

February 7, 2023

The Honourable Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Re: Correspondence Received on February 3, 2023

Thank you, Prime Minister Trudeau, for your correspondence received by the National Chief's Office February 3 and February 7, 2023, both in response to her letter requesting an invitation to the First Ministers Meeting on Health dated January 27, 2023.

Despite these two letters, the AFN Executive was completely sidestepped: no tangible action was taken to include First Nations in today's critical discussions despite multiple offers to work together with you, shoulder-to-shoulder, on the issue most imperative to First Nations citizens – their health and wellbeing.

Leading up to today's meeting with members of your Cabinet, the AFN Executive was made aware that there would be no announcements coming out of today's 'working group' discussions. However, today, through your correspondence to the National Chief and the media, we have learned that your government will increase healthcare funding to provinces and territories by \$196B over 10 years, including \$46.2B in new funding. As a part of this healthcare funding rollout, a 10-year \$2B "Indigenous Health Equity Fund" was also announced, yet again, without the presence of First Nations leadership, nor our direct consultation.

Prime Minister, without First Nation representation at the table where decisions are being made about us, every announcement is just a performance of reconciliation, and not a true commitment to its inherent principles.

Today's \$2B announcement has been cited by your office as a culmination of discussions with Indigenous leadership on self-determined healthcare funding, distributed locally through regions and communities. While we celebrate the hard work of First Nations leadership and their health technicians in achieving progress towards their ultimate principled goals through this new funding; ultimately, it is still unacceptable that the final decision was one from the federal government exclusively, with question marks remaining around what specifically prompted the small dollar amount itself.

While we look forward to taking you up on your offer of inclusion in upcoming First Ministers Meetings and through regional trilateral processes with the provinces, territories, and your government – our representative, as we requested, should have been there **today** for decisions made about **us**. There was nothing unreasonable about our request.

We look forward to enhanced collaboration with yourself and your office moving forward.

In Partnership,

The Assembly of First Nations Executive