

BC First Nations Health Governance Leadership Supports Investigation into Quebec Hospital's Racist Treatment of Joyce Echaquan

October 2, 2020 | Coast Salish Territory – The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), the First Nations Health Council (FNHC) and the First Nations Health Directors Association (FNHDA) in a joint meeting today unanimously expressed solidarity with the community and family of Joyce Echaquan, whose death at a Quebec hospital is now the subject of two investigations into the role of anti-Indigenous and racist treatment in her death. These allegations again reveal the urgent necessity of making systemic change in Canada to ensure equitable treatment and access to care for Indigenous peoples. The FNHA, FNHC and FNHDA are committed to zero tolerance of racism in health care.

Addressing racism and achieving health care equity is a shared goal for the FNHA, FNHC and FNHDA, partners in the made-in-BC health governance structure for First Nations – supported through meaningful actions to implement cultural safety and humility and lateral kindness with our health partners.

Canada's colonial history, including Indian hospitals that harmed Indigenous children and adults with non-consensual medical interventions, continues to haunt Indigenous people today. Recent allegations of anti-Indigenous racism in BC prompted creation of the independent Anti Racism Investigation by the BC Minister of Health. The Investigation's existence – coupled with the investigations into this Quebec incident – remind us all that systemic racism is too common an experience for Indigenous peoples across Canada.

Eradicating systemic racism requires every sector of society to build awareness and actively address instances of institutional racism. The health and safety of First Nations people is critical. We encourage Indigenous patients and health workers to tell their truth about racism so together we can create a more equitable health care system with zero tolerance of discrimination.

About the BC First Nations Health Governance Structure: The First Nations health structure belongs to First Nations in BC. It consists of political representation, leadership, and advocacy through the regionally-appointed 15-member FNHC; technical advice and capacity development on behalf of First Nations community Health Directors and Health Managers through the FNHDA; and health service delivery and associated partnership and leadership functions through the FNHA (including the services formerly delivered in BC by Health Canada's First Nations Inuit Health Branch Pacific Region). The FNHA, FNHC, and FNHDA receive direction from community leadership and Nations throughout the five regions of the province through community engagement sessions. To learn more about the FNHA please visit <https://www.fnha.ca/>