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L'Université Δ Δᓄᓂᓄᓂ
Northern Ontario
School of Medicine
École de médecine
du Nord de l'Ontario


Northern Ontario School of Medicine's
Response to the Truth and
Reconciliation Commission's
Calls to Action

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine wishes to acknowledge that the entirety of the School's wider campus of Northern Ontario is the traditional lands of the First Nations and Métis Peoples. The School also respectfully acknowledges that the medical school building at Laurentian University is located in the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and the land on which we gather in Sudbury is the traditional territory of the Atikameksheng Anishnaabeg and the Métis. The medical school building at Lakehead University in the Robinson-Superior Treaty territory and the land on which we gather in Thunder Bay is the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg and the Métis.



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“Working to improve the health of Indigenous Peoples in Northern Ontario is a priority, and is key to NOSM’s social accountability mandate to contribute to the better health of the people and communities of the region.”

Message from the Dean



I’m pleased to share with you the Northern Ontario School of Medicine’s (NOSM) response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s (TRC) *Calls to Action*. As an organization, NOSM recognizes its responsibility to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada and around the world, and in particular to the First Nations and Métis peoples of Northern

Ontario. The work of the School addresses many of the 94 *Calls to Action* specifically linked to health care and education. This report provides the status of NOSM’s response as of December 2016.

NOSM was created to address the health inequities faced by the peoples and communities across the wide expanse of Northern Ontario. With our many partners and collaborators, we are proud to have built a medical school that strives to ensure that the School’s education and research reflect the social, cultural, linguistic, and geographic diversity of Northern Ontario. From

our inception, our activities have been created for the context of the North, specifically designed to meet the needs of Northern, rural, remote, Indigenous, and Francophone communities.

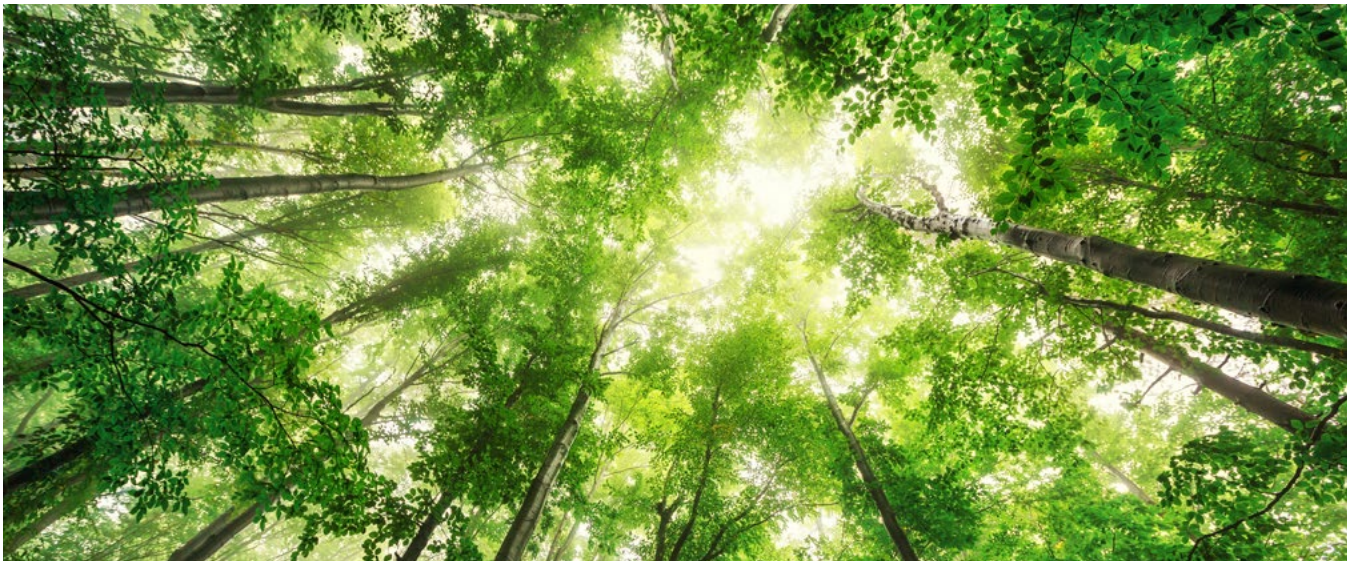
Thank you to the members of the working group tasked with compiling this report, and to everyone consulted in the preparing of this document to ensure that it accurately represents the activities and intentions across NOSM. Gchi-miigwetch to the NOSM Indigenous Reference Group and Elders Council, as well as other Indigenous Elders, community members, faculty, staff, and students whose wisdom and knowledge has been shared with us and whose guidance we will continue to warmly welcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger Strasser'.

