

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

February 3, 2023

Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister
Indigenous Services Canada
Via email only: ministresa-ministeris@sac-isc.gc.ca

RE: Pause of FNHA's 10-Year Canada Funding Agreement While BC First Nations Address Health Governance

Dear Minister Hajdu,

We are writing with respect to the currently ongoing negotiations on the Canada Funding Agreement between Health Canada and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and First Nations Health Council (FNHC). We must inform you that the current First Nations health governance structure does not comply to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and call on you to pause these negotiations until the concerns of title and rights holders have been addressed, while ensuring an interim solution is jointly agreed upon that ensures no disruption to provision of health services to First Nations in BC.

In spring 2021, resolutions on the BC First Nations health governance structure were presented, affirmed, and endorsed by consensus at the annual meetings of the three organizations which comprise the First Nations Leadership Council, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (2021-14), BC Assembly of First Nations (02/2021) and First Nations Summit (0621.11) (enclosed). These resolutions called for a comprehensive engagement and decision-making process among Chiefs to review the First Nations health governance structure's mandate, performance, and alignment with the 7 directives, and make decisions regarding necessary structural changes. The resolutions clearly stated that this process must be completed prior to the renewal of FNHA's Canada Funding Agreement. Despite this clear mandate, our efforts to carry out this review have been opposed by FNHA and FNHC.

In fall 2022, First Nations leadership reiterated their call on the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and the First Nations Health Council (FNHC) to cooperate in an arms-length health governance review and not to enter into any further agreements, including a renewed Canada Funding Agreement or the Tripartite Data Quality & Sharing Agreement, on behalf of First Nations prior to the external review of FNHA's governance structure and mandate by title and rights holders through resolutions (UBCIC 2022-50, BCAFN 23/2022, and FNS 1022.06) (enclosed).

Since the 2022 resolutions, we have continued working towards the renewal of First Nations health governance. In January 2023, FNLC hosted a session for First Nations representatives to share feedback on the health governance structure. This meeting confirmed the ongoing, unaddressed issues that title and rights holders have with the current health governance structure, which they are unable to bring forward through established mechanisms. The lack of input by title and rights holders into First Nations health runs contrary to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification and committed through legislation to implement.



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For your information, FNLC is looking forward to a long-overdue meeting the FNHC in the near future. We hope that our organizations can work collaboratively to strengthen First Nations health governance but emphasize that the external review and work of the Health Governance Restructure Committee, which was given a clear directive from title and rights holders through the 2021 and 2022 resolutions, must continue while FNHC and FNLC simultaneously strive to chart a collaborative path forward.

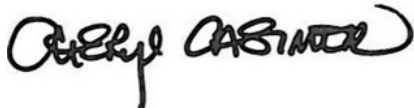
We call on you to pause negotiations on the Canada Funding Agreement with FNHA while jointly developing an interim solution to ensure no disruption to service provision for First Nations. This could mean issuing a one-year extension until the review has occurred and First Nations health governance is renewed to align with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. FNLC will utilize every avenue possible until the concerns of title and rights holders have been addressed and the health governance of First Nations is renewed.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT



Cheryl Casimer



Robert Phillips



Hugh Braker

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip



Chief Don Tom

On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:



Regional Chief Terry Teegee

CC: BC First Nations
First Nations Health Council
Minister Duclos, Health Canada

Minister Bennett, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions
Minister Dix, Ministry of Health