

IMPACT

Investing in **M**atriarchal **P**ower, **A**ccess, **C**are & **T**raditional Wellness

ALIGNING OUR WORK WITH LEGISLATIVE OBLIGATIONS AND PROVINCIAL COMMITMENTS



The Indigenous Equity Lab

The Indigenous Equity Lab is situated on the unceded and traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam), Sḵw̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations. We are grateful to the Coast Salish Peoples and support their inherent rights to these lands.



The **Indigenous Equity Lab**, led by Dr. Brittany Bingham (shíshálh Nation), is an Indigenous-led research collective dedicated to advancing Indigenous health equity. Its mission is to support Indigenous women's and gender equity, amplify Indigenous voices in health, transform health systems, and address the impacts of climate change. We work to revitalize traditional wellness practices, strengthen Indigenous health sovereignty, and build capacity through mentorship and Indigenous-led knowledge production.

"The well-being of Indigenous communities is deeply rooted in the health of their women leaders and matriarchs. Prioritizing the voices and wisdom of Indigenous women in menopause research is vital for guiding future research directions and priorities, allowing us to learn from their invaluable wisdom and experiences. I am committed and excited to conduct this foundational project, which will establish the foundation for this program of research which uplifts and invests in matriarchal strength, knowledge, access, care and traditional wellness through and beyond the menopause journey."

- Dr. Brittany Bingham (shíshálh Nation)

IMPACT focuses on traditional menopausal practices, elevating Indigenous women's voices in menopausal care and creating better healthcare services for Indigenous women in menopausal years.



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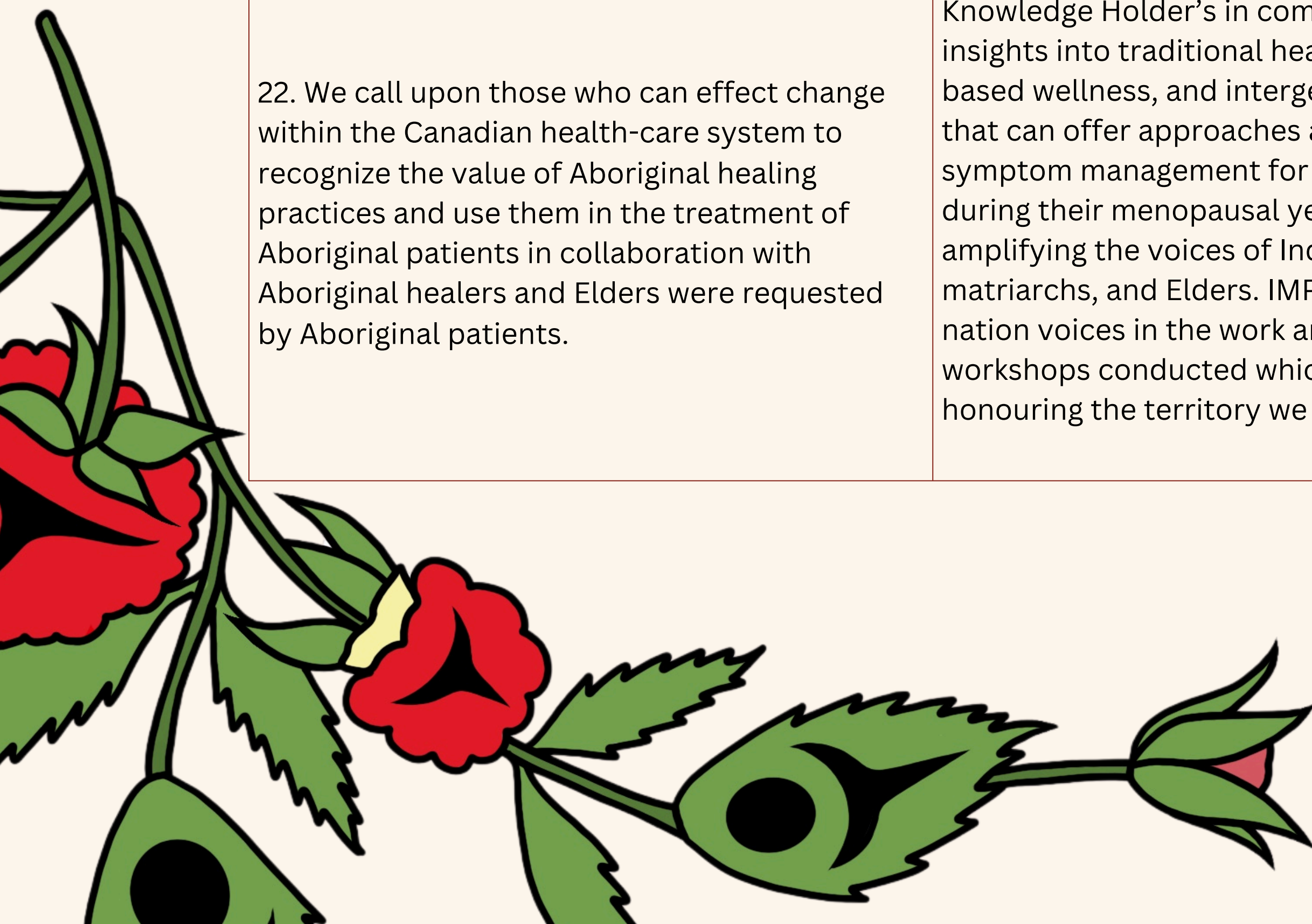
First Nations, Inuit and Métis People have the inherent right to their health, wellness, bodies and self-determination. These rights are affirmed by the legislative obligations: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and in the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (BC Declaration Act)¹⁻². Provincial commitments such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action, In Plain Sight Report, National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples (NIMMIWG2S+) Calls for Justice include essential recommendations and calls to action that are drawn upon from Indigenous Peoples stories and experiences³⁻⁴. These are essential in ensuring the research is being conducted in a way that enhances Indigenous equity and rights.