Dr. Roger Strasser AM

Professor of Rural Health
Dean and CEO
Northern Ontario School of Medicine



Created to be Accountable

Even before NOSM's Charter MD Class was welcomed in 2005, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine demonstrated its commitment to improving the health of the peoples and communities of Northern Ontario. At the earliest stages of development, NOSM engaged the Indigenous communities of Northern Ontario as part of its mandate to be accountable to the cultural diversity of the region. The School regularly solicits feedback from their invaluable experience and ideas to move the School forward.

In 2003, NOSM conducted a workshop titled [*Follow Your Dreams*](#), hosted by Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation near Kenora. The three-day gathering brought together over 130 delegates from Indigenous communities across the North, including treaty organizations, Elders, physicians, nurses, and other health-care professionals with experience in Indigenous health settings. Addressing issues specific to Indigenous Peoples, participants discussed with NOSM their ideas about student admissions criteria, curriculum development, NOSM governance, the need to engage Indigenous youth, and how to provide adequate financial and emotional support. Many recommendations from this gathering served as a blueprint for the development of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. The *Follow Your Dreams* report recommended that NOSM should be an "Indigenous-friendly medical school." Two of the key recommendations were that NOSM MD graduates be culturally competent in issues related to Indigenous health and the need for the School to build and strengthen partnerships with Indigenous communities.

This led to the establishment of Indigenous Affairs Unit and the Indigenous Reference Group, as well as development of partnerships with Indigenous communities so that all NOSM medical students have a mandatory four-week cultural immersion experience in their first year.

Three subsequent gatherings have taken place: [*Keeping the Vision*](#) hosted by Fort William First Nation in 2006; [*Living the Vision*](#) hosted by the Métis Nation of Ontario in Sudbury in 2011; and, [*Walking the Vision*](#) hosted by Chapleau Cree First Nation in 2014. Two additional gatherings focused specifically on research have also occurred, and include the [*Partnership Opportunities in Research Gathering*](#) in Thunder Bay in 2008 and the [*Indigenous Research Gathering*](#) in Sault Ste. Marie in 2016. Each of these gatherings—and a variety of additional yearly meetings—honour the participants' continued commitment to the School, and provide an opportunity for the School to report back on the progress and successes achieved with respect to the recommendations and to receive further input into the development and on-going operations of NOSM.

Though home to only six percent of Ontario's population, Northern Ontario comprises nearly 90 percent of the province's geography. Northern Ontarians fought for and inspired the creation of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, which was developed to help realize the dream that all Northern Ontarians—no matter who they are, or where they live—have access to quality health care.



Members of NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit and Indigenous Reference Group present two MD graduates with beaded stethoscopes in the Cultural Room at the medical school building in Sudbury in May 2013.

Working Together for a Healthier North

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine recognizes Canada's First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples as distinct groups with diverse cultures, histories, with a multitude of languages, and who have inhabited these lands for thousands of years. Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples is a key component of what makes the Northern Ontario School of Medicine unique; it's part of who we are. Respect, inclusiveness, social accountability, collaboration, and innovation are the five values that guide NOSM's mission to educate high quality physicians and health professionals and to becoming internationally recognized as a leader in distributed, learning-centred, community-engaged medical education and research.

In early 2016, NOSM and the School's Indigenous Reference Group (IRG) together announced [NOSM's adoption of the terminology "Indigenous Peoples"](#) in place of "Aboriginal Peoples." This change in terminology, recommended by NOSM's Indigenous Reference Group, was motivated by the Canadian Government's recognition of the [United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People](#) included within the [Calls to Action](#) made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). The term "Indigenous," used by the United Nations, is meant not to refer to people living in any particular region, but recognizes first peoples and their rights around the world.

