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BRIDGES HEALTH SERVICES AND THE NATIONAL CIRCLE FOR INDIGENOUS AGRICULTURE AND FOOD COLLABORATE TO ENHANCE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

[Regina, SK - September 30, 2024] - The NCI AF is pleased to announce a groundbreaking collaboration with Bridges Health Services aimed at advancing Indigenous agriculture and food systems through integrated mental health support. This partnership will utilize Bridges Health Services' innovative platform, Avail, to foster mental well-being and community resilience.

Bridges Health Services provides comprehensive mental health support, and their Avail platform offers a range of resources, including counseling services, mental wellness tools, and community support. By integrating these services into the framework of Indigenous Agriculture and Food Systems, NCI AF and Bridges Health Services aim to address the mental health challenges that can arise within these communities, ensuring mental well-being is prioritized alongside agricultural development.

The Avail platform will serve as a critical resource for Indigenous farmers, food producers, and community members, offering them access to the support they need to thrive both mentally and in their agricultural endeavors. By promoting integrated support, NCI AF and Bridges Health Services hope to create a holistic approach to community well-being while honouring Indigenous traditions and practices.

This collaboration is part of a broader commitment to improving the well-being of Indigenous peoples through innovative solutions that respect and elevate traditional knowledge and practices. Together, NCI AF and Bridges Health Services are paving the way for a more integrated and supportive approach to Indigenous agriculture and mental health.

President and CEO Kallie Wood said, "The NCI AF is thrilled to announce this revolutionary partnership with Bridges Health Services - it serves as recognition of the critical link between mental health and agricultural success within Indigenous communities. As we embark on this journey, we acknowledge true reconciliation involves not only honouring the past but actively supporting the well-being of our communities. By utilizing Bridges Health Service's innovative platform, Avail, we are not only addressing the mental health challenges faced by our farmers and food producers, but also reinforcing our commitment to holistic community well-being."



**National Circle for Indigenous
Agriculture and Food**

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She continued, “This collaboration between two passionate organizations embodies our dedication to uplifting Indigenous traditions and practices, ensuring as we grow our agriculture, we also nurture the mental resilience that sustains our communities. Together, we are nourishing and empowering a brighter, healthier future for all.”

“At Bridges Health, we are deeply honored to join forces with the National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food in this meaningful partnership,” shared Garry Derenoski, President and CEO of Bridges Health. “Through the integration of our Avail platform, we aim to provide essential mental health support to Indigenous farmers, food producers, and their communities. By blending our innovative mental wellness tools with the rich traditions of Indigenous agriculture, we are committed to fostering not only agricultural success but also the mental resilience that sustains these vital communities. Together, we are championing a holistic approach to well-being, rooted in respect, collaboration, and a shared vision for a brighter, healthier future.”

For more information about this collaboration and upcoming initiatives, please contact:

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