

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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December 9, 2022

Honourable Adrian Dix
Ministry of Health
Via email only: Hlth.minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos
Ministry of Health
Via email only: jean-yves.duclos@parl.gc.ca

Re: SUPPORT FOR AN INDIGENOUS LED PRIMARY CARE MEDICAL CLINIC

Dear Minister Dix and Minister Duclos,

The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is painfully aware of the historic and on-going racism and discrimination we as First Nations face within Canada's medical system. Our legacy of colonialism includes segregated Indian Hospitals, medical testing, forced sterilizations, and other gross harms, and today our people face a lack of access, inferior care, and worse medical outcomes, including death. The severe challenges Indigenous people face in the medical system in British Columbia were recently documented in the *In Plain Sight* investigation that included data from thousands of Indigenous individuals, as well as health care workers.

While we acknowledge there are efforts being made by federal and provincial governments to alleviate these challenges, the results of this work will take years if not decades to fully realize. We need safe health care spaces available immediately as a stopgap until the required improvements can be fully implemented in the existing medical system. We are writing today to bring to your attention a project whose aim is to do just this. Golden Eagle Rising Society in partnership with Spirit Works Limited have been designing an Indigenous led, Indigenous designed, culturally safe, trauma informed, primary medical clinic. The UBCIC executive applauds this important initiative.

We are in full support of this initiative and call on Federal, Provincial, and Local governments, as well as health-related organizations, to support this, and other similar Indigenous led primary care initiatives. Only when our communities are in the driver's seat can we ensure that Indigenous peoples are able to access the appropriate, culturally-safe care we so desperately need and prevent the worse health outcomes that are a direct result of colonialization and ongoing discrimination.

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip
President



Chief Don Tom
Vice-President



Kukpi7 Judy Wilson
Secretary-Treasurer

CC: UBCIC Chiefs Council
Provincial Health Authority
Union of BC Municipalities