In order to address the priority health concerns of Indigenous Peoples and communities in the North, NOSM works continually and collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples of the North. Since NOSM's inception, mechanisms have been in place to ensure that Indigenous Peoples of Northern Ontario have regular opportunities to provide formative input into the School's administration, education, and research.

The **Indigenous Reference Group (IRG)** is a council of representatives from Indigenous communities and organizations across Northern Ontario, consisting of—but not limited to—members of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Treaty #3, the Union of Ontario Indians, the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, the Independent First Nations, Ontario Native Women's Association, and the Métis Nation of Ontario. NOSM's [Indigenous Reference Group](#) is a multi-disciplinary committee that advises the Dean on all pertinent initiatives relating to Indigenous health, research, education, and administration. This group is an essential mechanism through which members of Indigenous communities in the North are encouraged and able to provide substantive input into NOSM's operations and priorities.

In 2015, the NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit held a [historic Elder's Gathering](#) on the traditional lands of Fort William First Nation, bringing together Elders from First Nations and Métis communities across Northern Ontario. The three-day

gathering began with a traditional feast and a sacred Turtle Lodge Ceremony atop scenic Mt. McKay. The following two days brought the Elders together for facilitated discussions about the purpose, function, and responsibility of NOSM Elders and those on the Council of Elders. Over the past 12 years, the School has developed relationships with more than 20 Elders who each have special gifts for working with community members. Each of these gifts, separately or together, is related to maintaining the holistic health of a community. Their knowledge is gained through a full life of learning, experiences, and teachings received from other Elders and traditional people. Through sharing and discussion, it was decided that the Elder's Council shall be guided in their work by the Seven Grandfather teachings: Nibwaakaawin (wisdom); Zaagi'idiwin (love); Minaadendamowin (respect); Aakode'ewin (bravery); Gwayakwaadiziwin (honesty); Dabaadendiziwin (humility); and, Debwewin (truth).

The **Council of Elders** is a group of eight Elders, with four female and four male representatives. Each Elder represents one of the cardinal directions of the medicine wheel to ensure the spiritual, cultural, political, and territory of each region is represented. These Elders each possess gifts and knowledge of traditional, cultural, and spiritual customs and practices; each of these gifts is part of maintaining the holistic health of a community. The knowledge the [Council of Elders](#) keep is gained through a full life of learning, experiences, and teachings received from other Elders and traditional people. Among many other roles at NOSM, the Elders provide support and cultural teachings, blessings, and ceremonies for NOSM learners, staff, and faculty; review applications of Indigenous applicants to NOSM; and, approve Indigenous curriculum content.

Indigenous Community Partnership Gatherings are held across Northern Ontario where representatives from NOSM's partner communities are brought together to hear reports from leaders at the School and to provide recommendations regarding how NOSM should move forward to best serve Indigenous Peoples in the region. Through these recurrent gatherings—which have taken place in 2003, 2006, 2011, and 2014—members and Elders of the Indigenous communities are partnering with NOSM faculty and staff to actively identify and implement solutions to the unique and diverse challenges of the Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario. Reports summarizing all NOSM's Indigenous Community Partnership Gatherings can be found at nosm.ca/indigenouaffairsreports.

NOSM's **Indigenous Research Gatherings** bring together Indigenous Peoples from across Northern Ontario to address challenges with research methodologies and practices. Similar to the Indigenous Community Partnership Gatherings, the [Partnership Opportunities in Research Gathering](#) hosted in Thunder Bay in 2008 and the [Indigenous Research Gathering](#) held in Sault Ste. Marie in 2016 provided an opportunity for Indigenous Peoples and health researchers—including researchers who themselves are Indigenous—to come together to acknowledge past experiences, conduct ceremonies for healing, generate future opportunities for positive and respectful relationships between Indigenous communities and researchers, and plan a new and positive path forward.



Gaa-taa-gwii

Based on the visions of Elder Langford Ogemah, Gaa-taa-gwii (meaning “to join, to help”) symbolizes the separate, but equal, life journeys of NOSM's medical school buildings in Thunder Bay and Sudbury through the joining of eagle feathers. Representing Mother Earth, the red cedar base joins everything together—including all of human kind—signified by the black, red, yellow, and white ribbons. Mr. Ogemah presented Gaa-taa-gwii to NOSM's Community Engagement portfolio in 2014, and Gaa-taa-gwii has been included in ceremonies, feasted, and under the care of NOSM since that time.



