



## 2026 National First Nations Substance Use Summit

### Livestream Schedule

The National First Nations Substance Use Summit will bring together leaders, Knowledge Keepers, wellness workers, youth, researchers, and community partners from across Turtle Island to share knowledge, strengthen relationships, and advance community-driven, culture-based approaches to substance use and mental wellness.

The in-person gathering has reached full capacity, but we're pleased to offer livestream access to select plenary sessions so more people can join us in learning and reflection. Below, you'll find the schedule of sessions that will be streamed live throughout the Summit.

We invite you to tune in, follow the conversations, and take part in this important national dialogue from wherever you are. No sign up required!

**Join us at the following link: [First Nations Substance Use Summit](https://thunderbirdpf-org.zoom.us/j/81630322873) (<https://thunderbirdpf-org.zoom.us/j/81630322873> - Webinar ID: 816 3032 2873)**

*Note: Zoom translated captions will enable participants to have the event automatically translated in real-time to captions in French, if needed.*

**Wednesday, February 25, 2026 (Day 1)**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Description</i>
8:30AM ET	9:30AM ET	<b>Opening Ceremony</b> The Summit will open in a good way with <b>Eagle River Singers drum group</b> , a prayer by <b>Elder Kistabish</b> , and territory acknowledgement, grounding us in respect, gratitude, and connection. <b>Pam Charlong</b> (Chair of Youth Substance Addiction Committee & A/President of Thunderbird Partnership Foundation) and <b>Jennifer Novak</b> (Director General, Mental Wellness & Health Promotion, ISC) will provide some opening remarks. This ceremony will set the tone for the gathering; honouring culture, community, and our shared commitment to healing and wellness.
9:30AM ET	10:15AM ET	<b>Keynote Speakers: Rising Through Resilience: A Journey from Homelessness and Addiction to Healing and Home</b> Join us for an inspiring keynote presentation featuring <b>Claudemier and Deidra Bighetty</b> as they share their powerful journey of transformation – from experiencing homelessness and addiction to rebuilding their lives with resilience, strength, and community support. Their story highlights the interconnectedness of wellbeing, housing stability, relationships, and hope, and offers deep insight into what truly enables healing beyond crisis.  Through honest reflection and lived experience, this presentation will explore how courage, connection, and cultural grounding can be pathways toward wellness and belonging. Their story underscores the importance of hope, meaning, belonging and purpose in creating pathways to wellness.
10:15AM ET	10:45AM ET	Break
10:45AM ET	12:00PM ET	<b>Panel: Launching Renewed HOS Framework</b> First introduced in 2011, Honouring Our Strengths marked a turning point for First Nations-led approaches to substance use and wellness, creating a shared vision for a culturally grounded continuum of care. Since then, the landscape of substance use, trauma, and community wellness has shifted.  This session marks the launch of the renewed Honouring Our Strengths Framework, updated to reflect today's realities and reaffirm the commitment to culture as foundation, spirit-centred care, and First Nations self-determination in wellness.  A panel of national leaders, including <b>Dr. Chris Mushsquash, Dr. Esther Tailfeathers, as well as Elders Reg and Rosemary Crowshoe</b> , will share reflections on the journey since the original framework, the lessons learned from more than a decade of community-led innovation, and how this updated framework strengthens and expands supports for the workforce at a time of rapid change.

5:30 PM ET	7:30 PM ET	<p><b>Awards Banquet:</b> Celebrating 50 Years of NNADAP</p> <p>Join us for an evening of celebration honouring 50 years of the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP), a milestone in community-led healing, prevention, and wellness. Since the 1970s, NNADAP has empowered First Nations and Inuit communities to lead their own programs and shape holistic approaches to substance use and recovery.</p> <p>This special banquet will recognize leaders, service providers, and community members whose dedication continues to strengthen wellness across the country. Guests will enjoy a comedy performance by <b>Deadly Aunties</b>, a shared meal, and the presentation of awards honouring excellence and cultural leadership in substance use and mental wellness.</p> <p>An evening to reconnect, reflect, and celebrate the generations of people who have walked together on the path of healing.</p>
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### Thursday, February 26, 2026 (Day 2)

Time	Event	Description
9:00AM ET	9:50AM ET	<p><b>Panel:</b> "Ways of the Heart" Youth Perspectives and Priorities on Mental Health and Substance Use</p> <p>This panel will bring together First Nations youth to share their experiences, insights, and priorities related to mental health and substance use. Youth will speak to the barriers and stigma they face when seeking support, and the ways family, peers, culture, and community connection contribute to healing and resilience.</p> <p>The session will also highlight the importance of youth leadership in shaping future approaches to prevention, harm reduction, and wellness programming. Grounded in lived experience and hope, this panel creates space for youth voices to guide how communities and systems can better support the next generation.</p>
9:50AM ET	10:15AM ET	<p><b>Mentimeter:</b> Planning the 10th Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Gathering</p> <p>For over 30 years, the Healing Our Spirit Worldwide (HOSW) gatherings have brought together Indigenous leaders, youth, and wellness practitioners from around the world. As we prepare for the 10th Gathering, this interactive Mentimeter session invites participants to help shape its vision and focus. Together, we'll use real-time input to explore themes, priorities, and opportunities for cultural programming, youth engagement, and policy dialogue — co-creating the foundation for a truly Indigenous-led global event.</p>
4:15PM ET	4:30PM ET	<p><b>Closing Ceremony</b></p> <p>The Summit will close in a good way with a drum group and prayer, offering space to reflect, give thanks, and carry the learnings forward. Together, we will wrap up the gathering grounded in connection, purpose, and responsibility to continue this work in our communities.</p>