



Truth and Reconciliation Day Statement from the Primary Care Collaborative

On the inaugural National Truth and Reconciliation Day being recognized today across Canada, the Primary Care Collaborative values the opportunity and responsibility to acknowledge some of the actions that can help support better understanding of colonization, the trauma of residential schools for Indigenous people and communities, and the ongoing impacts of systemic racism, and the steps to create safer spaces and change for Indigenous health and wellbeing.

For our collaborative group of primary health care associations, ensuring our staff have the tools they need to support improving Indigenous healthcare experiences and outcomes, is an essential step towards truth and reconciliation. Through the [Indigenous Cultural Safety \(ICS\) Program](#), offered by the Indigenous Primary Health Care Council, our associations are committed to taking concrete steps towards the respect and understanding at the core of de-colonization work. The ICS Program will help us to better understand our roles as individuals in supporting primary care providers to decolonize health care, and also in organizational change both within our associations and among the partners we work with.

Through a series of moderated and facilitated sessions, the program facilitates a deeper level of understanding of how colonialism is embedded in health systems and services, and how to motivate change at the organizational levels. The ICS Program also explicitly connects the impacts of racism and discrimination on the health and wellbeing of Indigenous people and communities, with real-world examples of how these impacts play out in people's lives. Importantly, this program also includes follow-up steps for organizations and providers and offers tools to deepen the learning of the initial program. Ultimately, the ICS Program supports a practical understanding of the truth of colonization for Indigenous people's experiences, and then some paths for how to support reconciliation.

The Primary Care Collaborative believes that collective commitments to actions such as mandating Indigenous cultural safety training for public service organizations is what will ultimately change the culture and the mindset of individuals and organizations. Increasing awareness of both historical context and connections to the current environments and conditions that Indigenous people face in health care is an essential foundational step to moving forward together, and to ensuring that Indigenous people's voices, concerns and trauma are heard and heeded within organizations, policy-making circles and governments alike.

The Primary Care Collaborative, therefore, remains committed to our own journey of Truth and Reconciliation this year, and on this inaugural day, by committing all of the staff at our associations to undertake ICS Program training, and to engage with other programs such as the [University of Alberta's Indigenous Canada](#) program, or resources and modules from [Cancer Care Ontario](#). In doing so, we also challenge and call on the wider public and government sectors across all of Ontario, who have also engaged with the ICS Program, to set out your organizational plans and commitments to ongoing learning and the steps being taken to promote organizational transformation.



Taken as a whole, it is these actions, which will outlast Truth and Reconciliation Day that will enable us to start moving on a path where Indigenous people and communities will be able to lead safer, healthier and happier lives, with lowered risk of violence and trauma from colonization's impacts.

About the Primary Care Collaborative (PCC):

We are a coalition of primary care organizations collectively representing 14,000 family doctors, 1,000+ primary care nurse practitioners, 286 primary care teams, 28 Indigenous primary care teams, including northern, rural, and remote teams in Ontario. This alliance of comprehensive primary care organizations joined together by common purpose to build on the collaborative work during the COVID-19 pandemic as we move towards recovery in a time of health system transformation. The PCC provides a collective and cohesive voice with the purpose of advancing equitable person-centred primary care in Ontario and is focused on influencing policy by creating a unified voice towards resolving barriers or challenges that prevent comprehensive primary care from being the foundation of the health system.