



THE ASSOCIATION OF
COUNSELLING THERAPY
OF ALBERTA

September 24, 2021

Grand Chief Vernon Watchmaker
Confederacy of Treaty 6 Nations
17533 106 Ave
Edmonton, AB T5S 1E7

Grand Chief Arthur Noskey
Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta
Administration Office
18178 – 102 Ave
Edmonton, AB T5S 1S7

Sent by email to: anoskey@treaty8.org and grandchief.watchmaker@treatysix.org

Dear Grand Chief Vernon Watchmaker and Grand Chief Arthur Noskey:

We are writing to you today in the hope of seeking a shared understanding and to request a meeting with you. Our organization, the Association of Counselling Therapy of Alberta (ACTA), holds deep respect for First Nations.

By way of background, ACTA is the precursor organization to the College of Counselling Therapy of Alberta (CCTA), which will regulate the professions of counselling therapy, addiction counselling and child and youth care counselling. The purpose of regulating these professions is:

- To ensure safe mental health and addictions resources
- To increase capacity for mental health and addiction services
- To provide processes for accountability and reconciliation when people are harmed

The intention of regulation is not to intrude or in any way disturb traditional and cultural indigenous healing practices. The legislation contains a clause that exempts traditional healing practices from regulation.

For those Indigenous practitioners who wish to belong to the CCTA, we want to create a college that does not exclude. The foundations of our work are equity, inclusiveness, belonging and anti-racism. After the Alberta Government gave ACTA permission to engage with First Nations (in February 2021), we began to contact and seek input from health policy directors for the

Treaty and Metis Nations, as well as the Indigenous Integration Committee. ACTA was scheduled to begin engagement with other committees, as well.

In June 2021, ACTA was told that Treaty 6 Grand Chief Vernon Watchmaker and Treaty 8 Grand Chief Arthur Noskey had written to the Premier of Alberta to express concerns regarding the regulation of counselling therapy, addiction counselling, and child & youth care counselling. Your letter was not shared with us, but we were told that your concern is whether traditional Indigenous cultural practices will be regulated. Our Government directed us to wait until Minister Shandro responded to you before we attempted engagement on these issues, and we respected that government to government communication should first take place. On September 20, 2021, we received a letter from then Health Minister Shandro, which we would like to discuss with you.

ACTA takes seriously that there were issues raised and is concerned that your letter may have gone unaddressed. Please know that traditional and cultural practices of Indigenous people will not be regulated by the CCTA. We would like to meet with you to understand more about your concerns, and for us to hear what else we can do to assure you of this. As well, as providers of healing services, it is the professions' obligation to know and understand how to reduce harm. This includes working with clients in ways that are culturally appropriate in our work as counsellors in many contexts across the province. It is our desire to integrate Indigenous perspectives into all of our processes, governance and policy decisions as a future college, and we seek your wisdom in how this may happen.

We respectfully request a meeting to better understand the issues. We humbly wait for your invitation to engage with you. Please contact Linda Sahli at registrar@acta-alberta.ca or 587-566-0159.

With deep regards,

Nicole Imgrund, Chair, ACTA
Linda Sahli, CEO/Registrar, ACTA