

the reduction of the gap in health status between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples a national priority. More than a decade later, that gap remains. In fact, the federal government has moved backwards on issues of Aboriginal health since the signing of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and Canada's apology to Survivors. It has terminated funding to a number of Aboriginal health organizations, including the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and the National Aboriginal Health Organization. These organizations were committed to models of research and treatment in which Aboriginal communities have ownership, control, access, and possession. Their loss significantly limits the development of accurate information about health issues and solutions under Aboriginal control. Health Canada has also cut funding for a number of Aboriginal primary health programs, including programs that address diabetes, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, youth suicide, infectious diseases, and maternal and child health.¹¹⁴ These cuts have had a serious impact on Aboriginal communities.

Trudy King, a former student at Grandin College residential school, is from Fort Resolution in the Northwest Territories.

When I lost my son here in 2003, I needed counselling for me and my children. I couldn't get help here anywhere. There was the health and social services coordinator here that I begged and begged to help us, and she said, "There's no monies. We don't have monies to get counselling for you and your kids." I couldn't go anywhere. Nobody would help us, and, and I didn't, and it was in 2003. There has to be help out there for people that want, are crying for help. I couldn't get it. My kids couldn't get it.¹¹⁵

A former student at Guy Hill residential school in Manitoba, M. R. E. Linklater, also emphasized the need for more community-based services when she spoke with the Commission.

More programs should be put on for our children and our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren 'cause they need to understand why their parents are the way they are. Why so many of our people are so into alcohol and drug addiction, and for myself, I know why, it's to survive or not to go back there. Our children need more education, support, more programs, not to cut the programs that they have in place.¹¹⁶

Health reforms often involve Aboriginal people in complex jurisdictional disputes and tripartite negotiations with both the federal and provincial or territorial governments. Such jurisdictional disputes have particularly affected Métis, non-status, and urban Aboriginal people, as the federal government insists that providing services to these groups is a provincial and territorial responsibility.