



NEWS RELEASE

MHCC SUPPORTS PRIME MINISTER'S APOLOGY TO VICTIMS OF INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

CALGARY, AB June 12, 2008 – The Honourable Michael Kirby, Chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, commends Prime Minister Stephen Harper for his historic apology to the thousands of former students of Indian Residential Schools. Kirby said the Prime Minister was speaking on behalf of all Canadians when he rose in the House of Commons yesterday and issued the statement of apology.

“I am hopeful this landmark apology will prove to be a positive step towards healing the mental health of Aboriginal peoples across the country”, said Kirby. “The residential school system is a sad part of our nation’s history. The apology tells Aboriginal peoples that Canadians recognize this policy of assimilation caused deep suffering, including mental abuse. I am hopeful the Prime Minister’s statement will help with the recovery process.”

The MHCC is a non-profit organization created to focus national attention on mental health issues. It is funded by the federal government but operates at arm’s length from all levels of government. The Commission’s objective is to enhance the health and social outcomes for Canadians living with mental health problems and illnesses.

The Commission was announced by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in response to one of the recommendations in the report by the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, entitled “Out of the Shadows at Last”. Former Senator Michael Kirby was Chair of the Senate Committee at the time the report was released.

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