Delegates with NOSM's Conference on the Move, the pre-conference session of the *International Conference on Community Engaged Education in the North (ICEMEN) 2016*, were treated to traditional dancing by Miles and Avery Sutherland (pictured above) during a welcome dinner on Manitoulin Island. Delegates later received a wild rice teaching by Mary Ellen Kitchigeg.

Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action*

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada was established in 2008 under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to explore and document the history and legacy of the residential school system and to make recommendations on healing and reconciliation. The Commission released 94 [Calls to Action](#) in June 2015.

As an organization, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine recognizes its responsibility to the Indigenous Peoples of this country and its obligation to redress the legacy of residential schools and to advance reconciliation. NOSM addresses 19 of the 94 *Calls to Action* specifically linked to health care and education training.*

*The following responses to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action* are current as of December 2016. Work has taken place since then, and continues to be undertaken to further NOSM's commitment to the 94 *Calls to Action*.

Legacy

Education

7

We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

10

We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:

- i. Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.**
- ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.**
- iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula.**
- vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.**

Since 2005, NOSM has been committed to recruiting Indigenous medical students. Persons of Indigenous ancestry, including First Nations, Inuit, or Métis, may voluntarily identify themselves as such. All self-identified Indigenous applicants to the MD program are considered under the General Admissions Stream, unless they specifically choose the Indigenous Admissions Stream.

NOSM designates two MD seats in each year for Indigenous students as an indication of our commitment, however, this is a minimum, not the total number of Indigenous students the School will admit.

Applicants deemed capable of succeeding in the MD program will be chosen from a broad range of backgrounds and from within Northern Ontario, rural, and remote areas in the rest of Canada. The mandate of NOSM's Admissions Committee is to reflect the demographics of Northern Ontario in the medical school class profile. From 2005 to 2016, NOSM has admitted 55 MD students who have self-identified as Indigenous; these students represent approximately 7% of the incoming MD class each year.

Opportunities exist for NOSM learners from all programs to continue to self-identify as Indigenous at any time, and in a confidential manner. This allows Indigenous students to receive services from NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit at any time during their studies. Services provided by the School's Indigenous Affairs Unit include, but are not limited to:

- Providing career mentoring connections with Indigenous physicians through relationships with Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada;
- Informing Indigenous learners about available bursaries, scholarships, and awards;
- Guiding learners to a better understanding of cultural awareness, sensitivity, and safety support;
- Respecting and remaining non-judgmental of held values and spiritual beliefs;
- Ensuring students are connected to their identity and have a sense of community;
- Connecting NOSM learners with supports available via Lakehead University and Laurentian University; and,
- Considering wellness activities that nurture connections to natural environments.



Elder Tom Chisel (left) and Dr. David Musson, NOSM Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education (right), present Indigenous MD graduates with beaded stethoscopes in Thunder Bay in May 2016.

NOSM's Undergraduate Medical Education program has been developed specifically with Indigenous health as a key component. Theme 1: Rural and Northern Health includes Indigenous health as a key focus, and covers the teaching of cultural competency especially in relation to populations in Northern Ontario such as Francophone and Indigenous Peoples, the history and geography of Northern Ontario, the history of medicine in the North, health care and service issues in Northern Ontario, and the challenges, benefits and rewards of practising medicine in Northern Ontario.

First-year medical students at NOSM complete a four week mandatory placement in an Indigenous community during their Integrated Clinical Experience (ICE). Prior to living and learning in the community, NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit provides compulsory sessions for students to help facilitate increased understanding of the diversity of Indigenous Peoples of the North. Students experience the realities of life in the rural and remote Indigenous community—the focus of this placement is cultural immersion, not clinical experience. These placements provide many opportunities for medical students to learn about Indigenous culture and the tools to become more culturally sensitive physicians.

NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit organizes activities during Orientation Week for first-year medical students, which include teachings about Indigenous culture; the history of their peoples; and, traditional medicines.

