

The discovery of 215 children's bodies buried on the grounds of a former residential school on the traditional lands of the Secwepemc Nation in Kamloops has made our hearts heavy. There are no words to offer to describe how terrible this finding is, which is a confirmation of what so many survivors knew for so long.

As physicians, we recognize the impact of this discovery as a reminder of the atrocities committed at this and other residential schools, and the immeasurable harm this has caused to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health of the survivors, their families and children for generations to come.

In addition to the supports available for survivors including KUU-US Crisis Line, Tsow-Tun Le Lum Society and the Indian Residential Schools Survivors Society, we are committed to continuing to educate ourselves on how to best provide culturally safe and appropriate care. We are taking steps as individuals and as an organization to enact the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

All families were impacted by the shameful residential school system, including the thousands who were stolen and sent to the Kamloops Indian Residential School from across BC. We also need to acknowledge the residential schools within the communities that our Division serves, including:

St Michael's Residential School – Alert Bay

Ahousaht Residential School - Ahousaht

Christie Indian Residential School – Meares Island

Kuper Island Indian Residential School – Penelakut Island

St George Indian Residential School - Lytton

While we still have much work to do, we have begun to do the important work to bring cultural safety and humility to the forefront of our individual practices and our Division. We will continue to work with First Nations communities with shared leadership at our Collaborative Services Committees and Local Health Planning Tables. We will continue to advocate for and directly compensate First Nations community members to participate in local planning tables and initiatives. We will continue to support our members to access cultural safety and humility training and will strive to elevate these offerings. We will strive to increase the representation of First Nations peoples in the leadership of our organization to help ensure that all our initiatives, strategies and activities are inclusive and embrace cultural safety and humility and honour recommendations of the TRC.

For those who would like to make a financial contribution to help with ongoing healing supports for residential school survivors, please consider donating to the Indian Residential School Survivors Society at [www.irsss.ca/donate](http://www.irsss.ca/donate) or Tsow-Tun Le Lum Society at <https://gofund.me/eea6aa02>.

Sincerely,

Dr. William Ho, Pemberton, Chapter Physician Lead

Dr. Jamie McKeen, Hazelton, Chapter Physician Lead

Dr. Duncan Ross, Merritt, Chapter Physician Lead

Dr. Paula Ryan, Salt Spring Island, Chapter Physician Lead

Dr. John Soles, Clearwater, Regional Physician Lead Interior

Dr. Tracey Thorne, Gabriola Island, Division Physician Lead

Dr. Vicci Weber, Lillooet, Chapter Physician Lead

**About the Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice:** The Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice was established in 2012. We support over 140 members in 4 geographic health authorities across 12 Chapters working in over 90 communities across the Province including over 50 First Nations Communities. Our Mission is to support and enable rural physicians to enhance rural health, rural work and rural living in their communities. Our Vision is locally-developed, innovative, accessible, and sustainable health services for thriving rural communities.

#### **For cultural supports**

- **KUU-US Crisis Line Society:** a 24-hour provincial Indigenous crisis line. Adults call 250-723-4050; children and youth call 250-723-2040. Toll-free 1-800-588-8717.
- **First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line:** Phone toll-free 1-855-242-3310 or chat online at [hopeforwellness.ca](http://hopeforwellness.ca).
- **The Métis Crisis Line:** available 24 hours a day at 1-833-MétisBC, 1-833-638-4722.
- **Tsow-Tun Le Lum:** Phone 1-888-403-3123 to access the following cultural supports: Levi Martin, James Quatell or Mike Kelly.
- **Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS):** Phone 1-800-721-0066 or 604-985-4464 to access the following cultural supports: Sadie McPhee, Gertie Pierre or Yvonne Rigby Jones. Mental health and counselling services are also available from the IRSSS Resolution Health Support Workers.