When engaging in research with Indigenous People it is essential that we uphold and address the calls to action and justice as outlined by legislative obligations including UNDRIP and the BC Declaration Act Action Plan as well as provincial commitments as outlined by Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action, In Plain Sight Report, National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples (NIMMIWG2S+) Calls for Justice. Health researcher, Institutions and authorities have the responsibility to think critically on how their work can support and uphold these calls to action and justice¹⁻⁵. IMPACT aims to affirm the inherent rights that Indigenous women+ by elevating their voices and lived experiences and aligning our work with these calls to action and justice. Allowing the work to be guided by and accountable to Indigenous People.



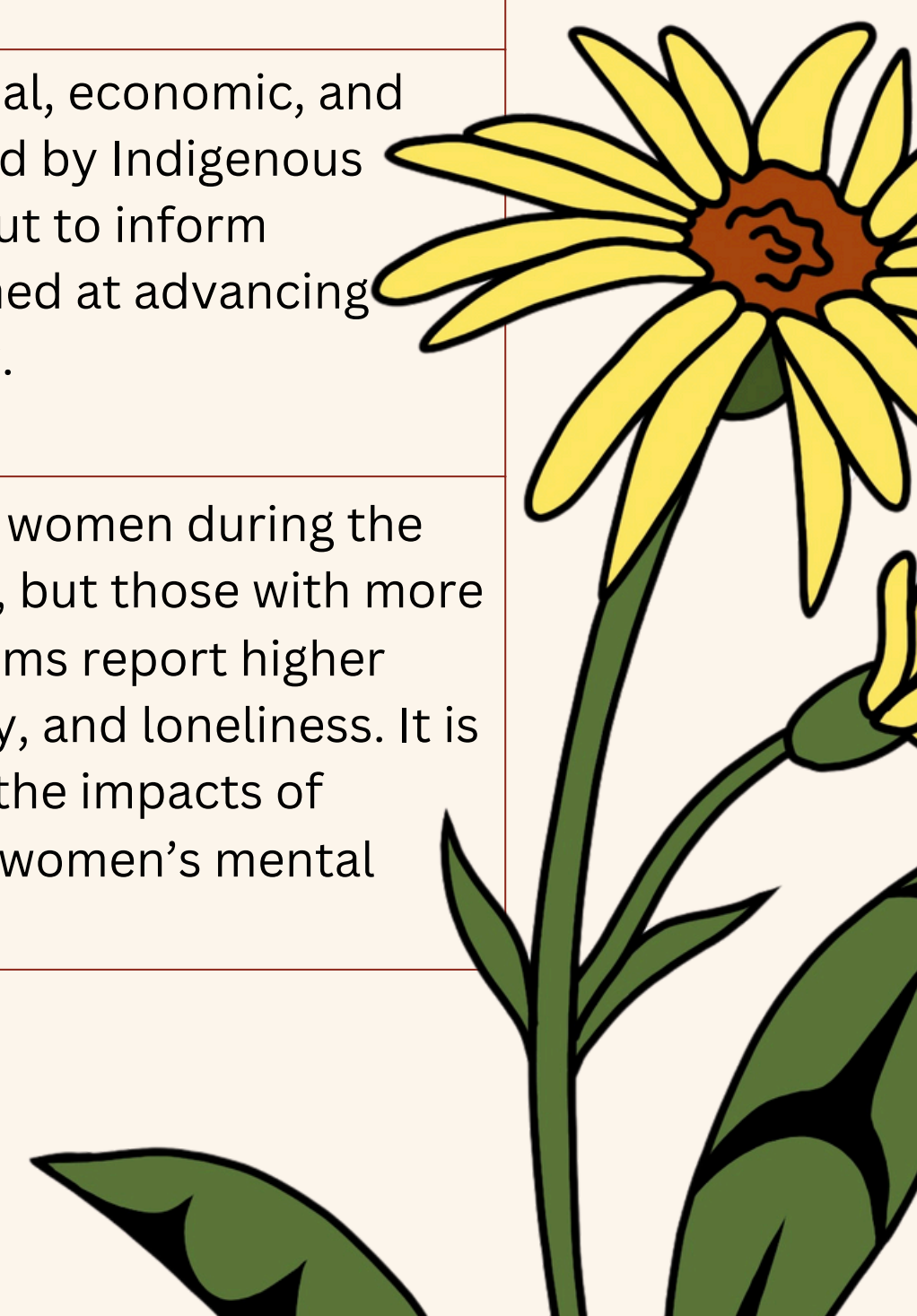
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA³

Call to Action and Justice	IMPACT
<p>19. We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.</p>	<p>IMPACT will enhance the representation of the voices and lived experiences of Indigenous Matriarchs and Knowledge Holders by gathering and documenting traditional menopausal wellness practices. The knowledge shared will be used to identify priorities for sustaining and revitalizing traditional wellness practices and address barriers to care.</p>
<p>20. In order to address the jurisdictional disputes concerning Aboriginal people who do not reside on reserves, we call upon the federal government to recognize, respect, and address the distinct health needs of the Métis, Inuit, and off-reserve Aboriginal peoples.</p>	<p>IMPACT will address the distinct needs of women in their menopausal years who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, each with their own unique lived and living experiences.</p>
<p>22. We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders were requested by Aboriginal patients.</p>	<p>IMPACT will seek input from Matriarchs and Knowledge Holder’s in communities, garnering insights into traditional healing practices, land-based wellness, and intergenerational teachings that can offer approaches and support symptom management for Indigenous women during their menopausal years. This will require amplifying the voices of Indigenous healers, matriarchs, and Elders. IMPACT will centre host nation voices in the work and within the workshops conducted which is integral to honouring the territory we occupy.</p>



IN PLAIN SIGHT: ADDRESSING INDIGENOUS-SPECIFIC RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION IN B.C. HEALTH CARE⁴

