

30 septembre

Journée nationale de la vérité et de la réconciliation



Honoring the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

A Reflection on Indigenous Midwifery and the UN Declaration on the
Rights of Indigenous Peoples

On this solemn occasion of the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, the College of Quebec Midwives – l'Ordre des sages-femmes du Québec – encourages its members to recognize the profound significance of this day and the intrinsic connection to the role of Indigenous midwifery in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (TRC)¹, as well as its intersection with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)².

The UNDRIP is a critical document that underscores the rights of Indigenous peoples to self-determination, cultural preservation, and healthcare which includes 'The right to free, prior and informed consent'. Article 24 specifically recognizes the right of Indigenous peoples to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including midwifery. It affirms the importance of respecting and promoting the right of Indigenous midwives to practice their profession without discrimination.

Considering the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and the principles enshrined in the UNDRIP, we must emphasize the importance of preserving and revitalizing Indigenous midwifery practices. This includes recognizing and dismantling the ongoing barriers that Indigenous midwives face and supporting their rightful place in healthcare systems, in alignment with the principles outlined in the UNDRIP.

As we continue our reflection on the painful history and legacy of colonization and the immense suffering inflicted upon Indigenous communities, we recognize the need for truth, healing, and reconciliation in our nation. As healthcare practitioners dedicated to the well-

being of individuals and communities, we believe that the path to reconciliation must encompass the restoration and empowerment of Indigenous traditions and voices.

Indigenous midwifery holds a sacred place within Indigenous cultures. Midwives keep and share teachings, provide essential care and support healing throughout the reproductive journey and guide new life into the world. It is through this invaluable role that Indigenous midwives contribute to the resilience and strength of their communities.

In honor of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, l'Ordre is publishing two documents: A framework for Second Attendants at Midwifery-led Births in the Community and a Framework for comprehensive care involving Intrauterine Devices, which have been prepared with and for Indigenous midwives and clients following multiple consultations and in collaboration with other partners. These two frameworks are in line with calls to action 75 and 76 of the Viens Commission Report³ which calls for Indigenous Communities to be able to receive care in a culturally safe and easily accessible manner. We are hoping that these documents and the underlying agreements will facilitate the work of bringing birth back to Indigenous Communities and providing respectful sexual and reproductive health care.

As midwives and members of the healthcare community, let us stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples on this National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. Let us commit to fostering a healthcare system that values and integrates Indigenous midwifery, medicine, and healing in accordance with the TRC and UNDRIP. This not only represents a path to reconciliation but also upholds the fundamental rights and dignity of Indigenous communities.

In unity and reflection,

L'Ordre des sages-femmes du Québec

1. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf
2. United Nations. (2008). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf
3. Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec. (2019). *Listening, Reconciliation and Progress: Final Report*. https://www.cerp.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Fichiers_clients/Rapport/Final_report.pdf

