



BC ASSOCIATION *of*  
SOCIAL WORKERS

BC Association of Social Workers  
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For immediate release

#### BC SOCIAL WORKERS ASK FNHA TO RECONSIDER END TO COUNSELLING PROGRAM

(Vancouver) BC's professional association for social workers is calling on First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) to reconsider the decision to end counselling services for non-status persons and for the BC and federal governments to step up with additional funding.

"We recognize FNHA's authority to take decisions in support of their organizational goals" said BC Association of Social Workers President Michael Crawford. "Our central concern is the short notice given to service users and providers, and the four-week phaseout period."

In a statement on the FNHA website, updated April 12, 2024, the health authority noted that program usage and available funding led to the decision to end mental health counselling for non-status people. Social workers and other professionals deliver counselling service funded by FNHA on contract. Current service users are eligible to be funded for four more sessions as based on a risk assessment that must be completed by the end of April 2024.

"Many non-status people, including Indigenous people seeking status with the federal government, may be harmed by the abrupt end of their counselling" said BCASW Executive Director Dianne Heath. "The short phaseout period will make terminating services challenging and finding resources, including ongoing counselling, difficult."

BCASW has contacted FNHA to ask that they extend the phaseout period to allow service users to either end counselling with their current service provider or for their service provider to find additional resources and make a suitable referral.

BCASW has contacted both the BC and federal governments asking them to provide funding to either continue funding mental health counselling for non-status people or to extend the phaseout period.

FNHA Update to Mental Health Counselling Programs

<https://www.fnha.ca/benefits/health-benefits-news/updates-to-mental-health-counselling-programs>

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BCASW is a voluntary, not-for-profit membership association that supports and promotes the profession of social work and advocates for social justice. BCASW is one of the provincial/territorial social work associations in partnership with the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW). Through CASW we support the work of the International Federation of Social Workers. BCASW was incorporated in 1956 and has branches and members (including students) throughout BC.

*BCASW acknowledges that our office is in the unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and that our members live and work in unceded territories across British Columbia. We also express appreciation to Métis and Inuit peoples across British Columbia.*