Two full-time faculty members at NOSM have a primary research focus on Indigenous health. These two faculty members are integral contributors to Theme 1: Rural and Northern Health, as described above.

NOSM's Northern Ontario Dietetic Internship Program (NODIP) and Rehabilitation Studies programs have created intentional Indigenous-focused team placements. In addition, a toolkit has been created for learners with continued efforts to articulate the clinical education/practica best practices required to advance and integrate competencies into Health Sciences curriculum that relate to Indigenous health and culture in practice.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit hosted sessions for first-year medical students regarding treaties, cultural competency, and respect for Mother Earth. The interactive sessions, led by an Indigenous facilitator, provided a venue to gain a deeper knowledge of traditions, history, and the Anishinaabe language. The sessions involved hands-on-activities, sharing circles, cultural activities, and knowledge sharing done through discussion-based pedagogies.

Going forward, NOSM will continue to build on the strengths of the School, and will:

- Strengthen connections with Indigenous Support Offices at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay and Laurentian University in Sudbury and ensure Indigenous learners are aware of the array of services, programs, and supports available.
- Work at a national level to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding.
- Continuously improve and evaluate current services provided for Indigenous student support.
- Investigate provision of wellness activities that nurture connections to natural environments.
- Purchase flags of Treaty Nations (i.e. Fort William First Nation and Ontario Métis Nation) to display at the main entrances of the medical school buildings, alongside the Canadian, Franco-Ontarian, and city flags. Additionally, a hanging a map in the lobby of both medical school buildings which recognizes all of NOSM's Indigenous communities and Treaty Nations will be considered.
- Provide School-wide sessions to students, faculty, and staff in order to have a better understanding of treaties and treaty relationships across Canada.
- Work towards an Indigenous-focused placement agreement with McMaster University's Physiotherapy / Occupational Therapy program.



In August 2013, NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit organized Orientation Week activities across Manitoulin Island for first-year medical students. The Great Spirit Circle Trail guides proudly spoke about their culture; the history of their peoples; traditional medicines; and, traditions of the Anishinaabe people of Manitoulin Island. Time spent on Manitoulin Island provides a strong foundation of knowledge of the Indigenous culture, which will prove beneficial to students during medical school and in practise.

Language and Culture

14 We call upon the federal government to enact an *Aboriginal Languages Act* that incorporates the following principles:

- i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.**
- iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.**

NOSM supports the recommendations and activities of the School's Indigenous Reference Group and Indigenous Affairs Unit on an on-going basis. Activities initiated by the Indigenous Affairs Unit include basic language sessions for medical students and Elder on Campus sessions where Indigenous Elders provide cultural teachings. Cultural ceremonies, including blessings, honour songs, and naming ceremonies are held upon request.

Official NOSM communications, identified media releases, public service announcements, and conference reports, signage, and documents are translated to OjiCree.

A student-led initiative was undertaken during the 2015-2016 academic year where optional Ojibwe language classes were provided to medical students. A NOSM medical student worked with the Native Language Instructors' Program Coordinator at Lakehead University to provide 13 students with an opportunity to learn how to introduce themselves in Ojibwe, say some medical-related terms, and practice proper pronunciation. The medical students were enthusiastic participants and say they hope to put their new language skills to use in future practise.

Indigenous Cultural Competency sessions are being planned for all NOSM learners, faculty, and staff. In addition to teachings about Turtle Island, pipes, ceremonies, and more, participants will learn about the Anishinaabe language.

Going forward, NOSM will continue to build on the strengths of the School, and will:

- Enhance and strengthen Indigenous culture and language programming for the School's learners, faculty, and staff.
- Expand the use of translation to additional Indigenous languages for all relevant documents.
- Actively collect and preserve Indigenous language materials (in various formats) relating to health and health care in NOSM's Health Sciences Library.

Health

- 18** We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.
- 19** We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess longterm trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.
- 22** We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients.
- 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.
- 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.

