
Assembly of First Nations

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ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
July 23, 24 & 25, 2019, FREDERICTON, NB

Resolution no. 20/2019

TITLE: National Training Program for Indigenous Epidemiologists

SUBJECT: Health

MOVED BY: Chief Elaine Johnston, Serpent River First Nation, ON

SECONDED BY: Chief Walter Spence, Fox Lake Cree Nation, MB

DECISION: Carried by Consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 23: Indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programs affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programs through their own institutions.
 - ii. Article 31: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect, and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.
- B. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action state:
- i. Call to Action (19): We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long term trends.

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- C. As Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island we have always had our own worldview that has informed our methodologies, our own sciences, our own research, our own laws that were passed down since time immemorial, our laws that were guided and aligned with the lunar cycles and ancestral star knowledge that told us when to plant, hunt, fish, and how we relate to one another. These laws and ways of knowing allowed us to survive and continue to do so.
- D. Our stories have been appropriated and interrupted by non-Indigenous researchers who have taken up the space and have been supported by institutions to tell our stories. Our stories have been analyzed from a non-Indigenous lens and worldview, and as a result, there is a gap and an urgent need to train our own Indigenous Epidemiologists who are grounded in an Indigenous worldview.
- E. The Institute for Indigenous Peoples Health (IIPH) is one of thirteen institutes within the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR), which is one of the three Tri-Council agencies. IIPH has supported Indigenous-led research Network for Environmental Indigenous Health Research (NEIHR) Program that is aimed at establishing a national network of centres focused on capacity development, research and knowledge translation centered around the worldview of Indigenous Peoples. The network is intended to provide supportive research environments for Indigenous health research driven by and grounded in Indigenous communities in Canada.
- F. There is currently a limited number of trained Indigenous epidemiologists in Canada. The next generation of leaders requires exceptional Indigenous community engagement skills and a solid grounding in local Indigenous ways of knowing and doing; mentoring a culturally safe and enriched environment for Indigenous health researcher trainees, knowledge keepers and knowledge users across Canada to grow world class knowledge and skills in health information sciences, applied epidemiology, and health services evaluation.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:

- 1. Call on the Government of Canada to support and direct Tri-Council agencies to support Indigenous communities and organizations to develop, implement, and evaluate a national Indigenous training and mentorship network to train and support a cadre of more than 100 Indigenous health information specialists, applied epidemiologists, and health service researchers who can lead the required transformation of Indigenous health and social information systems in Canada.

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