



October 18, 2024

To: NCLGA Membership

Re: Mental Health and Addictions Accord

Dear NCLGA Membership,

Please find attached the signatory version of the Mental Health and Addictions Accord (“Accord”) for your potential endorsement. The Accord is a living document aimed at identifying shared principles and actions to promote improvements in mental health and addictions services across Central and Northern British Columbia.

The signing ceremony will be a key part of the [Mental Health and Addictions Symposium](#), being held on November 13-14, 2024, in Prince George, BC. This ceremony will symbolize the collective commitment of signatories to advancing mental health and addictions initiatives across the region. Participating agencies will have the opportunity to be recognized for their leadership and collaboration in this important area.

If your local government is interested in endorsing the Accord, please email Bettina Johnson at bjohnson@nclga.ca with your selection of one of the following options for your response:

- We endorse the Accord and will have a representative available to participate in the signing ceremony at the Mental Health and Addictions Symposium on November 14, 2024, in Prince George, BC. (Please provide the representative’s name by November 6, 2024)
- We endorse the Accord but will NOT have a representative available for the signing ceremony. However, we would like our agency to be acknowledged during the ceremony.
- We are interested in endorsing the Accord but will not have approval in time for the Mental Health and Addictions Symposium. We will provide confirmation at a later date.

If your local government is not able to endorse the Accord before the Symposium, please note that endorsement can be provided at any time following the event. Additionally, the Accord is scheduled for review and an update in 2025, offering further opportunities for input and endorsement. For more information or to discuss further, please feel free to reach out to Bettina Johnson at bjohnson@nclga.ca.

Thank you for considering this important opportunity to join other organizations in advancing collective action to improve mental health and addictions services. Your support and participation are essential in fostering meaningful progress and making a positive impact on the lives of individuals and communities across the region.

Sincerely,



Judy Greenaway
President
North Central Local Government Association

2024 MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS ACCORD

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

Representatives of Local Governments

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

Name, Title, Agency

Name, Community