NOSM's MD curriculum provides clear Indigenous cultural competency for future physicians. This is provided through Theme 1: Rural and Northern Health curricula. The learning objectives for first-year NOSM medical students completing their four-week mandatory placement in an Indigenous community during their Integrated Clinical Experience (ICE) include governmental policy on Indigenous health. Although there are no distinctive courses in the NOSM UME curriculum, students receive education throughout the program in Indigenous health issues. The four-week cultural placement in a First Nations community culminates in a reflection on learning in a traditional sharing circle, facilitated by NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit.

NOSM learners are connected with Indigenous healers and Elders when on intentional placements and/or in communities/organizations that serve large Indigenous populations (e.g. Lake of the Woods Hospital in Kenora).

Career mentoring and connections with Indigenous physicians is available for learners, residents, and faculty through NOSM's relationship with Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada.

Many of NOSM's Postgraduate Education programs offer Indigenous content. Opportunities for residents include, but are not limited to:

- An Indigenous health academic session—delivered by NOSM alumna and Assistant Professor Dr. Doris Mitchell of Brunswick House First Nation—is mandatory for all first-year NOSM residents.
- Offering residents in the Pediatrics program clinical rotations in Sioux Lookout specifically with an Indigenous focus, as well as academic curriculum presentations on social pediatrics.
- Providing Psychiatry residents exposure to, and outreach with, Indigenous communities within its existing clinical curriculum, including shared mental health care with the Shkagamik-kwe Indigenous Health Access Centre in Sudbury.
- Incorporating specific academic and clinical curriculum to Indigenous population health in the Public Health and Preventative Medicine (PHPM) residency program.
- Making mandatory for Family Medicine residents themed academic days on special populations including Indigenous Peoples, as well as mandatory rural rotations—many of which include Indigenous communities.

Elder on Campus sessions offer NOSM learners, faculty, and staff protected time with an Elder to discuss identified topics and objectives throughout the academic year, with 11-12 sessions, as well as one-on-one sessions offered. The sessions are led by Elders and Indigenous healers, with the provision of culturally safe spaces in NOSM's medical school buildings which can be used by for smudging and other cultural practices.

As role models in personal counselling, NOSM's Learner Affairs Unit provides support for a collaborative and integrated approach to healing with referral to Elders and Indigenous healers.

NOSM's Postgraduate Education leadership is actively investigating options to add a third year of residency and ultimately a full two-year Family Medicine residency position focused specifically on Indigenous Health and centred in a remote First Nations community.

NOSM's Northern Ontario Dietetic Internship Program (NODIP) applications includes a self-identification option for Indigenous Peoples. To date, nine interns have self-identified and completed the program. Of 99 current NODIP graduates, more than 10% are working in Indigenous communities and organizations across Canada. NODIP interns receive cultural competency training in annual orientation sessions with NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit, during intentional placements, and through practice-based research projects on a variety of topics and settings (e.g. healthy weights interventions in Indigenous children and youth, parental feeding practices and early childhood caries in Indigenous children, and food experiences of residential school survivors in Spanish, Ontario). NODIP currently has 15 Registered Dietitian preceptors working in Indigenous communities/organizations.

Going forward, NOSM will continue to build on the strengths of the School, and will:

- Ensure that all related government published reports are available in the collection at the Library.
- Continue the discussions currently underway between NOSM, the University of Ottawa, and the Government of Nunavut to provide an Ottawa funded pediatric residency position with a northern focus, including Indigenous health, in Northern Ontario and Nunavut.
- Continue to pursue a partnership with Northwestern Ontario Indigenous communities, whereby NOSM's orthopedic surgery residency program is developing a regional approach to orthopedic care with a focus on the First Nation communities in Northwestern Ontario to improve health outcomes in the region.
- Integrate the existing Elders on Campus sessions as part of an expanded cultural competence education and training strategy.
- Create opportunities to share the new Indigenous spaces at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay and Laurentian University in Sudbury for cultural activities, and continue to increase connections between students, Elders, and NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit.
- Develop a proposal and funding for a new Research Chair in History of Medicine with a focus on Traditional Healing, which will recognize the value of Indigenous healing practices.
- Finalize the establishment of an Indigenous Health Lead role—a clinical faculty leadership position—to support all programs in incorporating Indigenous health in their clinical and academic curriculum. This will increase support and mentorship opportunities for Indigenous residents.
- Develop a research thread in residency curriculum to include the role of research with and by Indigenous Peoples and communities.



