

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB)  
Regional Offices Directory

**Atlantic Region**

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Maritime Centre  
1505 Barrington Street  
15th Floor, Suite 1525  
Halifax, NS B3J 3Y6  
1-866-414-8111

**Québec Region**

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Guy-Favreau Complex  
200 René Lévesque Blvd. West  
East Tower, 2nd Floor  
Montréal, QC H2Z 1X4  
1-877-583-2965

**Ontario Region**

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Emerald Plaza  
1547 Merivale Road  
3rd Floor, Postal Locator 6103A  
Nepean, ON K1A 0L3  
1-888-301-6426

**Manitoba Region**

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Stanley Knowles Federal Building  
391 York Avenue, Suite 300  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4W1  
1-866-818-3505

**Saskatchewan Region**

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Château Tower, 18th Floor  
1920 Broad Street  
Regina, SK S4P 3V2  
1-866-250-1529

**Alberta Region**

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Canada Place  
9700 Jasper Avenue, Suite 730  
Edmonton, AB T5J 4C3  
1-888-495-6588

**Pacific Region**

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Federal Building  
757 West Hastings Street, Suite 540  
Vancouver, BC V6C 3E6  
1-877-477-0775

**Northern Secretariat (Yukon)**

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Elijah Smith Building  
Suite 100 - 300 Main Street  
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2B5  
1-800-464-8106

**Northern Secretariat**

(Northwest Territories and Nunavut)  
First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Sixty Queen Building  
14th Floor, Postal Locator 3914A  
60 Queen Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9  
1-866-509-1769

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# Bulletin

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## Health Canada Indian Residential Schools (IRS) Mental Health Support Program

Welcome to the second edition of the Health Canada Indian Residential Schools (IRS) Mental Health Support Program Bulletin. The IRS Mental Health Support Program provides mental health supports to all former students of Indian Residential Schools who are resolving claims against the Government of Canada through the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Process or through litigation for abuse(s) suffered while attending Indian Residential Schools. The IRS Mental Health Support Program Bulletin continues to be published as needed to provide information about the program. The focus of this issue is the Resolution Health Support Workers and the invaluable services they provide.

### Background about Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC)

Since 1997, Canada has resolved more than 1,952 (as of January 2005) of the approximately 13,000 IRS legal claims. Through this experience Canada has learned that claimants often experience various emotional reactions when disclosing abuses suffered while attending residential school(s). This has led the Government of Canada to develop the IRS Mental Health Support Program to meet the needs of eligible claimants.

Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC) was established in June 2001, to resolve claims associated with the legacy of the residential school system.

In December 2002, IRSRC announced the creation of a National Resolution Framework. The centrepiece of the Resolution Framework is an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Process which aims to administer, validate and resolve claims in a safe and sensitive manner as an alternative to litigation.

If you are interested in learning about how to apply to the ADR Process, call the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) Help Desk at 1-800-816-7293 or visit IRSRC's website at [www.irs-rqpi.gc.ca](http://www.irs-rqpi.gc.ca)

The National IRS Crisis Line can also be reached 24 hours a day at 1-866-925-4419.

### The IRS Mental Health Support Program

Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) works in partnership with IRSRC to coordinate and fund a variety of services.

The IRS Mental Health Support Program provides access to mental health, transportation services and emotional support services for eligible claimants through the Health Canada FNIHB Regional Offices. Eligible claimants may include any former IRS attendee with a claim against Canada who is in the process of actively resolving their claim through the ADR Process or the courts. Each FNIHB Regional Office has a Regional Coordinator who helps eligible claimants access the services offered by the IRS Mental Health Support Program.



# IRS Mental Health Support Program Bulletin

Health Canada's infrastructure includes existing relationships with mental health professionals and guidelines and policies for the coordination and funding of mental health and transportation services. In addition, claimants will have access to emotional support services through community-based Resolution Health Support Workers (RHSW), while trying to resolve their claim. The RHSW will provide emotional support services to claimants before, during, and to a limited extent, after their litigation processes or ADR hearings have been settled.

The IRS Mental Health Support Program will coordinate the following services for eligible claimants:

- 1) **Mental health counselling** - based on receipt of a completed treatment plan (including the number of counselling sessions recommended and their cost) from a mental health service provider recognized by Health Canada and approved by First Nations and Inuit Health Branch.
- 2) **Transportation** - to access individual/limited family mental health counselling and/or Elder/Healer services not available in the home community and approved by FNIHB.
- 3) **RHSW emotional support services** - are available based on the needs of the claimant and will be provided by individual RHSW's working through Aboriginal or Aboriginally affiliated organizations funded by FNIHB.

## Resolution Health Support Workers (RHSW)

### Purpose

- To provide a variety of flexible "front-line" safety support and coordination services directly to IRS claimants involved in the ADR or court processes;
- The RHSW service can be accessed at any stage of the ADR or court process (completion of an ADR application form, hearing, court events, etc.)

### Roles and Responsibilities

- Provide emotional support to IRS claimants during all phases of the resolution process with a focus on ADR and litigation processes when requested (e.g. on-the-scene emotional support and/or telephone follow up);
- Identify claimant support needs offered within the IRS Mental Health Support Program;
- Refer IRS claimants to existing community services and supports;
- When possible, remind claimants of their scheduled ADR or court events and inform claimants that they may bring a support person to their hearing session (funded by IRSRC as part of their ADR process);
- Provide a liaison role between Health Canada, IRSRC and Aboriginal communities in raising awareness about the National Resolution Framework and the services available through the IRS MHSP (as described on the first page of this Bulletin) and support the needs of former students; and
- Communicate with Health Canada in order to identify high claimant activity areas and emergency situations.

### Activities to Date

- Respond to claimants in distress and refer them to the IRS HelpDesk, National IRS Crisis Line or Health Canada IRS Regional Coordinator;
- Attend IRSRC outreach/information workshops, commemoration events, discovery hearings and adjudication hearings;
- Accompany Form Fillers (a trained person who assists a former student in filling out the ADR application form) to ADR application workshops and provide emotional support to claimants;
- Respond to calls from IRSRC Resolution Managers and outreach staff, plaintiff's counsel, Adjudication Secretariat staff, Health Canada Regional Coordinator, Form Fillers, etc.;
- Prepare activity reports, participate in regular RHSW teleconference calls; network with Aboriginal groups, communities and Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) funded projects.

### Accessing RHSW Services

A former IRS attendee or family member may request RHSW services through any of the following methods:

- By calling the Health Canada IRS Regional Coordinator directly (see list on back of this Bulletin);
- An IRSRC Resolution Manager can make a request for support on behalf of a claimant or as a safety measure for an upcoming ADR or litigation process; or
- A third party (e.g. IRS Help Desk, lawyer) may refer and assist in accessing RHSW services.

For additional information or to access counselling, please contact the Health Canada IRS Regional Coordinator in the FNIHB Regional Office in your province/territory from the list provided on the next page. More information about the IRS Mental Health Support Program is available on the Health Canada website at

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnihb/cp/irs.htm>