



CARRIER SEKANI
FAMILY SERVICES

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Creating wellness together

Carrier and Sekani Chiefs call State of Emergency

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For immediate release

Carrier and Sekani Nations Chiefs are declaring a state of emergency for their Nations with respect to the ongoing opioid crisis, amidst the ongoing pandemic. Along with Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS), 11 Nation Chiefs call on the Canadian and Provincial Governments to take immediate action: a comprehensive and serious commitment to combat the opioid crisis that continues to claim lives at increasingly alarming rates.

Indigenous people in BC's northern interior region are experiencing alarming rates of overrepresentation in overdose deaths, and CSFS is seeking both federal and provincial funds to construct and operate a Healing/Treatment Centre. A toxic drug supply, combined with the harms of historical and present-day colonialism, has led to Indigenous people dying from toxic drugs at a much higher rate compared to other BC residents. Intergenerational impacts of residential school continue to be very present. Mental health issues and addiction continue to impact the families we serve at a high rate.

"Carrier Sekani Family Services is poised and ready to increase capacity and services for the Addictions and Recovery program (ARP) with our planned Healing/Treatment Centre, and we have a strong track record of successfully designing and delivering services to the communities we serve." said Chief Corrina Leween, CSFS Board President. "What we require now is a financial commitment from the federal and provincial governments that claim to prioritize Indigenous needs. To highlight this - I can share with you that in the past two weeks, communities we serve lost three more lives to this crisis. Three more people who were loved and were deserving of help." Leween continues, "We also know that this crisis is also affecting Indigenous children in care, particularly those in the care of the MCFD, and that some of these children are also suffering from addictions and opioid-related deaths. We need this treatment centre as a part of the wrap-around care we endeavour to provide to the clients and families we serve."

CSFS Chiefs strongly believe that any long-term solution in our region must include the CSFS Healing/Treatment Centre.

With the eventual development of a holistic Healing/Treatment Centre on Tachick Lake (a newly-acquired property located on the traditional territory of the Saik'uz First Nation, and targeted specifically for this purpose), CSFS will be able to greatly increase the support so sorely needed by many of the

people currently suffering on the streets of cities across BC. Our approach will include detox, cultural and western treatment modalities and aftercare.

A brief video on this project can be found here: <https://youtu.be/ObaMjV5442o>

CSFS Chiefs and Board of Directors strongly believes that the construction and operation of the CSFS Healing/Treatment Centre meets a number of provisions from the TRC Calls to Action. The TRC will be met, for example, with the integration of the Bah'lat (Carrier and Sekani Governing structure) and our program titled 'Healing the Healers' incorporates culture and spirituality into programming.

CSFS continues to engage with federal and provincial governments, along with the First Nations Health Authority to seek support in fully developing the healing/treatment centre, which desperately requires sufficient capital commitment. This work is becoming increasingly urgent – the time for governments to act and commit is now.

Contact Person:

CSFS Communications: 778-349-1676 (hours for response: 8:00am-7:00pm)