



FNHA, FNHC, FNHDA Issue Statement Supporting Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond's Investigation into Systemic Racism

July 9, 2020

Coast Salish Territory – The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), the First Nations Health Council (FNHC) and the First Nations Health Directors Association (FNHDA) welcome the launch of Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond's investigation into systemic racism in BC's health system.

"We welcome this effort to shine light on the systemic racism that still exists in our province and encourage BC Indigenous patients and health workers within the system to trust this process and come forward to tell their truth about racism," said Charlene Belleau, Chair of the First Nations Health Council.

Turpel-Lafond, a former judge and longtime children's advocate in BC will produce a report on racism in the BC health system following allegations that health-care staff in emergency rooms were playing a "game" to guess the blood-alcohol level of Indigenous patients.

"Mary Ellen is doing very important work that will have great impact on the future health and wellbeing of First Nations in B.C. and across Canada. FNHA is extremely pleased to support this work," said M. Colleen Erickson, Chair of the First Nations Health Authority Board of Directors.

"The FNHA looks forward to the outcomes of the review as a way to accelerate the progress on cultural safety for First Nations of BC," said Richard Jock, FNHA's Interim Chief Executive Officer. "It is important people participate in the survey as a way to provide their experiences. FNHA will look to provide appropriate ways to support participants who may be triggered by the final report's disclosures."

"The First Nations Health Directors Association (FNHDA) encourages all Health Directors to come forward to share their experiences to encourage First Nation community members to share any incidents that need improvement within the healthcare system. It is only through a clear identification of incidents that we can strengthen the health care system to ensure only positive experiences and outcomes for First Nations people," said Keith Marshall, President of the First Nations Health Directors Association.

The FNHA, the FNHDA and the FNHC have been aware of incidents of mistreatment of First Nations people in the health system and have worked hard to embed cultural safety and humility into health care delivery by working with our health partners to raise awareness and train staff. It is clear, however, that much work is still to be done.

Cultural safety and humility are essential dimensions of quality and safety and only a sustained and genuine commitment to action from all leadership paired with concrete actions will lead to the change needed.

Investigation Seeks Feedback Into Indigenous-Specific Racism in BC Health Care

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond's investigation into systemic racism in BC's health system includes a call for Indigenous people to describe their experiences. This can be done through a [survey](#), email ([Addressing Racism@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Addressing_Racism@gov.bc.ca)) or phone (1-888-600-3078) until July 30.

More information about the investigation can be found on the [investigation website](#).

Learn more:

To find out more about First Nations Health Authority, visit: <http://www.fnha.ca/>

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