



CINA President Statement on the loss of Indigenous children at Kamloops Indian Residential School

Ottawa, Ontario (June 2, 2021) — Once again Indigenous people across the country are faced with another series of challenges, loss and trauma in the recent disclosure of the 215 bodies found in a mass unmarked grave at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. The trauma comes on the transition to mark June as national Indigenous history month. It is estimated that more than 150,000 children attended Indian residential schools in Canada from the 1830s to 1996.

#WeAnswerTheCall is the national nursing theme as referred in the Indigenous Services Canada – First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, National Nursing Excellence Awards 2021. Our nurses will once again meet the needs to help with the emerging crisis of Indian Residential Schools trauma. “We must remember to respond to the various health concerns, mental health needs and the toll on physical capacity on another dark time in our history” says Lea Bill, CINA President.

The current restrictions due to COVID-19 guidelines has already presented significant challenges to Indigenous people and has changed the demands of our healthcare professionals on the frontline, in our remote and isolated communities – and impacts the ability to engage in the ceremonies that are the fundamental strength and support of our people. Indigenous Nurses have been, and will continue to be, the main or first point of contact when providing health services – and support the well-being of our communities.

June 2021 – is the beginning of Indigenous History Month - an opportunity for CINA in collaboration with our nonindigenous allies to continue to design tools, develop resources and recognize the need for Indigenous-led research to improve better health outcomes and the countless contributions of Indigenous people in many fields. CINA continues to work with multiple stakeholders to address the significant gaps in education, especially in Indigenous health content. The expertise and skills that Indigenous Nurses bring to healthcare is truly – *Indigenous Ways of Knowing*.

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