

January 9th, 2024

The Honourable Patty Hadju, M.P.,

Minister of Indigenous Services Canada

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Dear Honourable Minister Hadju;

We are writing to you at this time to ask the Government of Canada to work with Indigenous organizations to develop a national Indigenous-led healing foundation. We also ask you to begin work on behalf of the Government of Canada to provide funding support through this national Indigenous-led healing foundation to communities across Canada and support them in their efforts to lead in the healing of intergenerational trauma in Indigenous communities.

We envision a centre much like the National Aboriginal Healing Foundation that provides funding to communities for approaches to care that;

- include honouring community voices through meaningful engagement,
- community, and client-centered approaches,
- building and supporting community capacity,
- human health resources training and support, and
- culturally sensitive responses.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to Action include a call for the Government of Canada to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools.

In 2007, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement provided \$125 million, extending the Aboriginal Healing Foundation's (AHF) original mandate by five years, to 2014 however, there is much work yet to be done. In 2014, George Erasmus, President of AHF said, "The work of healing and reconciliation is by no means complete. But the past years show us what we can do by working together, and so I urge the public to support survivors by supporting this work of healing and reconciliation."

We are urging you to continue to support communities in building and reinforcing sustainable healing processes that address the legacy of physical, sexual, mental, cultural, and spiritual abuses in the residential school system, including intergenerational impacts.

Sadly, in its final report of 2014 the AHF argued that the healing which had begun, through the foundation's support of communities, needed to be continued but, "To many it feels as if Canada has not only closed a chapter on residential schools, but the entire book of healing as well."

As Indigenous people, we urge you, in your leadership position, to reopen a discussion on the need for Canada to support Indigenous healing at this critical time as many of our communities are in crisis.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

On behalf of Indigenous Action Canada
Lorraine Rekmans