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First Nations Health Authority

## News release

For immediate release

### **\$12.5 million announced to build new healing house in Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc**

March 23, 2023 — Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc — Traditional Territory of the Secwépemc, British Columbia

We honour the experiences of Survivors of the Kamloops Indian Residential School and acknowledge the continued impacts on the intergenerational Survivors.

Today, Kúkpi7 (Chief) Rosanne Casimir of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services, and Colleen Erickson, Board Chair of the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), are pleased to jointly announce \$12.5 million in federal funding towards the construction of a new healing centre at Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc.

This funding follows a commitment made by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau affirming the Government of Canada's support to establish a healing centre at Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc during his October 2021 visit to the community. This safe space will provide trauma-informed programs to support individuals and their families in their spiritual, mental, emotional and physical healing. Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc has selected an architect to lead the construction process and will be working with the membership to create a welcoming design.

The federal funding is in addition to previously committed funds by the FNHA toward healing initiatives at Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. Following the discovery of 215 unmarked graves at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School (KIRS), the FNHA supported Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc with \$2.5 million in funding to help address the intergenerational and residential school impacts experienced by the community, as well as other communities during that difficult time. The FNHA has also provided an additional \$1.3 million to assist the community with the engagement and planning, and will continue to work in partnership with the community to establish this innovative healing centre.

Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc chose, by a community referendum, to keep the Kamloops Indian Residential School building that the federal government formerly owned. The community views its preservation as a reminder of the ongoing legacy of the residential school system, ensuring that its history is never forgotten.

Canada has also committed up to \$1.5 million to assess the feasibility of possible structural renovations and design upgrades to the Kamloops Indian Residential School building, with the goal of determining what funding would be needed for future work. This contribution stems from the \$100.1 million, announced by the Government of Canada in August 2021, to help communities begin to address on-reserve school buildings and associated sites that were once used for residential schools.

Addressing the harms suffered by Survivors, their families and communities is at the heart of reconciliation and is essential to renewing and building relationships among Indigenous Peoples, governments, and all Canadians.

## Quotes

“The legacy of residential schools is one that has tried to take our culture, language, and identity from us, causing profound damage. The healing house will provide culturally appropriate supports that will help to address these long-standing impacts. It will support healing for our Survivors and those impacted by Kamloops Indian Residential School, leading to healthier futures for our children and those not yet born. We look forward to working with the First Nations Health Authority on the implementation of our healing house and providing opportunities for our people to thrive with resources that will now be available.

Trust goes a long way when words and actions are in sync. Following through with the commitment to provide sustainable funding for the healing centre, which will support the need of addressing the intergenerational mental trauma caused by the experience at KIRS, is a step towards that positive path forward.”

Kúkpí7 (Chief) Rosanne Casimir  
T'kém'lúps te Secwépemc

“Two years ago, the discovery of 215 burial sites at the former Kamloops Residential School, as well as unmarked graves at other former residential school sites, shocked the country. The community of T'kém'lúps te Secwépemc led the way in opening the nation's eyes to the truths that were always known by Indigenous Peoples. Now, T'kém'lúps te Secwépemc paves the way in showing what is possible along the healing journey. Canada will continue to support the Survivors, their families and the affected communities through their healing journeys, on their own terms.”

The Honourable Patty Hajdu  
Minister of Indigenous Services

“We acknowledge the leadership of T'kém'lúps te Secwépemc in lifting up this good work in partnership with Indigenous Services Canada and the FNHA. We look forward to the ongoing work in support of this precedent-setting healing model.”

Colleen Erickson  
Board Chair, First Nations Health Authority

“We must never forget what happened and preserve the memory of these little ones forever. We must also ensure this never happens again and that will only occur when we have our own fiscal powers and jurisdiction. Only then will we achieve reconciliation with Canada.”

Manny Jules, Chair of the 13 Grassroots Advisory Council  
T'kém'lúps te Secwépemc

“The FNHA is committed to collaborative and innovative approaches with First Nations communities and other health partners to ensure the provision of culturally safe mental health and wellness supports for First Nations people in BC. In partnership with T'kém'lúps te Secwépemc and Indigenous Services Canada, FNHA is pleased to fund and support the new



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healing house that will help to address needs for trauma-based healing. These funds are separate from additional funds earlier provided by FNHA and other federal and provincial partners for healing and related needs at Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc.”

Richard Jock  
CEO, First Nations Health Authority

“The Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc healing centre is a great example of service delivery models and solutions that are self-determined by First Nations at the community level and grounded in Indigenous knowledge and healing practices. I hold my hands up to the First Nations leaders and community members who made this happen. This is exactly the kind of system transformation that will help improve the health and wellness for First Nations people in BC.”

Wade Grant  
Board Chair, First Nations Health Council

### Quick facts

- A [National Residential School Crisis Line](#) is available to provide support to former residential school students who need to access emotional and crisis referral services by calling the 24-hour National Crisis Line at 1-866-925-4419.

### Associated links

- [Government of Canada enhances support to Indigenous communities to respond to and heal from the ongoing impacts of residential schools](#)
- [Addressing former residential school buildings and sites on reserves](#)
- [National Residential School Crisis Line](#)

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