Traditional drumming was included in Orientation Week activities organized for first-year medical students in August 2008 by NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit.

Reconciliation

Canadian Governments and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

43 We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

In early 2016, NOSM and the School's Indigenous Reference Group together announced NOSM's adoption of the terminology "Indigenous Peoples" in place of "Aboriginal Peoples" to acknowledge the Canadian Government's recognition of the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People.



NOSM conducted a workshop titled *Keeping the Vision* hosted by Fort William First Nation in 2006. Workshop participants discussed with NOSM their ideas about student admissions criteria, curriculum development, NOSM governance, the need to engage Indigenous youth, and how to provide adequate financial and emotional support.

National Council for Reconciliation

55 We call upon all levels of government to provide annual reports or any current data requested by the National Council for Reconciliation so that it can report on the progress towards reconciliation.

Going forward, NOSM will continue to build on the strengths of the School, and will:

- Where applicable, and as part of on-going research at NOSM, provide data to the National Council for Reconciliation.

Professional Development and Training for Public Servants

57 We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

NOSM's Community Engagement Relationship Working Group - Cultural Competency Task Force completed an organizational environmental scan in 2016 on cultural competency in the workplace in consultation with the School's Human Resources Unit, and will continue to scan for training tools/strategies that could be implemented in consultation with NOSM Indigenous Affairs Unit.

At a NOSM staff meeting in June 2016, employees heard a presentation from NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit regarding the TRC report.

Going forward, NOSM will continue to build on the strengths of the School, and will:

- Actively collect materials in NOSM's Health Sciences Library to assist with training faculty and staff on the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.
- Adjust HR policies to include: cultural competency in orientation documents; training options for employees and managers; arrange for hiring managers and HR staff to hear from Elders regarding cultural competency; invite an Elder to meet with new employees on a bi-annual basis; and, implement cultural competency skill requirements into new job descriptions.



Delegates with NOSM's Conference on the Move, the pre-conference session of the *International Conference on Community Engaged Education in the North (ICEMEN) 2016* visited Debajemujig Creation Centre and saw a sunset traditional story-telling performance by the Global Savages. The map (shown above) depicts Turtle Island and the history of the Anishinaabe people of Manitoulin Island.

Education for Reconciliation

63 We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues.

- iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

65 We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.

NOSM's Learner Affairs Unit promotes Elders on Campus sessions and other learning opportunities with Indigenous content which support students in learning and understanding of shared histories with Indigenous Peoples.

NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit hosts an annual Local Community Coordinator Workshop for community partners in Indigenous communities who support medical students during their four-week placements, and include Elders in these activities.

Going forward, NOSM will continue to build on the strengths of the School, and will:

- Stay current and inform students of opportunities for sense of community.
- Explore further discussions on [13 Principles of Indigenous Education](#) released by Universities Canada in June 2015.



A facilitated workshop during the *Indigenous Research Gathering* in Sault Ste. Marie in 2016 provided an opportunity for delegates to work in groups to provide guidance to NOSM about the future for participatory and inclusive health research with Indigenous Peoples. They discussed lessons learned, a path forward, priorities, and guiding principles and protocols. Themes that resonated out of these sessions included: community control, inclusivity, transparency, accountability, respect and relationships, and the Seven Grandfather teachings.

Youth Programs

66 We call upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation, and establish a national network to share information and best practices.

69 We call upon Library and Archives Canada to:

- iii. Commit more resources to its public education materials and programming on residential schools.

70 We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Association of Archivists to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of archival policies and best practices.

NOSM's Health Sciences Summer Camps are held annually to provide an opportunity to Northern Ontario students to explore Indigenous culture, health, and tradition, Francophone culture, health, and tradition, health-care careers, obtain hands-on experience, and find a mentor. The camps are open to all students—including Indigenous youth—going into grade 10 and 11 (14-16 years of age) in September of that year. From a socially accountable perspective, NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit recognizes a number of factors why Indigenous students are limited to participate in the learning opportunities located in urban centres. Issues include: safety concerns while in Thunder Bay or Sudbury, completing community-based youth summer projects; lack of cultural safety programming; and, racism. It's believed that Indigenous students from rural and isolated communities are at a disadvantage to access student-oriented health sciences learning opportunities such as NOSM's Health Sciences Summer Camp.

