

**For Immediate Release**

**News Release**

**Métis Nation of Ontario signs landmark mental health agreement  
with Providence Care and Queens University**

OTTAWA (July 11, 2007) --- Today the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), Kingston-based Providence Care and Queen's University signed an agreement that will dramatically expand the MNO's limited mental health resources, training and research capacity across the province.

MNO President Tony Belcourt stated "The health and well-being of our citizens has always been, and continues to be a priority for the MNO. By working in conjunction with Queens University and Providence Care we are finally going to begin to address the lack of adequate mental health services currently available to our people."

Under the agreement, Providence Care will become the mental health training resource, providing training and certification for all MNO health care providers, including annual certification in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills and Non Violent Crisis Intervention training. Additional access to clinical training and mental health expertise will be provided via videoconference and on-line education. To increase educational capacity, the MNO and Providence Care will use an internet portal to provide Métis caregivers access to educational materials and clinical education 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"This relationship started some 18 months ago, when we began to work together to identify the educational needs of the Métis Nation mental health care provider," said Allen Prowse, Vice President of Providence Care Mental Health Services. "We are proud to sign an agreement today that formalizes our commitment to help meet the educational and mental health care needs of the Métis people of Ontario."

Researchers at the Centre for Health Services and Policy Research at Queen's University's in Kingston will work with Providence Care and the MNO to conduct a survey of mental health conditions among the Métis people. Data from the survey will be used to help plan, access and provide the appropriate resources to meet the identified needs.

"The decision to partner with Providence Care and Queen's University was based on their willingness to embrace and learn about the Métis culture. Providence Care and the MNO have agreed to work together to ensure all training, services and materials are culturally appropriate and sensitive to the needs of the citizens of the MNO" added President Belcourt.

France Picotte, Health Portfolio holder and Vice-Chair of the MNO added "This agreement is groundbreaking as it will finally allow the MNO to gather very important mental health data which currently does not exist for the Métis of Ontario as well as enhance the capacity of our health care workers across the province."

The Métis are a distinct Aboriginal people with a unique culture, language and heritage, and with an ancestral Homeland that centres around Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, parts of the Northwest Territories, as well as the northwestern United States. The Métis played an instrumental role in the shaping of Canada, and work tirelessly to share their culture, music, traditions and knowledge of the environment with their fellow Canadians. Today, the Métis live, work, raise their families and pay taxes in communities all across Canada.

**For further information see backgrounder or contact:**

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