

First Nations Health Council Calls Upon BC Conservatives to Remove Candidate from Juan de Fuca-Malahat riding

Today, the First Nations Health Council (FNHC) demanded that BC Conservative leader John Rustad remove Marina Sapozhnikov (running in Juan de Fuca-Malahat) from the party's roster.

Said Wade Grant, Chair, and Wenecwtsin (Wayne Christian), Deputy Chair: "In 2024, it's simply not enough to condemn and express sadness over racist behavior from an individual running for public office. This type of colonialist ideology is made even more repugnant by Ms. Sapozhnikov willingness to repeat intolerable archaic statements that malign her fellow citizens. It's upsetting to think of how this MD and general practitioner viewed her Indigenous patients – these kind of racist beliefs are exactly why First Nations people don't feel safe accessing health care in BC and have poorer health outcomes as a result.

In the FNHC's work to improve health outcomes for First Nations, pervasive racism is the central barrier to making progress. Every day, our leaders spend time calling out the tired old playbook of racist and divisive rhetoric we hear in public discourse and see enacted within policy. For those who question if racism is still an everyday lived experience for First Nations – Sapozhnikov's Vancouver Sun interview is just the latest example of how intolerable and abhorrent views sow division. We stand with First Nations in BC in their expectation to lives that are culturally-safe. We ask Canadians to use their voice to call out racist, divisive attitudes and push for removal of racist individuals whose views influence the public discourse."

Research proves how prevalent anti-Indigenous racism is in the health care system, and how First Nations don't feel safe accessing health care or confident of getting equitable health care:

- **Indigenous people are 3-4 times** more likely than non-Indigenous to report feeling "not at all safe" in health care settings.
- First Nations people were **more than twice as likely** as other residents to leave B.C. hospitals against medical advice.
- compared to Indigenous women, **18.6% more non-Indigenous women** who were recently or currently pregnant had a regular health care provider.

About the First Nations Health Council (FNHC) The FNHC is one of four pillars of the First Nations Health Governance Structure in BC, along with its partners at the FNHA, the FNHDA and the Tripartite Committee on First Nations Health, which includes the BC and federal governments. Its advocacy journey began in the early 2000s, including the 2007 signing of the Transformative Change Accord to address health disparities between First Nations people and other BC residents. The FNHC's mandate is to oversee transformation of the health system, make progress on the Social Determinants for Health and advocate for First Nations decision-making in health and wellness. The FNHC provides political leadership for implementation of Tripartite commitments and supports the health priorities for BC First Nations. For information, visit [FNHC.ca](https://fnhc.ca)