

---

## Assembly of First Nations

---

55 Metcalfe Street, Suite 1600  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L5  
Telephone: 613-241-6789 Fax: 613-241-5808  
www.afn.ca



---

## Assemblée des Premières Nations

---

55, rue Metcalfe, Suite 1600  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 6L5  
Téléphone: 613-241-6789 Télécopieur: 613-241-5808  
www.afn.ca

**SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY  
DECEMBER 6, 7, & 8, 2016; GATINEAU, QC**

**Resolution no. 78/2016**

---

**TITLE:** Indigenous Youth Suicide

---

**SUBJECT:** Suicide, Mental Health

---

**MOVED BY:** Chief Peter Beatty, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, SK

---

**SECONDED BY:** Chief Tammy Cook Searson, Lac La Ronge Indian Band, SK

---

**DECISION** Carried by Consensus

---

**WHEREAS:**

- A. The following articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states:
- i. Article 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.
  - ii. Article 21 (2): States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.
- B. The Assembly of First Nations National Youth Council's Calls to Action on Life Promotion states that "we recognize that the prevention of suicide does not rest with one sector or government department. It is a complex and multi-dimensional problem that requires the concerted efforts of individuals, families, communities, as well as federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments to solve it. In other words, we recognize that we are all implicated in the solution, albeit in different ways."
- C. Indigenous youth are experiencing physical, emotional, spiritual and mental health trauma as a result of the intergenerational impacts from colonialism. Suicide rates are five to seven times higher for First Nations youth than for non-Indigenous youth and are considered to be among the highest in the world.

---

**Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 8th day of December 2016 in Gatineau, Québec**

  
**PERRY BELLEGARDE, NATIONAL CHIEF**

**78 – 2016**  
Page 1 of 2

- D. It is recognized that the current mainstream western-approach to suicide, when dealing with Indigenous and national crises, are ineffective. These approaches should be required to adopt a holistic framework that emphasizes physical, emotional, spiritual and mental well-being within their programmatic agenda. Further, they require multiyear resourcing for community based intervention, prevention and after-care services.
- E. It is understood that the current crises facing our youth require significant national attention. The *First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework* reflects the Indigenous worldview of holistic well-being, whereby traditional knowledge as guided by Elders and Knowledge Keepers, is the focal point to prevention, intervention and after-care and is equally recognized as an effective method when dealing with youth suicide.

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

1. Urge the Prime Minister of Canada to recognize the national crisis regarding the current state of youth suicide in Canada and to take immediate remedial action that is guided by communities as they see fit.
2. In recognition of resolution 22/2014 and 26/2015, it is required that the Chiefs-in-Assembly encourage National Chief Perry Bellegarde to advocate to fully implement the *First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework*.

---

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 8th day of December 2016 in Gatineau, Québec



---

PERRY BELLEGARDE, NATIONAL CHIEF