

To Whom It May Concern at Health Canada,

I am a fourth-year, metis nursing student at the University of Alberta. Caring for people is my passion and I am so grateful to have the opportunity pursue an education in a career that I love. I am especially passionate about using my personal experience and knowledge to address health disparities experienced by indigenous people. Indigenous people - especially women, experience significant disparities regarding their health. The life expectancy for Indigenous peoples is significantly shorter than non-indigenous peoples. This statistic is unacceptable. Once I graduate, I hope to advocate for changes in policies that take these health disparities into account, so we can achieve a more effective health care system and provide more culturally sensitive care for Indigenous peoples. I also enjoy giving back to the community and practicing care through my involvement in a variety of volunteer programs, such as the Bent Arrow Societies Coyote kids program, Make-A-Wish, and by being a senior ambassador program for the University of Alberta.

I find it difficult to express my gratitude for this scholarship. In previous years of my degree, I have had to work as a waitress on the weekends to afford tuition and my monthly expenses. Although I work full time hours over summer, it is not enough to cover all my expenses such as tuition, textbooks, scrubs, and equipment and other bills such as gas, car insurance, groceries and many more. Having to work on weekends while being in school Monday to Friday put a significant strain on my mental health and negatively impacted my academic performance, as I didn't have sufficient time to study or work on assignments. On more than one occasion, I was close to failing a class as I did not have the time required to work on my school work. Thanks to generosity of this scholarship, I will not have to work during the academic year and I will be able to focus my energy on making the most out of my education. I will also be able to invest more time and energy into my volunteer positions, which will allow me to develop skills that will aid me in my future career as a nurse, such as leadership and time management.

In the future, I will use my education to continue to give back to the community. It has been a great blessing to go to school. Generous donors and Indspire make it financially possible for me to pursue an education, and for that I am eternally grateful. When I graduate, I will use my knowledge of the health disparities experienced by indigenous peoples and leadership abilities to advocate for changes in policies and programs that will allow more culturally sensitive care. When I graduate, I will donate to programs such as Indspire so in the future, metis people can have the same opportunity I did to pursue their ambitions and aren't restricted by any sort of financial hardship.

Thank you again for your generous support,

*Mariah Mazer*

*University of Alberta, Fourth Year BScN*