

MEMORANDUM

Date September 1, 2021

File: 195-20/BCEHS All

CLIFF: 1063022

To: All BCEHS staff

Re: Recognition Re: National Truth and Reconciliation Day, September 30, 2021

Our front-line paramedics and dispatch employees experience and see first-hand the impacts and on-going trauma experienced by the survivors and families of those who attended the residential school system.

With the recent discoveries of human remains, most of them children, on the grounds of residential schools across this country the truth of the atrocities experienced has come to light. Although these atrocities have always been known by the Indigenous survivors of the residential school system, voices of Indigenous Peoples and increased media attention have brought these stories into the light.

Recently the federal government announced September 30 as a new statutory holiday to commemorate and honour those who were lost, and the families and communities that continue to grieve and heal.

Previously known as Orange Shirt Day, <https://www.orangeshirtday.org/>, September 30 will now be recognized as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. As part of our commitment to honour, recognize, grieve, and commemorate those who were lost and those that continue to survive and heal, Ambulance Paramedics of British Columbia, CUPE 873 and BC Emergency Health Services have purchased orange epaulettes that will be available for distribution to all our frontline paramedics and dispatch staff. The epaulettes will begin shipping to stations in mid-September 2021.

Working together, we will be recognizing September 30 by encouraging and asking uniformed staff to wear the epaulettes as a show of support and recognition for the month of September. We have also ordered pins for non-uniformed employees to wear to help recognize this important day as well and these will be made available to staff at regional and corporate offices.

We encourage all employees to make this a day of reflection and an opportunity to learn and better understand the history and impacts of colonialism and residential schools. We encourage you to take the time to review and learn about the 10 principles of reconciliation, the 94 calls to actions and the 46 articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). <https://nctr.ca/>

The stories, history, and truth of the horrors of the residential school system can be impacting to all, and we encourage those that need support to reach out, by contacting one of the supports listed below:

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To connect with a confidential peer CISM team member or obtain a referral to a trauma-informed mental health professional, contact 1-855-969-4321.

To access a variety of resources through our Employee Family Assistance provider for you and your immediate family, contact Homewood Health at 1-800-663-1142.

Thank you for all you do for our patients and the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Leanne Heppell
Interim EVP and Chief Ambulance Officer
BC Emergency Health Services
Provincial Health Services Authority

Original signed by

Troy Clifford
Provincial President
Ambulance Paramedics of BC
CUPE Local 873

We are honoured to deliver care and services to communities around the province on the traditional, unceded and ancestral lands of many Indigenous Peoples.