Call to Action and Justice	IMPACT
<p>2. That the B.C. government, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous peoples in BC develop appropriate policy foundations and implement legislative changes to require anti-racism and “hard-wire” cultural safety, including an Anti-Racism Act and other critical changes in existing laws, policies, regulations and practices, ensuring that this effort aligns with the UN Declaration as required by DRIPA.</p>	<p>IMPACT will strive to enhance cultural safety for Indigenous women by incorporating Indigenous perspectives and healing methods into menopause research and promoting culturally safe care models that are directly informed by those affected. IMPACT will seek to co-design and implement a BC provincial survey on menopausal priorities and access to care in partnership with the Women’s Health Research Institute and create a Framework for Indigenous women’s wellness during menopause to be implemented into the new Women’s menopause care unit.</p>
<p>10. That design of hospital facilities in B.C. include partnership with local Indigenous peoples and the Nations on whose territories these facilities are located, so that health authorities create culturally appropriate, dedicated physical spaces in health facilities for ceremony and cultural protocol, and visibly include Indigenous artwork, signage and territorial acknowledgement throughout these facilities.</p>	<p>The project will utilize Indigenous perspectives, expressed through the voices of Matriarchs Knowledge Holder’s and Elders, at all stages to better serve Indigenous women during the menopausal years. The project will seek input from the Musqueam Nation, on whose traditional territory the BCCW hospital is located. Additional input from Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh is desired but lies outside the scope of this project.</p>
<p>16. That the B.C. government implement immediate measures to respond to the MMIWG Calls for Justice and the specific experiences and needs of Indigenous women as outlined in this Review.</p>	<p>IMPACT addresses the social, economic, and marginalization issues faced by Indigenous women and seeks their input to inform culturally safe services aimed at advancing women’s health and equity.</p>
<p>17. That the B.C. government and FNHA demonstrate progress on commitments to increase access to culturally safe mental health and wellness and substance use services.</p>	<p>Symptoms experienced by women during the menopausal years are vast, but those with more severe menopause symptoms report higher rates of depression, anxiety, and loneliness. It is integral to further explore the impacts of menopause on Indigenous women’s mental health.</p>



NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS, AND 2SLGBTQQIA+ PEOPLES⁵

Call to Action and Justice	IMPACT
<p>1.6 We call upon all governments to eliminate jurisdictional gaps and neglect that result in the denial of services, or improperly regulated and delivered services, that address the social, economic, political, and cultural marginalization of, and violence against, Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.</p>	<p>IMPACT recognizes the invaluable insights that Indigenous women, Matriarchs, Knowledge Holder’s and Elders possess. By centering these voices in research, it will create culturally safe resources and aim to address gaps affecting health outcomes and accessibility. While menopause research is gaining attention, Indigenous women’s voices are notably absent from this work. The project will invest in the strength and knowledge of Matriarchs.</p>
<p>3.1 We call upon all governments to ensure that the rights to health and wellness of Indigenous Peoples, and specifically of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, are recognized and protected on an equitable basis.</p>	
<p>3.2 We call upon all governments to provide adequate, stable, equitable, and ongoing funding for Indigenous-centred and community-based health and wellness services that are accessible and culturally appropriate and meet the health and wellness needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. The lack of health and wellness services within Indigenous communities continues to force Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people to relocate in order to access care. Governments must ensure that health and wellness services are available and accessible within Indigenous communities and wherever Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people reside.</p>	<p>The project will seek to enhance accessibility to services for all Indigenous women and advance healthcare policy to foster culturally safe care models for Indigenous women. IMPACT will address gaps in women’s health data, ultimately improving healthcare access for women, including those living in rural and remote areas.</p>





Call to Action and Justice

IMPACT

7.1 We call upon all governments and health service providers to recognize that Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, including 2SLGBTQQIA people – are the experts in caring for and healing themselves, and that health and wellness services are most effective when they are designed and delivered by the Indigenous Peoples they are supposed to serve, in a manner consistent with and grounded in the practices, world views, cultures, languages, and values of the diverse Inuit, Métis, and First Nations communities they serve.

The voices of Indigenous women and Matriarchs are largely underrepresented in menopausal research. Therefore, this project seeks to fill this gap and enable Indigenous women’s self-determination in healthcare.

7.2 We call upon all governments and health service providers to ensure that health and wellness services for Indigenous Peoples include supports for healing from all forms of unresolved trauma, including intergenerational, multigenerational, and complex trauma. Health and wellness programs addressing trauma should be Indigenous-led, or in partnership with Indigenous communities, and should not be limited in time or approaches.

Women’s health is often viewed primarily in relation to pregnancy and menstruation as common life stages, but menopause is largely overlooked. Stigma and a lack of knowledge prevent individuals from discussing menopause and seeking assistance, which can leave them feeling unsupported. The stigma surrounding menopause is particularly complicated for Indigenous women, as colonial oppression of Indigenous peoples has led to discomfort in discussing their sexual and reproductive health. IMPACT will aim to create more equitable and culturally safe menopausal services rooted in traditional wellness.

