



PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

February 7, 2023

Dear National Chief Archibald:

I am writing to acknowledge the concerns your office has raised to the Minister of Health, Jean-Yves Ducloux and the Minister of Indigenous Services, Patty Hajdu about the upcoming Premiers meeting on February 7, 2023.

I agree with you that if we truly want to improve Indigenous health outcomes, Indigenous voices need to be at the forefront of health care discussions. To improve overall Indigenous Peoples access to health services, our government recognizes the importance of trilateral working discussions amongst Indigenous leadership, the Provincial and Territorial Governments, and the Federal government. This meeting with the Premiers on February 7 is a working meeting to discuss healthcare delivery in the provinces and territories. When our government schedules the next official First Ministers Meeting—Indigenous leadership will have seats at the table.

Our government recognizes the unique health needs of Indigenous peoples in Canada and over the last 7 years we have invested considerably (nearly \$30 billion) in supporting Indigenous health. This is perhaps nowhere more evident than in our extensive and effective collaboration in the face of COVID-19. Funding alone however, is not sufficient and that's why we're supporting continued self-determination over health services through the co-development of Indigenous health legislation.

Every Indigenous person deserves equal access and quality healthcare, free from discrimination and racism. Though, much work remains. I agree that we cannot continue hearing about stories such as what happened to Joyce Echaquan and Brian Sinclair for example—who both died without receiving the medical care they needed. Our Canadian health care systems need to do better and that requires working alongside Provinces and Territories to address these hard issues.

RoseAnne Archibald
National Chief
Assembly of First Nations

That is why our government has taken the position that enhancements to Provincial and Territorial health funding must seek results-based measures to assess improvements across all vulnerable groups. Agreements will include the development and implementation of indicators which will support the collection of disaggregated data which is critical to advancing equitable access to healthcare, especially in urban areas. This is a gap that Indigenous partners have previously identified and we look forward to collaborating further to advance information gathering and data sharing systems that are so critical to improving overall health outcomes.

We have heard your request for more targeted care and supports as part of our response to the current healthcare crises. That is why today we are announcing that we will invest \$2 billion over 10 years, starting in 2023-2024, to an Indigenous Health Equity Fund to support First Nation, Inuit and Metis partners in this important work. This is an enhancement on top of the substantial investments and ongoing shared work to support healthier Indigenous individuals, families and communities.

The roll-out of the Indigenous Health Equity Fund will be designed and implemented in partnership with Indigenous leadership. It will support First Nation, Inuit and Metis priorities and approaches to enhance health outcomes at the community and regional levels—building up capacity and resources from home. But this also requires collaboration between all governments. Especially when you factor community members who require better wrap-around services when they have to leave their communities to access more specialized health services in provincial and territorial health systems.

We are committed to a nation-to-nation, government to government, Inuit to Crown relationship and this means respecting specific First Nation, Inuit, and Metis Health priorities. This is critical for self-determination and for building healthier communities together. I look forward to continuing our work together on healthcare through future discussions.

As this matter falls within the portfolios of the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Health, the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, and the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, I have asked that a copy of this letter be forwarded to their offices for their information.

Please accept my warmest regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Justin Trudeau', written in a cursive style.