



MEDIA RELEASE

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The Tsilhqot'in Nation endorses the recommendations outlined in the Turpel-Lafond Report, *In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care.*

Williams Lake, BC: The Tsilhqot'in Nation endorses the recommendations outlined in the Turpel-Lafond Report, *In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care* and its findings of wide-spread systemic racism within the B.C. health care system.

Almost 9,000 participants were surveyed in the report, and the overall findings are that Indigenous people feel unsafe when seeking medical care in the province due to prejudice. The report explains the vicious cycle of systemic racism in health care, starting with the underpinnings of colonialism and how the colonial foundation leads to stereotypes and discrimination that result in poor outcomes for Indigenous people and put their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical health at risk.

The report concludes that addressing the issues found in health care for Indigenous peoples first requires addressing the legacy of colonialism. Indigenous peoples have a basic human right to health as outlined in the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Some of the recommendations of the report further include: an apology from the BC Government, collaboration with Indigenous Peoples on anti-racism policy and law, Indigenous governing bodies and representatives to develop a strategy and establish expectations for the health care sector and Indigenous cultural safety and humility training or an accreditation standard.

Nits'il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, TNG Tribal Chairman

"This is not an Indigenous people's issue, but everyone's issue. As stated in the report, systemic racism requires a systemic response. Everyone needs to work together to address racism in these institutions, which are built on the foundation of colonialism. It is going to need to be a collective effort. Today BC learned how serious the issue of racism towards Indigenous peoples is in the health care system. We, as Indigenous peoples, have known and lived with the discrimination and mistreatment all of our lives. We support the recommendations and we call on the BC Government to urgently take the steps necessary to implement them."

D O W N T O W N O F F I C E

L A K E S I D E O F F I C E

253 4th Avenue North
Williams Lake, BC V2G 4T4
Ph: (250)-392-3918
Fax: (250)-398-5798

1729 South Lakeside Drive
Williams Lake, BC V2G 3A9
Ph: (778)-799- 2145
Fax: (778)-799-2142



Nits'il?in (Chief) Jimmy Lulua, TNG Vice-Chair

“The BC Government has a responsibility to ensure that these recommendations are implemented and don't get neglected or forgotten, which has happened in the past. We were in support of the investigation, but now we see the real test, which is what will BC do with the information found. An apology is a good start, but it needs to be backed by action. This falls directly within the BC DRIPA legislation, which is about ensuring basic human rights for Indigenous Peoples. Health is essential to our survival and well-being; the government needs to recognize our basic human rights and our rights to self-determination. Racism is a learned behaviour, rooted in colonialism, and it is found across all sectors. There is a responsibility on the universities as well to ensure that all front-line workers have cultural competency before graduates are able to go and serve the public. Cultural education and training must also be led and informed by Indigenous peoples.”

Media Contact:

Jacey Warne
Communications Manager
T̓silhqot'in National Government
(403)-998-7581
jwarne@tsilhqotin.ca