

## Instructions have been Provided: Actioning Foundational Commitments to Indigenous Peoples in the BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer

**Jorden Hendry, Tsimshian, Lax Kw'alaams Band**

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Doctor of Philosophy Student in Public Health

### **Introduction/Background:**

We have been given clear direction on steps needed to address Indigenous-specific racism. Foundational Commitments to Indigenous Peoples include the testimonies from thousands of survivors of colonial harms who informed recommendations laid out in Truth & Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action and National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls (MMIWG) Calls for Justice. Other Foundational Commitments include the recommendations on upholding inherent rights provided through the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the BC Declaration Act and Action Plan, and In Plain Sight.

### **Methods:**

As part of our two-year "Unlearning & Undoing White Supremacy Project" within the BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer (OPHO), we have begun to monitor progress towards implementing these Foundational Commitments. We have developed a mixed-method tool that focuses on measuring and understanding action that has been taken by the Government of British Columbia towards the Foundational Commitments to Indigenous peoples, particularly those related to anti-racism in health.

### **Results:**

Findings from OPHO's "Action on Foundational Commitments Self-Assessment" indicated variability in awareness of Foundational Commitments. We initiated "OPHO Foundational Commitments to Indigenous Peoples Series" to ensure all team members are familiar with each set of instructions and have required tools and direction to uphold them in day-to-day work. The workshop series includes 4 sessions: 1) UNDRIP, 2) TRC & MMIWG, 3) In Plain Sight, 4) Accountability. We provide a framework to begin engaging health leaders with these Foundational Commitments. Life-saving instructions have been provided; now it is the work of public health systems to enact them.