



Peter Henderson Bryce, M.D.

Award for Health Professionals

Advocating for the Health and Well-Being
of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Children and Youth

Peter Hender Bryce, Medical Doctor (M.D.), 1853-1932

Who Was Peter Henderson Bryce?

Peter Henderson Bryce was born in Mount Pleasant Ontario in 1853 and graduated from the University of Toronto in 1876 when Canada was only nine years old. He went on to receive a medical degree and become an expert on tuberculosis. He served as President of the American Health Association, founder of the Canadian Public Health Association and Ontario's first Secretary of Health (1882–1904) before accepting a post as Chief Medical Officer at the Indian Department in 1904.

Bryce wrote many articles on public health and served as founder and member of numerous professional organizations. In 1907, Bryce inspected 35 residential schools in three prairie Provinces. He found that 24 percent of the children in these residential schools had died of preventable diseases like tuberculosis. At File Hills Residential School, over 75 percent of the children had died. Bryce said, “medical science knows just what to do” to stop the children from dying and he sent many recommendations to the government to improve the health conditions in the schools. The Government of Canada ignored his calls for action and the children continued to die, prompting Bryce to continue to speak out by publishing articles in the *Ottawa Citizen* newspaper, *Saturday Night Magazine* and a book called *The Story of a National Crime: An appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada*. Bryce also engaged his colleagues to join him in pressuring the government including S.H. Blake, a leading human rights lawyer of the time, who wrote that “if Canada fails to obviate the preventable causes of death [to the children in residential schools] it brings itself into unpleasant nearness to manslaughter.” Bryce continued his advocacy until he died in 1932.

The Government of Canada failed to make the changes Bryce recommended, pushed him out of government and tried to undermine his arguments. Despite the personal risk and sacrifices, Bryce never gave up. He was a man of moral courage who acted on his values and responsibilities as a health professional to support First Nations children at a time when many others were silent. His efforts to save the lives of children in the residential schools was acknowledged by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in its final report.



**Caring
Society**

First Nations Child & Family
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Other Ways P.H. Bryce Made a Difference

Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce was very active in his community. Many of the organizations he founded or participated in continue to play an active role in supporting health and wellness today. For example, Bryce served in the following capacities:

- The Canadian Public Health Association (founder)
- American Public Health Association (served as president and honorary fellow)
- The American Journal of Public Health (contributor)
- Canadian Medical Association, Public Health Section (chairman)
- Canadian Historical Association (founder)
- Ontario Department of Health (founder)
- Upper Canada College (alumni)
- University of Toronto (alumni)
- Arts and Letters Club of Ottawa (served as president)

The University of Toronto and Dr. Michael Dan recognized Dr. Bryce's courageous and principled commitment to public health in 2015 by opening the Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health.

The Award

This award recognizes health professionals who courageously advocate for the safety, health or well-being of Inuit, Métis and First Nations children and youth. Although the individual might be working to help one child or one community, it is important to show how these efforts could help other First Nations, Métis and Inuit children.

The award committee recognizes that a wide range of people work for the holistic health of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and thus we welcome nominations of traditional healers, community health advocates, physicians, dental and optical health professionals, mental health professionals, nurses, occupational/physical therapists, etc.

In keeping with Dr. Bryce's example, nominations must specifically point out how the nominee overcame personal and professional challenges and risks to stand up for the rights of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children as described in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child (www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchildfriendlylanguage.pdf).

Proposed Benefit of the Award

Dr. Bryce stood up for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children even when it was a hard thing to do because other people criticized him. He knew what was right and, in a peaceful and respectful way, kept standing with First Nations children. We want others to follow his example by having the courage to stand up for the right thing and help this

generation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and youth have the same chance to succeed as other children and youth in Canada.

Award Criteria

- The nominee must be currently engaged as a health professional.
- The nominee is actively standing up for the health and well-being of Métis, Inuit or First Nations children and youth in Canada in peaceful and respectful ways.
- Nomination shows how the efforts can help First Nations, Métis and Inuit children beyond the specific child/youth or group the award nominee is working with.
- The nominee has overcome personal or professional challenges and risks to stand up for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and youth.
- The nominee inspires others to learn, care and take action to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and youth.
- The nominee's work supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Nomination Process

The Peter Henderson Bryce Award nomination form must be completed along with a cover letter telling us why the nominee should get this award and two letters of support for the nomination. You are also welcome to include supporting materials (written work, videos, pictures, etc.) that demonstrate the candidate's work relevant to the award criteria.

The complete nomination package (nomination form, cover letter and letters of support and supporting materials relevant to the nomination) must be received by **11:45 pm EST on June 30, 2024**. If sending by mail, please send the complete nomination package, including letters of support to:

Peter Henderson Bryce Award Committee,
c/o First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada
Suite 202, 350 Sparks Street, Ottawa, ON K1R 7S8

For more information please contact info@fncaringsociety.com

Please note that incomplete nomination packages will not be considered.



**First Nations Child &
Family Caring Society**