

## 2024 MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS ACCORD

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We, the undersigned, recognize the urgent and ongoing 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 addictions on individuals, families, caregivers, 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, addictions 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 addictions requires a collaborative and dedicated approach, involving government agencies, healthcare providers, community organizations, Indigenous communities, educational institutions, businesses, and individuals with lived experience and their caregivers.

#### 2. Recognition of Complexities Facing Indigenous Communities:

- We recognize that Indigenous communities in Central and Northern British Columbia have complex historical, cultural, geographic, social, and economic dynamics that need to be considered.

#### 3. Recognition of Complexities Facing Local Governments:

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

#### 4. Recognition of Complexities Facing Central and Northern BC:

- We recognize that Central and Northern British Columbia face regional complexities, 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 addictions often deters individuals from seeking and receiving help and accessing appropriate care in a timely manner.

#### 6. Prevention and Early Intervention:

- We understand the critical importance of prevention and early intervention in addressing mental health and addictions. We recognize while many of the most severe mental illnesses are not preventable, many people can be considerably helped by appropriate and timely treatment.

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## 7. Accessible and Culturally Relevant Services:

- We acknowledge the necessity for accessible, culturally relevant mental health and addictions services that meet the diverse and evolving needs of our communities.

## 8. Community Support and Recovery-Oriented Care:

- We recognize the vital role of community-level supports and services at all stages, alongside timely and accessible recovery-oriented care, in promoting the well-being and recovery of individuals affected by mental health and addictions. We recognize the importance of education on severe mental illness, and the availability of long-term treatment options.

## 9. Equity and Social Justice:

- We acknowledge that marginalized and underserved populations, including Indigenous communities, racialized groups and 2SLGBTQI+ individuals, face disproportionate levels of mental health and addiction challenges and are more likely to experience poverty and that this reality needs to be addressed.

## ACTIONS

### 1. Information Sharing and Coordination:

- We are committed to sharing information and coordinating efforts to improve the delivery of mental health and addictions 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. Advocacy:

- We are committed to advocating to the Provincial Government for increased funding, resources, and policy changes that support the timely delivery of mental health and addictions services in our communities. This includes advocating for investments in prevention, education, early intervention, treatment, and long-term recovery supports, as well as for policies that address the social determinants of health.
- We are committed to advocating for education and awareness initiatives to challenge stigma, enhance understanding, and foster empathy and support for all those affected by mental health and addictions.
- We are committed to advocating for prevention and education programs, early screening initiatives, and timely access to intervention services for children, youth, families and caregivers to address mental health and addictions before they escalate.
- We are committed to advocating for the development of services that are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of all community members in Central and Northern British Columbia.
- We are committed to advocating for the development of local, community-based support services, peer support programs, and diverse recovery-oriented treatment options that empower individuals and their caregivers on their recovery journeys. This includes

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promoting social integration and community connection as vital in recovery-oriented treatment. We commit to advocating for solutions that address systemic inequities, promote social justice, and ensure that efforts to address the mental health and addictions crisis are inclusive, respectful, and equitable for all community members.

### 3. Shared Vision for Central and Northern BC:

- We are committed 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 and advocating for positive change to address the mental health and addictions crisis 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

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Name, Title, Agency

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Name, Title, Agency

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Name, Title, Agency

#### Representatives of Local Governments

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Name, Title, Agency

#### Representatives of Organizations

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Name, Title, Agency

#### Individual Representatives

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Name, Community

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Name, Community

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Name, Community