



Tsilhqot'in LEADERSHIP MEET WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS TO DISCUSS HEALTH CARE CRISIS

The Tsilhqot'in National Government (TNG) held a meeting on March 7, 2024 to call for action on the health care crisis impacting Indigenous communities in the region, driven by racism in the Williams Lake area healthcare system and the dire shortage of Doctors. Those in attendance included representatives from Interior Health, Cariboo Regional District, and City of Williams Lake as well as representatives from the Tsilhqot'in communities. As a witness to the discussion, members from the First Nations Health Authority were also in attendance.

Racism continues to be a problem within the healthcare system, negatively impacting access to care. The calls to action from the *In Plain Sight* report from 2020 remain unaddressed.

Although five new nurses are planned to come to the Cariboo Memorial Hospital next month, there still remains a Doctor shortage in the area.

During the meeting, Interior Health outlined a 3-step plan for educating medical staff on racism and cultural awareness, which includes an online learning platform and an official blanket and prayer ceremony in April. The remaining partners agreed that working closely with the Tsilhqot'in Nation to address issues in the health care system must be made a priority as they move forward.

TNG looks forward to continue working together to find solutions to the health care crisis in the area.

“Racism at the hospital is still happening – this meeting was an opportunity to address these issues. We need to have consistent communication with the Interior Health Board to make sure that voices are heard and issues are dealt with appropriately.

We also wanted to have this meeting with Interior Health to voice concerns over the lack of qualified Doctors in Williams Lake. We are concerned about the reason for Doctors leaving. This issue effects everyone in Williams Lake and the surrounding area. We ask the government and those on the board - to work together to find innovative ways to attract culturally sensitive Doctors and retain them.”

—Nits'il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, O.B.C, LL.D. (hon.). Tribal Chair
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