

Victoria Demonstration Calls Attention to Latest Incident of Alleged Anti-Indigenous Racism in BC

Peaceful gathering held as BC's Addressing Racism Investigation Underway

July 21, 2020 | Indigenous leaders and community members held a peaceful protest today at Victoria's Royal Jubilee Hospital in support of an Indigenous man from T'Sou-ke Nation whose experience in accessing care has resulted in inadequate care and alleged racism. The young man is a member Canadian Armed Forces, and a member of the T'sou-ke First Nation.

Canada's colonial history, including residential school and Indian hospitals that harmed Indigenous children and adults with non-consensual medical interventions, continues to haunt us today. Recent allegations of anti-Indigenous racism prompted creation of the Addressing Racism Investigation by the BC Minister of Health in mid-June. The investigation's existence – coupled with today's demonstration about another incident – remind us all that systemic racism is an all too common experience for Indigenous people in BC.

Addressing Racism Investigation. On June 19, BC's Minister of Health appointed Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond to lead an independent investigation into allegations of Indigenous-specific discrimination in the province's health care system. Recent examples of Indigenous people being refused respectful or timely medical care remind us that this investigation matters. Addressing racism and achieving health care equity is a shared goal for the First Nations Health Council and the First Nations Health Authority. In addition, we are working with our health authority partners to address this across BC.

Indigenous People Urged to Share Their Story. All Indigenous individuals to complete the survey of their experiences within the BC health care system. People can complete the survey [online](#) or call and leave a detailed message for the investigation team at 1-888-600-3078 or via email at addressing_racism@gov.bc.ca.

QUOTES

M. Colleen Erickson, Chair of the First Nations Health Authority Board of Directors

"The latest incident is a further call to eradicate racism from our health system. We urge everyone to share their story through the online survey addressing racism. Individuals can also leave a detailed message for the investigation team at 1-888-600-3078."

Charlene Belleau, Chair, First Nations Health Council

"We welcome this investigation into systemic racism in the BC health care system and encourage Indigenous patients and health workers to trust this process and come forward to tell their truth. The allegations that prompted today's demonstration illustrate how systemic racism is experienced too often by First Nations and Metis people in BC."