To increase opportunities for Indigenous students to be effectively engaged, recruited, and inspired to consider medical studies at NOSM, the Indigenous Affairs Unit developed two pilot community-based health sciences camps in partnership with Indigenous communities. NOSM's Indigenous Affairs Unit is working together with local and surrounding resources to plan and deliver the community-based camps that are culturally specific and culturally safe.

Going forward, NOSM will continue to build on the strengths of the School, and will:

- Collaborate with Indigenous communities and partners to host additional community-based camps.
- Make available in NOSM's Health Sciences Library any resources or education opportunities developed by Library and Archives Canada and according to any recommendations from the Canadian Association of Archivists.

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

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We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

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We call upon the Government of Canada to commit to making a funding contribution of \$10 million over seven years to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, plus an additional amount to assist communities to research and produce histories of their own residential school experience and their involvement in truth, healing, and reconciliation.

Going forward, NOSM will continue to build on the strengths of the School, and will:

- Propose the creation of a Research Chair in the History of Medicine, with a specific focus on traditional Indigenous health. A potential research focus could be looking at the nutritional and other health research experiments that took place in the residential school system.
- Incorporate into NOSM's Health Sciences Library collection any health related research and produced histories relating to Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The library will also collect materials that will assist in educating staff and faculty on the history of Indigenous Peoples, including the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.



NOSM's Health Sciences Summer Camps are held annually to provide an opportunity to Northern Ontario students to explore Indigenous culture, health, and tradition, Francophone culture, health, and tradition, health-care careers, and find a mentor. Youth from Northwestern Ontario (pictures above) received hands-on experience during the 11th annual Health Sciences Summer Camps in July 2016.

Business and Reconciliation

92 We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous Peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
- iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

NOSM currently advertises jobs via social media and the website, which are publicly accessible on the internet. The School invites applications from all qualified individuals, and is committed to employment equity and diversity in the workplace and welcomes applications from Indigenous Peoples.

Going forward, NOSM will continue to build on the strengths of the School, and will:

- Determine contact lists for Indigenous communities' job boards and will distribute job postings in Indigenous communities for greater access.



Members of NOSM's Indigenous Reference Group—a council of representatives from Indigenous communities and organizations across Northern Ontario—gathered in Sudbury in 2007.



In June 2016, Elder Emma Meawasige spoke to *ICEMEN 2016* participants at the site of the former Garnier and St. Joseph's Residential Schools about her experience of being taken away from her family to be educated in the very schools that the participants were viewing.

Scope and Creation of this Document

Northern Ontario School of Medicine's Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action is based on NOSM's *Preliminary Report: Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action* written in December 2016. The *Preliminary Report* was prepared by a working group tasked with assessing NOSM's progress and future plans to address the TRC's *Calls to Action*. In creating the *Preliminary Report*, all portfolios and units within NOSM were consulted to ensure the report accurately represents the activities and intentions across the School.

The working group consisted of:

- Ms. Tina Armstrong, Director of Indigenous Affairs and member of the Indigenous Reference Group, Northern Ontario School of Medicine
- Dr. Joyce Helmer, Associate Professor, Chair of the Indigenous Admissions Sub-Committee, and member of the Indigenous Reference Group, Northern Ontario School of Medicine
- Ms. Alexa Lesperance, First-year NOSM medical student and member of the Indigenous Reference Group, Northern Ontario School of Medicine
- Ms. Kathleen Beatty, Director Equity and Quality, Northern Ontario School of Medicine
- Dr. Owen Prowse, MD, MPH, FRCSC, Assistant Professor of Surgery and Assistant Dean of Admissions, Northern Ontario School of Medicine

This response to the TRC's *Calls to Action* serves as a living document accountable to all communities of Northern Ontario. Designed as a framework for ongoing work, the response will serve as a measure of progress with annual reporting to the NOSM community for input and guidance. In this way, the School will invite all collaborators for ongoing input as we continue to address the spirit and intent of the *Calls to Action*. The working group would like to acknowledge the valuable feedback that the members of NOSM's Indigenous Reference Group provided for the preparation of this document.

