Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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Association of Ontario Midwives
Delivering what matters.

Relationship Accord

between

Nishnawbe Aski Nation ("NAN")

and

Association of Ontario Midwives ("AOM")

(Collectively "the Parties")

WHEREAS, the Sioux Lookout Area Chiefs Committee on Health (CCOH) and Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Chiefs issued a Declaration of Health and Public Health Emergency on February 24, 2016 in order to call attention to the ongoing crises at the community level and across the health care system within NAN territory.

WHEREAS, NAN communities have issued and developed numerous declarations, recommendations, resolutions and studies providing specific and comprehensive solutions to the ongoing crises.

WHEREAS, First Nations in NAN territory are asserting their jurisdiction and control over health care through the development of the NAN Health Transformation process and NAN Health Commission with the goal of developing a new, responsive and system-wide approach to health care for NAN territory.

WHEREAS, the *Charter of Relationship Principles Governing Health System Transformation in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Territory* expresses the commitment of NAN, the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada to work in a renewed multilateral nation-to-nation relationship that is intended to result in immediate, medium, and long-term transformative changes to the existing health system at the NAN community level.

WHEREAS, the mission of the Association of Ontario Midwives (AOM)is to advance the clinical and professional practice of Indigenous/Aboriginal and Registered midwives in Ontario.

WHEREAS, the AOM has implemented a strategic plan, which includes objectives to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). Objectives include increasing access to midwifery care in Indigenous communities that is rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, and working in close collaboration with Indigenous leaders, communities and stakeholders.

WHEREAS, the AOM supports the success of existing Indigenous and Aboriginal midwifery services, and works to develop capacity in order to provide access tomidwifery services in communities that do not yet have access to these services.

WHEREAS, the AOM advocates for the continued growth of the Indigenous Midwifery Program within the Ontario Ministry of Health. This advocacy to date has resulted in increased access for Indigenous communities through the implementation of eight programs on First Nations, urban, rural and remote Indigenous communities.

WHEREAS, The AOM has committed to working on increasing awareness of the work of Indigenous midwives, increasing public education and knowledge transmission of midwifery care, including cultural knowledge in Indigenous communities, and providing opportunities for gatherings that will focus on sharing and learning about Indigenous midwifery.

WHEREAS, the AOM has committed capacity to grow Indigenous leadership and collaboration at the organizational and corporate level of the association. This is to better support Indigenous/Aboriginal midwives, and advance the reclamation of Indigenous Midwifery in First Nations and Indigenous communities.

WHEREAS, the AOM's organizational capacity enables research efforts, proposal writing, policy and communications efforts, negotiations processes, and inter-governmental advocacy and access to direct Indigenous midwifery expertise.

WHEREAS, the AOM supports the model of care that Indigenous Midwives provide. Indigenous midwives have specific core competencies that are responsive to the unique needs of Indigenous communities. Indigenous Midwifery provides integrated care that honours traditions, respects beliefs, knowledge systems and original languages. Indigenous midwives contribute to the wholistic health and healing of communities through models of care for families that include advocacy with families to stay intact and protect from harmful child welfare practices.

WHEREAS, NAN and the AOM jointly acknowledge and support the full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) .

WHEREAS, NAN and the AOM jointly acknowledge that capacity building, cultural awareness and cultural safety for First Nations peoples is essential to the success of Health Transformation and a new health system for NAN territory.

WHEREAS, NAN and the AOM jointly acknowledge that an equitable and comprehensive NAN health system requires high quality infrastructure, data and equipment to meet the unique needs and operational conditions specific to NAN First Nations.

WHEREAS, NAN and the AOM commit to working together respectively to actively involve NAN First Nations in advocating for access to midwifery in NAN First Nation communities, along with the necessary infrastructure, supports, education and training opportunities required.

WHEREAS, NAN and the AOM are guided by a common vision that is grounded in the objective of health equity, and the removal of barriers to safe and effective health care in NAN territory.

