

## **Title: Acknowledgment of Traditional Indigenous Territories at AS Events**

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### **Background/ Purpose**

- A traditional territory refers to an area of land that Indigenous people and/or their ancestors traditionally occupied or used. Customarily, when entering another's traditional territory, one would seek permission to enter the area. Recognizing Indigenous people as traditional stewards of the land is a critical part of demonstrating respect for the culture and customs of the Indigenous people of Canada. Therefore, an acknowledgement of the traditional territory by the host or a formal welcome by an elder should be made at the beginning of an Aesculapian Society (AS) event.
- The AS recognizes that colonization and forced assimilation of Indigenous people in Canada have had devastating and lasting effects. By acknowledging the land, we are reaching beyond colonization and recognizing its significance to the Indigenous peoples who lived and continue to live upon this territory and whose practices and spirituality are tied to the land. We are also acknowledging the damaging consequences of colonization and the establishment of residential schools and working towards renewing relationships and dialogue with First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

The statements can be updated on yearly basis at the discretion of council.

### **Territorial Statement Full Outline:**

*"To begin, let us acknowledge that Queen's is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory. We are grateful to be able to be live, learn and play on these lands. We thank the Indigenous peoples of this area for their care of this land for thousands of years and we hope to honour and respect them as we have this meeting.*

*To acknowledge this traditional territory is to recognize its longer history, one predating the establishment of the earliest European colonies. It is also to acknowledge this territory's significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived, and continue to live, upon it and whose practices and spiritualities were tied to the land and continue to develop in relationship to the territory and its other inhabitants today. The Kingston Indigenous community continues to reflect the area's Anishinaabek and Haudenosaunee roots. There is also a significant Métis community and there are First people from other Nations across Turtle Island present here today."*

## **Territorial Statement Shorthand Outline for use at smaller events:**

*To begin, let us acknowledge that Queen's is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory. By acknowledging this traditional territory, we recognize the longstanding history of the original people of this land.*

### **Implementation/Logistics**

- The full statement will be read at the AS Annual and Spring General Meetings, Health and Human Rights Conference, HG Kelly Lectureship. The shortened statement can be used at smaller events at the discretion of the organizers.
- This document will not be binding for events organized in partnership with external organizations, or for Interest Group events; however, efforts should be taken to suggest an acknowledgement of traditional Indigenous territories at the outset of the event where possible.
- At the beginning of the meeting or event, the most responsible AS executive member will prepare and read the territorial statement to ensure that Indigenous peoples of the area where the general meeting is held are represented. This responsibility should be added to the relevant portfolios' transition documents. The template included above can be used as a model.
- For some events, we will ask permission from an elder or member of the local Indigenous community to enter and be welcomed to the land where the event is held. This recommendation is not binding to any event, but should be decided at the discretion of the AS executive. We would also ask this Indigenous community member to open the event with a traditional prayer, song or welcome message. To show our gratitude and respect to the Indigenous community for taking time to open the meeting, it is customary that a gift shall be given. The funding for this gift will come from the given event's existing budget line.

### **Authorship and Contributions**

- The document was written by Julia Lew (VP External Sr), Thomas Dymond (Local Officer of Indigenous Health), and Cale Templeton (AS President) in consultation with past and current Indigenous Health Interest Group and members of the Indigenous Community.
- The document was drafted based on the Ontario Medical Student Association's Position Statement on Acknowledgement of Traditional Indigenous Territories.