



May 2026

## **Position Statement: Indigenous Leadership in Defining Merit and Excellence in Medical School Admissions**

---

The National Circle for Indigenous Medical Education (NCIME) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to advancing Indigenous medical education. The NCIME works with leading subject matter experts, Indigenous physicians, Canadian medical schools, medical organizations and other institutions to enact systemic changes in healthcare for the betterment of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples. As leaders in this field, we urge Canadian medical schools to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are meaningfully involved in defining merit and excellence in medical school admissions processes.

Merit cannot be meaningfully defined and evaluated without acknowledging the historic and ongoing impacts of colonization, nor without recognizing the lived experience, expertise, and relationality that Indigenous Peoples bring to the medical profession. The NCIME is concerned with the precedent set forth by provincial governments to create umbrella legislation regarding the definition of merit that supersedes consultation with subject-matter experts and is in violation of the legislative rights of Indigenous peoples in Canada, outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Admissions processes that incorporate holistic reviews, principles of anti-racism and Indigenous excellence are essential to fulfilling Canada's commitments to upholding Indigenous Rights, reconciliation, eliminating health inequities, increasing Indigenous representation in health human resourcing, and improving health outcomes for all Canadians. It is thus imperative that Canadian Schools of Medicine embrace the participation of Indigenous Leadership and Indigenous Subject Matter Experts as decision makers in defining and assessing merit in their admission pathways. This is critical to fulfilling commitments made in the 2019 Joint Commitment to Action on Indigenous Health endorsed by the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.

---

For more information, media may contact:  
National Circle for Indigenous Medical Education  
Colin Jackson  
Communications and Liaison Lead  
204-223-4660  
cjackson@ncime.ca

The NCIME is funded by Health Canada's Health Care Policies and Strategic Fund and the Canadian Medical Association. Le CNFMSA est financé par le Fonds stratégique et politique en matière de soins de santé de Santé Canada et l'Association médicale canadienne.