7.4 We call upon all governments and health service providers to provide necessary resources, including funding, to support the revitalization of Indigenous health, wellness, and child and Elder care practices. For healing, this includes teachings that are land-based and about harvesting and the use of Indigenous medicines for both ceremony and health issues. This may also include: matriarchal teachings on midwifery and post- natal care for both woman and child; early childhood health care; palliative care; Elder care and care homes to keep Elders in their home communities as valued Knowledge Keepers; and other measures. Specific programs may include but are not limited to correctional facilities, healing centres, hospitals, and rehabilitation centres.

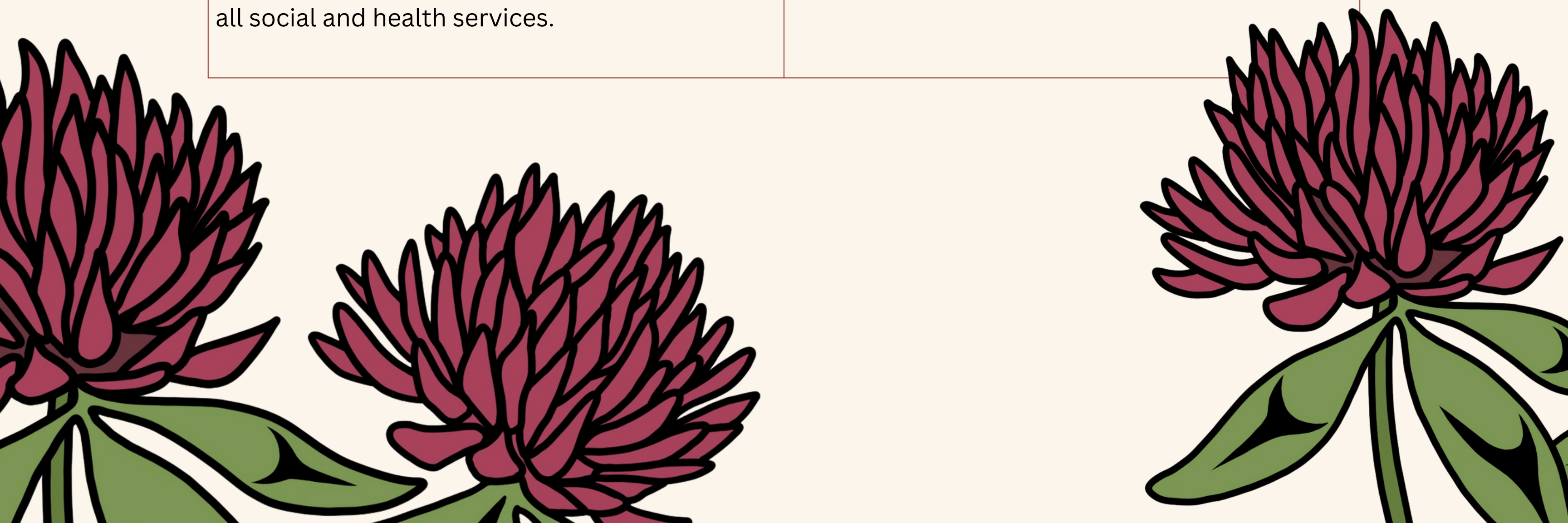
IMPACT will leverage the strengths of Indigenous Matriarchs, eElders, and Knowledge Holders to guide research and policy that honours Indigenous ways of knowing and traditional wellness. By seeking input from key groups of Indigenous women, IMPACT will create self-determined solutions for women in their menopausal years.

15.6 Protect, support, and promote the safety of women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people by acknowledging and respecting the value of every person and every community, as well as the right of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people to generate their own, self-determined solutions.



UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES¹⁻²

Call to Action and Justice	IMPACT
<p>21.1 Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.</p>	<p>By generating evidence on Indigenous menopause experiences, IMPACT will fill gaps in Indigenous menopause research and healthcare services.</p>
<p>21.2 States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.</p>	
<p>23. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions</p>	<p>By incorporating Indigenous perspectives and lived-experiences into menopause research, IMPACT addresses critical gaps in women’s health data and, as a result, enhances access to culturally safe and relevant healthcare.</p>
<p>24.1 Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.</p>	<p>IMPACT will center Indigenous perspectives and honour the importance of traditional holistic health, which includes land-based healing, traditional medicines, and Indigenous understandings of health and wellness.</p>





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On behalf of the **Indigenous Equiy Lab**

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