SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
DECEMBER 4, 5 & 6, 2012, GATINEAU, QC

Resolution no. 55/2012

TITLE:	Mental Wellness as a National Priority
SUBJECT:	Mental Wellness
MOVED BY:	Chief Donovan Fontaine, Sagkeeng First Nation, MB
SECONDED BY:	Chief Maureen Chapman, Skawahlook First Nation, BC
DECISION:	Carried by Consensus

WHEREAS:

A. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples States:

   Section 18: Indigenous people have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own Indigenous decision making institutions.

   Section 24.2: Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.

B. First Nations communities across Canada are declaring a state of crisis with regards to mental wellness in their communities. With suicide rates being five to seven times higher than the Canadian population and addiction and prescription drug abuse rates reaching crisis-levels in many communities, First Nations need to come together to make mental wellness a national priority.

C. There is a lack of resources available for addiction treatment, more specifically, aftercare in communities. Individuals are treated for their addiction but then go back to the community where no supports are available to support them in this transition or to help them continue on their healing journey. Resources are needed to support the full continuum of mental health services.

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D. First Nations traditional healers and Elders who utilize culture and a mind, body and spiritual approach to healing are not recognized or funded by the federal government.

E. Previous resolutions on mental wellness include:

- Resolution 08/2012: Federal Government of Canada Failing to provide Mental Health Services.
- Resolution 57/2011: Support Akwesasne Leadership in Addressing State of Crisis Regarding Substance Abuse.
- Resolution 7/2011: Support for Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Grand Council Treaty #3 Strategy on "Restoring our Nations: Action Plan for Community Recovery from Opioid Addiction".
- Resolution 04/2011: Making First Nations Health a Priority.
- Resolution 30/2009: First Nations Youth Suicide Prevention Requires Youth and Traditional Healers and Elders Leadership.
- Resolution 2008/06: Adequacy and Funding of Mental Wellness and Addictions Programs
- Resolution 2005/15: Implementation of First Nation mental health and wellness strategy with appropriate fiduciary support from the federal government.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:

1. Mandate the National Chief to make First Nations mental wellness and life promotion a national priority.
2. Direct the AFN to continue discussions with all First Nations to address community-based issues that focus on mental wellness.
3. Direct the AFN to explore how social media and social networking are used as a tool to promote positive mental wellness and to bring together regions, communities, Elders and youth.
4. Direct the AFN to raise awareness of the importance behind healing the family and community and not just the individual and to secure resources for all aspects of healing with special attention paid to aftercare within the community.
5. Direct the AFN to advocate to the federal government to support community groups and processes that ensure cultural and traditional approaches are at the forefront of healing and wellness.

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