

CEO's Blog

September 30, 2022



Thunder Bay Regional
Health Sciences
Centre

Thunder Bay Regional
Health Research
Institute

Hello, Boozhou, Bonjour,

As you know, today marks the annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada – a day to remember those children who never returned home and Survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. This day of reflection is crucial to the reconciliation process as we continue to do better in learning about the unique history, language and culture of Indigenous peoples – to provide a better environment for those we provide care for.

Please take some time to reflect on what this day means, including learning about the rich and diverse culture, experiences, and histories of [First Nations, Inuit, and Métis People](#).

As part of our commemorative activities, we are pleased that the construction of the Tipi on the east side of our Hospital property is now completed. The Tipi is a part of our commitment to supporting Indigenous peoples when a time of spiritual connectedness or special time with others is needed. We thank our community partners for assisting in the construction and for their guidance. Special thanks also go out to the generous donors in our community who designated their donations directly to the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation's Family CARE Grant program, which was instrumental in funding the construction.

Today is also Orange Shirt Day in Canada. This is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day intended to raise awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of residential schools, and to promote the concept of "Every Child Matters". The orange shirt is a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations. People are encouraged to wear orange on this day to honour the Survivors of residential schools. You can learn more about Orange Shirt Day here: <https://www.orangeshirtday.org/>

As part of our Strategic Plan 2026 pillar, *Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion*, we continue to improve and recognize the needs and expectations of diverse populations we serve. On September 25, we celebrated Franco-Ontarian Day and acknowledge the need to continue to embrace opportunities where we can improve and strengthen the services we provide to the Franco-Ontarian population.

Finally, please know there are mental health supports available for those impacted. Former residential school students can call 1-866-925-4419 for emotional crisis referral services and information on other health supports from the Government of Canada. Indigenous peoples across Canada can also go to The Hope for Wellness Help Line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for counselling and crisis intervention. This service is available in English and French, and, upon request, in Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut. Call the toll-free Help Line at 1-855-242-3310 or connect to the online chat at www.hopeforwellness.ca.

COVID-19

As you know, restrictions continue to be lifted across the province and country – but here at the Hospital we will maintain our focus on keeping our measures in place that are needed to protect you and the most vulnerable patients we provide care to. We have done well throughout the past months as we managed through what we hope is the last wave. I ask that you be patient and keep up the great work as we continue to assess the current levels of risk and what's coming next.

Final Thoughts

This is a busy time of year. Many of you are back in full force with work schedules, after work duties and chauffeuring kids to activities. And, despite the public narrative that the pandemic is over, we know it is not because we see the impacts every day. The contrast between narrative and reality can sometimes be confusing for those of us who work in health care. With that in mind, I want to encourage you to pay attention to your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Know that we have supports for you here at TBRHSC should you need to talk to someone. As well, I want you to give serious consideration to getting the new COVID-19 bivalent booster shot that's now available.

I know it's been more than 2.5 years and you've heard it a dozen times from me alone – but I want to say thank you again. Thank you for your ongoing professionalism, your endurance, and your compassion for your colleagues and the people we serve. You continue to amaze on a daily basis. Keep up the fantastic work that you do.

As always, you are welcome to comment on this blog or connect with me for any other matter. You can reach me at: rhonda.ellacott@tbh.net



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