

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS ACCORD

DRAFT – FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT

We, the undersigned, recognize the urgent need to address the mental health and addictions crisis affecting our communities in Central and Northern British Columbia.

We acknowledge the profound impact of mental health and addiction challenges on individuals, families, communities, and our society as a whole.

We recognize the inherent dignity of all who live and work in Central and Northern British Columbia, their right to appropriate mental health and addictions services, and the need to work together to improve services and outcomes for those affected by mental health and addiction challenges and their related intersections.

Therefore, we hereby commit to the following principles and actions, working collaboratively and leveraging our collective resources to advance positive solutions:

PRINCIPLES

1. Collaboration and Partnership:

- We acknowledge that addressing mental health and addiction challenges requires a collaborative and dedicated approach, involving government agencies, healthcare providers, community organizations, Indigenous communities, educational institutions, businesses, and individuals.

2. Recognition of Challenges Facing Indigenous Communities:

- We recognize that Indigenous communities in Central and Northern British Columbia face complex historical, cultural, social, and economic challenges.

3. Recognition of Challenges Facing Local Governments:

- We recognize that local governments face unique challenges, including limited resources, capacity constraints, geographic isolation, and diverse community needs.

4. Recognition of Challenges Facing Central and Northern BC:

- We recognize that Central and Northern British Columbia face regional challenges, such as remote locations, industrial and remote worksites, harsh weather conditions, limited healthcare infrastructure, and socio-economic disparities.

5. Stigma Reduction:

- We recognize that stigma surrounding mental health and addiction often deters individuals from seeking help and accessing appropriate care.

6. Prevention and Early Intervention:

- We understand the critical importance of prevention and early intervention in addressing mental health and addiction issues.

7. Accessible and Culturally Relevant Services:

- We acknowledge the necessity for accessible, culturally relevant mental health and addiction services that cater to the diverse needs of our communities.

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8. Community Support and Recovery-Oriented Care:

- We recognize the vital role of community-level support at all stages, alongside timely and accessible recovery-oriented care, in promoting the well-being and recovery of individuals affected by mental health and addiction challenges.

9. Equity and Social Justice:

- We acknowledge the disproportionate impact of mental health and addiction issues on marginalized and underserved populations, including Indigenous communities, racialized groups, 2SLGBTQI+ individuals, and people living in poverty.

ACTIONS

1. Information Sharing and Coordination:

- We commit to sharing information and coordinating efforts to improve the delivery of mental health and addiction services across Central and Northern British Columbia. This includes sharing best practices, data, and resources to enhance service coordination and integration, as well as the collecting and sharing of baseline data to monitor progress on the actions of the Accord.

2. Joint Advocacy:

- We commit to advocating jointly for increased funding, resources, and policy changes that support the timely delivery of mental health and addiction services in our communities. This includes advocating for investments in prevention, education, early intervention, treatment, and recovery supports, as well as for policies that address the social determinants of health.
- We commit to advocating for education and awareness initiatives to challenge stigma, enhance understanding, and foster empathy and support for those affected by mental health and addiction challenges.
- We commit to advocating for prevention and education programs, early screening initiatives, and timely access to intervention services for children and families to address mental health and addiction challenges before they escalate.
- We commit to advocating for the development of services that are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of Central and Northern British Columbia.
- We commit to advocating for the development of local, community-based support services, peer support programs, and recovery-oriented treatment options that empower individuals on their recovery journey.
- We commit to advocating for solutions that address systemic inequities, promote social justice, and ensure that efforts to address the mental health and addiction crisis are inclusive, respectful, and equitable for all community members.

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3. Shared Vision for Central and Northern BC:

- We commit to advocating for the development of a shared vision for Central and Northern British Columbia, identifying supports needed in smaller communities, and advocating for increased funding and policy changes.

CONCLUSION

In signing this Mental Health and Addictions Accord, we affirm our dedication to working collaboratively, taking decisive action, and advocating for positive change to address the mental health and addiction challenges in Central and Northern British Columbia. We support this Accord as a living document with flexibility to evolve into the future.

We pledge to uphold the principles of collaboration, cultural safety, equity, and prevention as we work towards a future where all residents can thrive in body, mind, and spirit.

Signed,

Representatives of Indigenous Governments

Representatives of Local Governments

Name, Title, Agency

Name, Title, Agency

Name, Title, Agency

Name, Title, Agency

Name, Title, Agency

Name, Title, Agency

Name, Title, Agency

Name, Title, Agency

Representatives of Organizations

Individual Representatives

Name, Title, Agency

Name, Community

Name, Title, Agency

Name, Community