outcomes for urban Indigenous peoples, systemic change must occur at multiple levels,” said Varley, “We encourage all partners and stakeholders to read the Urban Indigenous Wellness Report and implement the recommendations.”

To read the full report, visit <http://bcaafc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BCAAFC-Urban-Indigenous-Wellness-Report.pdf>.

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