
News Release

Indigenous health in Canada requires stronger commitment by the federal government

(October 16, 2019, Mississauga, ON) The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC), the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada (IPAC), and the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada (SRPC) call for federal leadership to address adverse health effects on Indigenous people in Canada.

We call on all candidates to provide solutions for the following priorities that have remained unaddressed in our urban, rural, and remote First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities:

- Improving the quality of health care services, which includes taking positive action to reduce:
 - Systemic racism in the health care system
 - Culturally unsafe care
 - Violence and trauma in Indigenous communities
- Acknowledging the social determinants of health by:
 - Providing safe drinking water and updating the infrastructure
 - Improving the quality of and access to education
 - Supplying a better quality of housing and reducing overcrowding
- Supporting healthy children and families by:
 - Addressing child welfare issues and enforcing Jordan's Principle
 - Increasing support for families living in poverty
- Promoting safe communities and wellness across the age spectrum by:
 - Increasing cultural, educational, and recreational resources
- Engaging with Indigenous communities by:
 - Ensuring that interventions meet the needs of the population at individual, family, and community levels
 - Fostering collaboration and autonomy to define and address their needs in health and social sectors

Respecting self-determination through collaboration with Indigenous leaders, health professionals, and managers is essential to success.

While some political parties allude to these priorities in their respective platforms, it is essential that the actions outlined above receive ongoing support, which includes dedicated funding and a goal of progress over the next four years.

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-2-

“There is much that can be done to improve care provided to Indigenous patients and communities,” says Dr. Sarah Funnell, Co-chair of the CFPC’s Indigenous Health Working Group. “Federal leaders have a responsibility to support and advance initiatives that will lead to more equitable outcomes for some of Canada’s most vulnerable and marginalized populations.”

The CFPC, IPAC, and SRPC look forward to working collaboratively with the next federal government, as well as Indigenous health organizations, to achieve progress in Indigenous health and well-being.

-30-

About the College of Family Physicians of Canada

The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) is the professional organization that represents more than 38,000 members across the country. The College establishes the standards for and accredits postgraduate family medicine training in Canada’s 17 medical schools. It reviews and certifies continuing professional development programs and materials that enable family physicians to meet certification and licensing requirements. The CFPC provides high-quality services, supports family medicine teaching and research, and advocates on behalf of the specialty of family medicine, family physicians, and the patients they serve.

About the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada

The Society of Rural Physicians of Canada (SRPC) is the national voice of Canadian rural physicians. Founded in 1992, the SRPC’s mission is championing rural generalist medical care through education, collaboration, advocacy and research.

On behalf of its members and the Canadian public, SRPC performs a wide variety of functions, such as developing and advocating health delivery mechanisms, supporting rural doctors and communities in crisis, promoting and delivering continuing rural medical education, encouraging and facilitating research into rural health issues, and fostering communication among rural physicians and other groups with an interest in rural health care. The SRPC is a voluntary professional organization with over 1,500 members representing rural physicians in Canada’s 5 regional divisions spanning the country.

About the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada

The Indigenous Physicians Associations of Canada (IPAC) is the representative organization of Canada’s Indigenous medical students, residents, fellows and physicians.

IPAC derives its authority from the teachings of our ancestors, from the legitimacy of the history of our experiences, and from our communities and peoples. As an organization of contemporary medicine people, IPAC recognizes the health inequities of Indigenous people and communities who look to us for leadership and knowledge. We believe it is our responsibility and right to come together to help improve Indigenous peoples' physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health and to impact the determinants of Indigenous

.../3

-3-

health. We also believe in supporting our medical learners and those in the earlier stages of their medical training so that we ensure a healthy and well, supported, mentored and sustainable Indigenous physician workforce who contribute meaningfully to the health care system.

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