

SOVEREIGN NATIONS OF TREATY NO. 8

Protect, Promote, Bring to Life, Implement, and Sustain the True Spirit and Intent of Treaty No. 8 "As long as the Sun Shines, The Grass Grows, The Rivers Flow and until such time as Yidah Should Reverse"

The Honourable Dan Williams
Minister of Mental Health and Addiction
Mha.minister@gov.ab.ca

The Honourable Adriana LaGrange
Minister of Health
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Cc. MLA Brooks Arcand-Paul
Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Critic, NDP
Edmonton.WestHenday@assembly.ab.ca

Regarding: The Proclamation of the College of Counselling Therapy of Alberta

As the Grand Chief of Treaty No. 8, I am writing to inform your offices that the Sovereign First Nations of Alberta Chiefs had convened a meeting and we seek your action on proclaiming the College of Counselling Therapy of Alberta (CCTA).

Over the past several years, Treaty 8 First Nations has had an unprecedented escalating mental health crisis, which requires greater access to competent and safe mental health counselling. There have been five First Nations in Northern Alberta that have declared a State of Local Emergency (S.O.L.E) due to mental health crises. The trauma from residential schools continues to impact our people, along with the aftermath of COVID-19, which is exasperating mental health and addiction issues. Knowing that Mental Health is an important component of health, which warrants that Counselling Therapists in Alberta should be held to the same safety and quality assurance measures, including cultural competencies, standards of practice, and ethical, effective delivery, as other health professions.

During this time, the Government of Alberta has stalled work on the CCTA, which directly blocks First Nations' federal funding through the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB), Indigenous Service Canada for Mental health counselling.

The NIHB has stated that they will cover Counselling Therapists' services to First Nations once they become regulated in Alberta. There are Indigenous counsellors in Alberta who are unregulated Counselling Therapists and, therefore, can not provide services through NIHB to First Nations people. It is critical that the Alberta government stop creating barriers for First Nations to access the mental health services they need.

The First Nations of Treaty No.8 acknowledges and endorses the collaborative work with ACTA and supports the prioritization of proclaiming the CCTA to increase access to mental health counselling and safety for First Nations. Once the CCTA is proclaimed, Treaty No.8 will collaboratively work long-term with the CCTA and other First Nations, Metis and Inuit to establish cultural safeguards and understandings within the CCTA's processes, policies, and governance.

We call on the Alberta Government to proclaim the CCTA without further delay. It is unacceptable to allow ongoing risk of the provision of mental health services to First Nations and non-Indigenous people and to block federal health funding access to First Nations in Alberta.

Sincerely,



Grand Chief Arthur Noskey
Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta

cc. Sovereign Nations of Treaty No. 8



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