WHEREAS, The NAN Health Transformation process is a NAN community-led and community-driven process whereby NAN First Nations are engaged to ensure their voices are heard and incorporated into the development of a new NAN First Nations health system and community-centered programming.

WHEREAS, NAN and the AOM jointly acknowledge and respect NAN First Nations inherent rights, Aboriginal and Treaty rights and their protection under s.35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982.*

WHEREAS, NAN and the AOM jointly acknowledge and agree, as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) that Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

INTENT:

1. The objective of this Relationship Accord is to guide the partnership between NAN and the AOM as NAN proceeds with the NAN Health Transformation process and the creation of a NAN Health Commission.
2. NAN and the AOM intend to develop mutually supported initiatives within NAN territory to build capacity and transform the experiences of First Nations people within the health system.
3. The NAN Health Transformation process will be led by NAN First Nations.
4. The Parties will collaborate to bring meaningful change to health care in NAN territory, and will support NAN First Nations in reaching their objectives for improved health access and health outcomes.
5. This Relationship Accord is a relationship-strengthening document only, and it is not intended to create or alter legal obligations on the part of the AOM or NAN.
6. The voices and experiences of First Nations people and communities will be considered in the development of initiatives or services.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The principles that shall govern this Relationship Accord are as follows:

A. The NAN vision and principles for Health Transformation, as outlined in the NAN Charter of Relationship Principles Governing Health System Transformation in NAN territory (Appendix "A").

B. The principle of self-determination and respect for the traditions and languages of the people of NAN territory.

THEREFORE THE PARTIES AGREE THAT:

1. Support capacity building, skill building, leadership and training of First Nations people throughout the health system in NAN territory.
2. Provide leadership and advocate for the improvement of health outcomes and health equity by identifying and addressing barriers to safe and effective care in NAN territory
3. Support leadership and advocacy in building a foundational system, quality improvement and development tools, data collection and infrastructure that are based on person and family-centered innovation and the highest levels of safety and quality care.
4. Support efforts to achieve health equity and develop holistic approaches to addressing health needs, including maternal and newborn/child health, reproductive justice, as well as social, environmental, and First Nations determinants of health.
5. Foster the development of relationships and partnerships with other entities in support of the mutual objectives articulated in this Relationship Accord.
6. Support and assist initiatives arising from relationship accords between NAN and other entities aimed at the improvement of health care services for NAN First Nations.

7. Subject to applicable privacy laws including but not limited to Ontario's Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004 and Ontario's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Parties will work together to assist NAN First Nations to have access to health data related to their community and, to the extent permitted by such applicable law, the parties will work together to ensure that any existing or future data collection or sharing is compliant with the principles of Ownership, Access, Control and Possession (OCAP) whereby First Nations control data collection processes in their communities and own, protect and control how information about their peoples is used.

NON-DEROGATION

For greater certainty, except to the extent that is otherwise agreed by the First Nations concerned, none of the provisions referred to in this Relationship Accord abrogates or derogates from:

a. The federal fiduciary responsibility for First Nations; oR

b. The First Nations, treaty or other rights or freedoms that pertain to the First Nations of NAN, including:

i. Any rights or freedoms that have been recognized by the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763,

ii. Any rights or freedoms that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired,

iii. Inherent right to self-government referred to in section 35.1 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982 and the powers and jurisdictions set out in self-government agreements, and

iv. Any rights or freedoms relating to the exercise or protection of their languages, cultures or traditions.

Signed this 23RD day of March, 2021.

On behalf of Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler

On behalf of Association of Ontario Midwives

Juana Berinstein (Mar 23, 2021 15:18 EDT)

Juana Berinstein, Interim Executive Director

On behalf of Association of Ontario Midwives

Ellen Blais

Ellen Blais (Mar 23, 2021 16:44 EDT)

Ellen Blais, Director of Indigenous Midwifery

NAN- AOM- Relationship Accord - March 23, 2021

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