

NWT ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITIES

# 2023 ADVOCACY DAYS

## MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH



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# MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

## KEY FACTS:

- Proportion of heavy drinkers in NWT is double the national average (43% vs 19.1%).
- Suicide rate in NWT is nearly double the national average (9.2 vs 5.1 / 100,000 citizens).
- Access to quality broadband is limited thereby restricting virtual options.
- 31.7% of NWT have a housing problem.
- 19% of NWT households are in core housing need.
- Substance use cost \$4,047 per person in NWT (regardless of age), compared to \$1,258 per person in Canada. Costs are distributed between: lost productivity, healthcare, criminal justice, and other direct costs.



## RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

So much of the ability of the NWT to move forward is tied to Reconciliation and the social determinants of health including mental health and addictions and other areas like employment, education, early childhood development, food security, and housing and homelessness.

## TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION CALL TO ACTION #21

We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority.

## UPSTREAM VERSUS DOWNSTREAM

There are actions that can be taken to support community healing. When we think of the analogy of a person falling into a river who may face the danger of drowning, 'upstream' interventions are actions that are taken to prevent people from falling into the river, where 'downstream' actions are taken to either provide the person in the river with a lifejacket, or farther along the way, to pull them from the river to prevent them from drowning.

Effective and meaningful actions can be taken at any point along the river, but the really impactful actions for the both the individual and the community, are those that address the root causes to prevent people from falling into the river in the first place. They are investment in social, economic, policy and regulatory structures that make it possible for everyone to meet their full potential.

## NWTAC RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Implement the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework to create a future where Northern and Arctic people are thriving, strong and safe.
- Implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action* and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' *Calls for Justice* in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.
- Adequately fund the provision of Mental Health and Addictions treatment to allow the Territories to move beyond the harm reduction model that is not even being achieved.



# NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL  
POPULATION  
**44,469**

**33** Communities from  
Kakisa of **54** residents to  
Yellowknife of **20,960**

**1,183,000** km<sup>2</sup>

Official Languages **11**

Residents  
who are Aboriginal  
**50.3%**

Homes  
without  
Internet  
**20.3%**

GDP  
**\$ 3,745**  
million

HIGHEST FOOD PRICE INDEX

**Colville Lake 2X**  
Yellowknife

**67.3%**  
Employment Rate

**10**  
of 33 communities receive  
telecoms by satellite

**1**  
Senate Seat  
**1**  
House Seat

**31.7%**  
Households with Housing  
Problem

**19.8%**  
in Core Housing Need