



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Historic Chair to Lead Heart Health Research for First Nations Peoples**

**Coast Salish Territory - Vancouver, BC** - The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Simon Fraser University (SFU), and St. Paul's Hospital Foundation have announced the establishment of the First Nations Health Authority Chair in Heart Health and Wellness at St. Paul's Hospital. The position, the first of its kind in Western Canada, will offer a holistic focus on First Nations and Aboriginal peoples' cardiac health, and put First Nations communities in the driver's seat of heart health research to determine their own path to better health outcomes.

The \$1.9-million Chair will lead research and education into critical policy related to heart health, disease prevention and control associated with chronic diseases among First Nations people, providing invaluable direction and a guiding voice in the area of cardiac health and its wellness determinants. The role will be an active leadership voice locally, provincially, and nationally, advancing the understanding of strategies to develop a program of excellence in First Nations wellness and disease prevention.

Co-located at the FNHA, SFU, and St. Paul's Hospital, the Chair's responsibilities include leading research to: develop protective strategies of health promotion that include culture and spirit; understand risk factors related to the social determinants of health; and produce health knowledge for policies and programs.

The Chair will also work to improve health system outcomes for First Nation peoples by developing preventive disease databases to increase research infrastructure and capacity in First Nations communities. Mentorship will also take place within SFU and St. Paul's to grow culturally competent and respectful research and knowledge translation by and for First Nations communities in the area of cardiac health.

Cardiovascular health for First Nations people may vary throughout each Nation, region, and demographic in the Province of BC. More research specific to First Nations – particularly in the areas of hypertension, heart attack and stroke, and diabetes – needs to be done to protect heart health and wellness and ensure timely care for First Nations people.

By conducting provincial and national outreach, the Chair will strengthen relationships and develop a network of researchers that is responsive to First Nations' community needs, promoting health within their own communities, and to support and advance the goals of First Nations' wellness and disease prevention and policy at the FNHA, St. Paul's and SFU.

Recruitment for the Chair position will take place immediately until the right candidate is found.



### **Partner Quotes:**

"The introduction of a Chair in Heart Health and Wellness is about bringing together the best of Indigenous and western worldviews of health. This position will be a force for change within the clinical, research, education, and social determinant communities, contributing to improved health outcomes for First Nations and Aboriginal people. We are excited by the openness and willingness shown by our partners to have First Nations take the lead - we all benefit when we learn from one another."

### **Joe Gallagher, CEO of the First Nations Health Authority**

"The establishment of a First Nations Health Authority Chair at St. Paul's for Heart Health and Wellness has been a collaborative effort and this position also reflects the ministry's focus of reducing chronic disease to help improve health outcomes for all British Columbians including First Nations and Aboriginal peoples throughout B.C."

### **Terry Lake, Health Minister**

"This Chair represents an historic partnership to advance knowledge and prevention of chronic diseases in First Nations communities. It also reflects SFU's commitment as Canada's most community-engaged research university to support First Nations peoples on their path to restore health and wellness in their communities."

### **Andrew Petter, President and Vice-Chancellor of Simon Fraser University**

"Creating this Chair is an exciting opportunity for the FNHA, SFU and St. Paul's Hospital's provincial Heart Centre to connect clinical needs and outcomes to world-leading research and teaching. The innovations developed through this collaborative partnership will have a profound impact in addressing the unique health and wellness needs of people in First Nations communities throughout British Columbia."

### **Diane Doyle, President and CEO of Providence Health Care (operator of St. Paul's Hospital)**

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### **About the First Nations Health Authority:**

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) is the first province-wide health authority of its kind in Canada. In 2013, the FNHA assumed the programs, services, and responsibilities formerly handled by Health Canada's First Nations Inuit Health Branch – Pacific Region. The FNHA works to reform the way health care is delivered to First Nations in British Columbia (BC) through direct services and collaboration with provincial partners. The FNHA is governed by and serves BC First Nations individuals and communities. For more information on the FNHA visit: [www.fnha.ca/about](http://www.fnha.ca/about)

### **About St. Paul's Hospital Foundation:**

St. Paul's Hospital Foundation raises funds to support St. Paul's Hospital, a globally acknowledged centre for innovation, research, teaching and care. St. Paul's is home to many world-class medical and surgical programs, including cardiac services, HIV/AIDS and kidney care, and serves both the local community and patients from across British Columbia and the Yukon.

### **About Simon Fraser University:**

As Canada's engaged university, SFU is defined by its dynamic integration of innovative education, cutting-edge research and far-reaching community engagement. SFU was founded almost 50 years ago with a mission to be a different kind of university—to bring an interdisciplinary approach to learning, embrace bold initiatives, and engage with communities near and far. Today, SFU is a leader amongst Canada's comprehensive research universities and is ranked one of the top universities in the world under 50 years of age. With campuses in British Columbia's three largest cities—Vancouver, Surrey and Burnaby—SFU has eight faculties, delivers almost 150 programs to over 30,000 students, and boasts more than 130,000 alumni in 130 countries around the world.