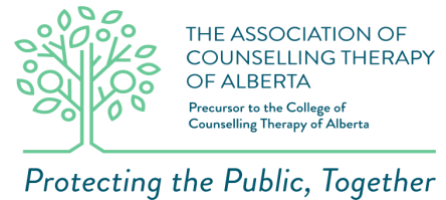


August 4, 2023

The Honourable Rick Wilson
Minister of Indigenous Relations
lr.ministeroffice@gov.ab.ca



Dear Minister Rick Wilson

Congratulations on your re-election and appointment as Minister of Indigenous Relations. The need for regulation and proclamation of the College of Counselling Therapy of Alberta (CCTA) is familiar to you, as this has been a long-standing process in Alberta. At our most recent meeting in April 2023, with the Ministry of Health and Addiction and Health Workforce Planning and Accountability, options were presented on our file for the new Ministers to be briefed on, with a simplified path to an expedited proclamation. We look forward to hearing that the government is prioritizing completing the steps to proclaim the CCTA.

Persistent lack of culturally safe mental health services and Indigenous mental health professionals in Alberta perpetuate mental health inequity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Unregulated counsellors in Alberta have no requirements to ensure culturally safe counselling services. **The CCTA is scheduled to be the 32nd health regulatory college in Alberta and is committed to being in right relationship and partnership with First Nations, Metis, Inuit and Indigenous peoples of Alberta to address systemic racism, co-create cultural safeguards Indigenous training pathways to the CCTA, and ensure standards of practice and codes of ethics uphold Indigenous healing practices without infringement.**

Alberta is lagging because it is one of the remaining jurisdictions that does not regulate Counselling Therapists. It is of significant concern that unregulated counsellors can continue working in Alberta without training and following substantial breaches of trust, such as sexual abuse or misconduct against clients because the CCTA regulations have yet to be proclaimed.

Finally, proclaiming the CCTA increases much-needed funding for mental health counselling by increasing the number and diversity of professional counsellors covered through the Non-Insured Health Benefits program, employee benefits, and insurance providers. Indigenous professional counsellors in Alberta are working with ACTA, advocating for the government to proclaim the CCTA because they cannot offer mental health counselling to First Nations people through NIHB without regulation. The CCTA will help Indigenous Albertans receive culturally safe mental health counselling when, where and how they choose.

We would like to meet with you to discuss the CCTA and answer your questions. In the spirit of reciprocity and respect for finite resources, the Government's commitment to proclaim the CCTA would ensure collaborative work with First Nations, Metis, Inuit, and Indigenous peoples will result in actionable beneficial outcomes for Indigenous peoples. Please email Laura Hahn at registrar@acta-alberta.ca to advise of a date and time that works best for you.

Sincerely,

Laura Hahn, ACTA Interim CEO and Registrar, registrar@acta-alberta.ca

CCd

Chief of Staff, Riley Braun, Riley.braun@gov.ab.ca

Chair of ACTA, Nicole Imgrund, Chair@acta-alberta.ca

Background and FACT Sheet ACTA/CCTA

The **Association of Counselling Therapy of Alberta (ACTA)** is the precursor organization to the **College of Counselling Therapy of Alberta (CCTA)**. ACTA was established at the request of the government to build the CCTA and begin grandfathering the counselling professionals into the College to ensure a **seamless transition for Alberta's workforce**. ACTA has completed this work and has been prepared for the proclamation of the CCTA since 2021. The workforce, stakeholders (including employers and post-secondary programs), and the public are ready for counselling to be regulated in the CCTA. The delay in the proclamation creates unnecessary instability for Alberta's essential mental health workforce.

The Legislative Assembly of Alberta unanimously passed legislation to regulate counselling professions to address public health safety issues, improve mental health funding sources for the public, and increase access to mental health professionals throughout Alberta. Unfortunately, these concerns remain without the proclamation of the CCTA.

Regulation of counselling professions with the CCTA will Improve Albertan's Access, Affordability, and Safety of needed Mental Health Counselling:

- Provide **4000+ additional, safe, professionally trained practitioners** to help meet service demands and **fill vacant positions** throughout Alberta, including rural areas that require being regulated within the *HPA*.
- **Leverage the full scope of Alberta's professional counsellor's** training and competencies within the health care system.
- **Attract and retain the workforce** of mental health counsellors in Alberta, creating diverse education options with **streamlined credentialing to the CCTA**.
- Enhance counselling professionals' **labour mobility to Alberta** from other provinces and countries that regulate Counselling Therapy.
- Increase **Albertan's choice of when, where and how** they receive mental health counselling as many Counselling Therapists are trained in diverse modalities.
- Ensures Albertans receive mental health counselling accountable to **minimum health safety standards in the HPA**.
- Enhance **culturally safe** and competent mental health services for First Nation and Indigenous peoples as collaboratively established with First Nations.
- **Increase funding to Albertans through third-party insurance** plans, which typically only cover health services from regulated professionals.
- **Increases federal funding to First Nation and Indigenous peoples** through the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program, which limits coverage for services to regulated health professionals only.