

MEDIA RELEASE | 1ST FEBRUARY 2020

Métis Youth's Resilience Shines Through in Spite of Health Disparities

In partnership with Métis Nation BC, McCreary Centre Society today released *Ta Saantii Deu/Neso: A Profile of Métis Youth Health in BC*. The release happened at the Métis Nation BC Climate Change and Health forum attended by Minister Judy Darcy, BC's Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Using data from the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey, the report looks at the current health picture of Métis youth, their changing needs, and at disparities between the health of Métis and non-Métis youth.

The report highlights the strength and resilience of Métis young people, with one in five engaging in traditional or cultural activities over the past year, and 13% able to speak at least a few words of an Indigenous language.

Métis youth are also benefitting from the support of their community. There was an increase from five years earlier in those who felt there was an adult in their community who really cared about them, and who felt their ideas were listened to and valued in the activities they engaged in.

However, the results also showed that Métis youth are dealing with challenges to their health and well-being in many areas at higher rates than their non-Métis peers. For example, they were more likely to have been in government care, to have experienced discrimination and harassment, to report mental health challenges, and to miss out on mental health services when they felt they needed them.

McCreary's Executive Director Annie Smith explained: *"This report really highlights the need to ensure we continue to look at what is going on for Métis youth, listen to their perspectives and experiences, and seek to address the disparities they experience to growing up healthy in BC, in comparison to their non-Métis peers."*

It also shows ways we can step in and support them when they need it, including ensuring they have opportunities to connect to culture; and have their unique history, needs, and strengths recognized within their schools and the services they may want to access."



McCreary
Centre Society

McCreary Centre Society is a non-government, non-profit organization committed to improving the health of BC youth through research, evaluation and community-based projects.

Founded in 1977, our vision is that all youth are supported to be healthy and connected.

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**MÉTIS NATION
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Métis Nation British Columbia develops and enhances opportunities for our Métis Chartered Communities and Métis people in British Columbia by providing culturally relevant social and economic programs and services.

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Métis Nation BC's Minister of Health Susie Hooper, reflected on the results *"The Ta Saantii reports created from the 2013 and 2018 McCreary Adolescent Health Surveys speak to the health and wellness concerns that Metis Youth are facing on a daily basis, in comparison to their non-Métis peers. It is a touching glance across the province into the lives of youth from twelve to nineteen years old.*

The resilience of our Métis Youth is strongly linked to increased attachment to their families, Community, and Culture. MNBC is dedicated to creating opportunities to bring Métis Youth together, both with Youth Ministry and through the newly created Metis Youth Mental Health and Wellness Initiative. This Initiative, driven by the passion and wisdom of its Youth members, aims to build awareness around mental health and shine a light on the resilience of Youth."

A copy of the report, *Ta Saantii Deu/Neso: A Profile of Métis Youth Health in BC* can be obtained at www.mcs.bc.ca.

BACKGROUNDER

The 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) was conducted in 58 of BC's 60 school districts and is the sixth time students have been asked to complete the comprehensive health survey since 1992. Over 38,000 of the province's Grade 7–12 students participated, including 3% who identified as Métis.

Since 2008, the BC AHS has asked youth specifically about Métis heritage, and this report contains data from the 2008, 2013, and 2018 surveys.

The survey provides essential information about health trends, and about risk and protective factors that can influence young people's healthy transitions to adulthood. The 2018 survey included 140 questions asking youth about their perceptions of their current physical and mental health, their engagement in health promoting and health risk behaviours, and about factors that can contribute to a healthy transition to adulthood.

Some key findings from the report:

As in 2013, Métis youth represented almost a third (32%) of Indigenous youth who completed the survey.

A quarter (24%) of Métis youth had a family member who had attended residential school. These youth were more likely to have been in government care (17% vs. 10% of those who did not have a family member in residential school), and to have experienced a family member attempt or die by suicide (50% vs. 25%).

Métis youth with care experience were three times as likely to have attempted suicide as their peers without care experience (21% vs. 7%). Also, the overall percentage of Métis students who attempted suicide in the past year was higher than among non-Métis youth. However, youth reported a more positive health picture if they had a supportive adult in their life.

The percentage of Métis students who slept for eight or more hours on the night before completing the survey decreased from 49% in 2013 to 44%. Also, fewer than 4 in 10 students (38%) reported going offline after their expected bedtime (e.g., turning off their phone or putting it in silent mode).

In the past year, 27% of Métis youth had missed out on mental health services which they felt they needed (vs. 18% of non-Métis youth).

In the past month, 32% of Métis youth had vaped with nicotine and 28% had vaped without nicotine. Métis youth were more likely than non-Métis youth to have vaped.

Similar to five years earlier, 62% of Métis youth had tried alcohol and 42% had tried marijuana. Youth in 2018 were more likely than their peers ten years earlier to wait until they were at least 15 years old to first use either of these substances.

Among students who drank alcohol on the Saturday before taking the survey, 59% engaged in binge drinking, which was similar to non-Métis youth and a decrease from 79% in 2013.

There was an increase in the percentage of females who experienced sexual abuse (from 23% in 2013 to 32%), while rates for males remained comparable (6%).

Two thirds (67%) of Métis students felt they had an adult inside their family they could talk to if they had a serious problem. These youth were less likely than those who did not have this support to have attempted suicide (2% vs. 20%) or self-harmed (17% vs. 46%) in the past year.

Métis students were more likely than those five years earlier to report that their teachers cared about them (62% vs. 57% in 2013). Métis youth who felt part of their school and felt safe at school were more likely to plan to pursue post-secondary education and to report positive mental health.

There was an increase in the percentage of Métis youth who felt there was an adult in their community who really cared about them, and Métis youth were more likely than non-Métis youth to have such an adult in their community (69% vs. 64%).

The percentage of youth who felt listened to and valued in the activities they were involved in increased (from 38% in 2013 to 44%). Métis youth who experienced this type of meaningful engagement in their activities were more likely to report positive mental health, to feel an adult in their community cared about them, and to feel connected to their community.

Webinar presentations:

McCreary Centre Society will be hosting webinars presenting the findings from the report.

Webinar presentation schedule:

- Monday, February 3rd at 12pm and 2pm
- Thursday, February 6th at 2pm
- Friday, February 7th at 9am
- Wednesday, February 12th at 12pm
- Thursday, February 13th at 10am and 2pm

Webinar details:

- Join from your computer, tablet or smartphone: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/809072269>
- Join via phone: 1-888-299-1889 (toll free) or 1-647-497-9373. Access code: 809-072-269