

September 2021, Minister Schulz

RE: Sept 30 National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

As you are aware, Sept 30 has been acknowledged as a National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. While this is considered a federal statutory holiday, many contracted agencies are/were planning and choosing to offer their staff reflection or healing time that day. Some are actually offering the day off and many are exchanging another important statutory holiday (Easter Monday, Remembrance Day, Boxing Day etc.) for this day. For most of them it is an act of reconciliation (TRC #80). As agencies that continue to serve an overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth, it is considered an act of ally ship and advocacy.

80. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to establish, as a statutory holiday, a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour Survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

Most agencies are encouraging employees, their colleagues, co-workers and friends to be take part in this day and wear an Orange shirt, take personal pledges of reconciliation, take a course, watch a webinar or training event in their community or virtually.

Recently many of our members who are contractors, received a notice from Leann Wagner, ADM through their contract managers that outlined:

- Services are expected to be available and delivered as per usual and,
- Remuneration for services delivered on this day will be the same as regular non-statutory holidays.
- Contract funding cannot be used to pay any additional staffing costs.

We can assure you that agencies will not abandon their responsibilities and contractual obligations. Services will be provided as they always are on other days of importance and emergency planning will be in place.

Although there is nothing in the message that we disagree with, in terms of obligation, the issue is the misalignment of the message. What organizations were informed is that the province does not recognize the day as a statutory holiday therefore they will not support the contracted agencies to do so. To say the least the message seems tone deaf and misguided given the current circumstances surrounding residential schools (Alberta having the most schools) and over 5000 unmarked graves recently discovered throughout Canada, and almost 70% of the Children in Care being Indigenous. It also

seems misaligned to the ***Child and Youth Enhancement Act*** matters to be considered, which guide the work in this sector.

We are asking that as the Minister of Children Services that there could/should be some recognition of the importance of this day, and that agencies can adjust their days off accordingly.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Pauline Smale

President