

Settlement Agreement processes is but one example of the invaluable service these professionals can provide.

Call to Action

23) We call upon all levels of government to:

- i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field.
- ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities.
- iii. Provide cultural competency training for all health-care professionals.

Closing the gap in health outcomes will come about only as part of a comprehensive strategy of change. To be more effective in improving health outcomes, non-Aboriginal medical practitioners must develop a better understanding of the health issues facing Canada's Aboriginal peoples and of the legacy of residential schools.

Call to Action

24) We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Justice

Residential schools inflicted profound injustices on Aboriginal people. Aboriginal parents were forced, often under pressure from the police, to give up their children to the schools. Children were taken far from their communities to live in frightening custodial institutions, which felt like prisons. The children who attended residential schools were often treated as if they were offenders and were often victimized.

This pattern of disproportionate imprisonment and victimization of Aboriginal people continues to this day. The continued failure of the justice system denies Aboriginal people the safety and opportunities that most Canadians take for granted. Redress to the racist and colonial views that inspired the schools, and effective and long-term solutions to the crime problems that plague too many Aboriginal communities, call for increased use of Aboriginal justice, based on Aboriginal laws and healing practices.