



WEENEEBAYKO AREA HEALTH AUTHORITY

19 Hospital Drive, P.O. Box 664, Moose Factory, ON P0L 1W0
Tel: 705-658-4544 Fax: 705-658-4917
www.waha.ca

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RE: Honouring the 215 Children Loss at Indigenous Residential School in Kamloops, British Columbia

To our community members:

“We mourn in solidarity with all Indigenous communities for the lives of the 215 Indigenous school children recently identified, on the site of Canada’s largest residential school, in British Columbia,” said Lynne Innes, President and CEO of Weeneebayko Area Health Authority - WAHA.

Canadian residential schools were compulsory boarding schools run by the federal government and religious authorities during the 19th and 20th Centuries. The Kamloops Indian Residential School was operated by the Roman Catholic Church from 1890 -1969. After which, the central government assumed operations and ran it as a day school during 1969 - until it closed in 1978. At peak operation, the school had 500 plus students attending.

The schools operated under the guise of “removing the Indian from the child” – a racist, forcible assimilation policy of the day that has left the unsettling legacy of trans-generational trauma. Students were subjected to sexual abuse, violence, neglect, and malnutrition. This systemic maltreatment has adversely affected many communities throughout the years. Surviving children and their families have suffered the unthinkable loss of their culture, language, religion, socio-economic contributions, and the ability to shape the future with an Indigenous worldview and way of life.

“This news has affected Indigenous communities and Canadians across the region and country deeply. Its a painful reminder to many of our residential school survivors of their trauma and grief. Our thoughts are fixed on the loss children and the grieving families. The families all deserve to learn the truth about their loved ones. During the week of May 31 - June 4th, the Canadian flags at all WAHA hospital sites will be flown at half mast to recognize the children and all our residential school survivors. With deepest sympathy, we extend to the families our prayers and love,” said Lynne Innes, President and CEO of Weeneebayko Area Health Authority - WAHA.

Recent history continues to reveal that Canada as a nation need to do better. Reconciliation between our founding nations requires truth telling.

Sincerely,

Lynne Innes, President & Chief Executive Officer, WAHA