

April 26, 2021



**BRITISH COLUMBIA
ASSEMBLY OF
FIRST NATIONS**

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First Nations Health Council
C/o Charlene Belleau, Chair
Via email:
eaglestar1952@gmail.com

Richard Jock, CEO
First Nations Health Authority
Via email: Richard.jock@fnha.ca

Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister
Ministry of Health
Via email:
<mailto:Hlth.minister@gov.bc.ca>

Colleen Erickson, Chair
First Nations Health Authority
Via email:
colleen.erickson@fnha.ca

RE: First Nations Health Governance Structure Renewal

Dear Minister Dix, Charlene Belleau, Colleen Erickson and Richard Jock:

We are writing with to advance a First Nations health governance structure renewal, as directed through resolutions by our membership (attached).

Indigenous Nations have an undeniable sovereign responsibility and mandate to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of their members. In 2019, there was a change in leadership resulting in a shift in how the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) operates that has been to the detriment of First Nations communities, particularly when it comes to honouring First Nations sovereignty and governance, the provision of services, and management of the COVID pandemic response. First Nations communities have found an increase in decisions being made by FNHA and health systems organizations without the involvement of, or input from, the communities.

We note that the recent *In Plain Sight* report into Indigenous-specific racism in BC's healthcare system described a set of issues in Finding #10 related to the need for the First Nations Health Plans and structures to be renewed and strengthened, and made Recommendation #6 calling for an engagement process with BC First Nations to establish expectations, the concept of legislation, and changes to the First Nations health governance structure to align with the standards of the UN Declaration and utilize the tools available under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

We call for a comprehensive engagement and decision-making process among the Chiefs to review the First Nations health governance structure's mandate and performance and alignment with the 7 directives, and make decisions regarding necessary structural changes and potential legislation in light of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. Further, we call for this engagement and decision-making process to be immediately initiated, and for a renewed mandate and structure to be agreed upon by First Nations throughout BC including co-developing legislation as described in section 9.1 of the Tripartite Health Framework Agreement prior to renewal of the First Nations Health Authority's (FNHA) Canada Funding Agreement.

Importantly, this engagement and decision-making process must include all First Nations in B.C., and be developed and overseen by an arms-length group from the FNHA, including but not limited to a sub-set of representatives of the First Nations Health Council and the First Nations Leadership Council organizations, and other Chiefs and leaders identified through an open process who will communicate with all First Nations in B.C. in a public and transparent way.

There are clear concerns and priorities that First Nation communities have regarding their involvement in the planning and delivery of health services to their membership, as well as the concerns Nations have about the disconnect between them and the FNHA that is adversely impacting the delivery and quality of health services in their communities. It is for this reason, that we are calling for your immediate response and action.

Sincerely,

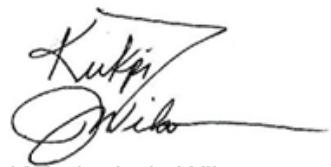
On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip



Chief Don Tom



Kukpi7 Judy Wilson

On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:



Regional Chief Terry Teegee

CC: First Nations in BC
First Nations Summit
First Nations Health Directors Association