



Assembly of First Nations  
**National Health  
Legislation Forum - Hybrid**

*May 31 – June 1, 2023*

*Delta Toronto Downtown  
Toronto, Ontario*

FORUM PROGRAM







# Assembly of First Nations National Health Legislation Forum 2023 - Hybrid

May 31 – June 1, 2023

DELTA TORONTO DOWNTOWN, TORONTO, ONTARIO

## FORUM BACKGROUNDER

Statistics show that First Nations face significantly lower health outcomes than the rest of Canada. To fix this system, a massive overhaul is required. However, whether it involves a lack of access to quality and culturally safe health care, dealing with racism from health care providers, having no input or control over their own health care systems, or the ongoing legacy of a colonial system and attitudes, the challenges we face are substantial.

First Nations have long expressed the need for changes in a dated, ineffective health care system rooted in Canada's colonial history. It was not designed for First Nations, yet we live within its realities daily.

Individual and systemic racism are significant contributors to the poorer health outcomes experienced by First Nations. Years of complaints from individuals who frequently encounter racism and discrimination while accessing the health care system have been met with apathy and ineffective mechanisms to address their concerns. Inequality in accessing culturally safe health care has resulted in years of poor health outcomes, but even deaths for First Nations. This all points to the hard truth: that the status quo can not continue.

Proposed Distinctions-Based Indigenous Health Legislation could provide an opportunity to address some of these challenges. If developed effectively and driven by First Nations themselves, it could hold all levels of government more accountable to First Nations, clarify jurisdiction over health care provision for First Nations, mandate culturally safe training for health care workers, provide statutory guarantees for health care funding, and a recognition of the Treaty rights to health, among other potential benefits.

Certain principles must guide health legislation to clarify its intent and purpose, including Joyce's Principle, Inherent and Treaty Rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Health Legislation Forum – being held May 31 and June 1 - aims to bring together First Nations community representatives, First Nations leadership, health technicians, government representatives and legal experts to hear informative panel discussions and plenary presentations that will centre around the potential impacts of distinctions-based health legislation. The AFN aims to utilize feedback from First Nations at this forum to shape recommendations for co-drafting potential federal health legislation with the federal government (with much of this work happening in the Fall of 2023).

Over the next couple of days, the AFN will be sharing the most up-to-date information while at the same time providing a forum to hear from you with your questions, concerns and ideas, and we hope that you come away with greater insight into the potential for this health legislation.



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## FORUM DISCUSSION GUIDE

First Nations and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) are discussing Federal Distinctions-Based Indigenous Health Legislation as a potential tool to support First Nations health.

Health legislation work at the AFN is guided by the Chiefs Committee on Health and is mandated by three resolutions: *Resolution No. 69. 2017 Exploring A Legislative Base for First Nations Health*, *Resolution No. 18. 2021 Supporting First Nations Participation in Dialogue on Health Legislation* and *Resolution 16. 2023 Distinctions-Based Indigenous Health Legislation*. The AFN provides First Nations with health and legal research, analysis, and resources for discussion with Canada. The AFN leads national dialogues that support First Nations to impact the discussion on health legislation and to shape what the legislation will contain. An AFN Leadership Table has been set up to advise AFN on this work.

### Discussion Guide

This discussion guide provides questions and topics for First Nations to reflect on at the National Health Legislation Forum. The focus of our discussions is federal distinctions-based Indigenous health legislation and identifying what should be included in the purposes and principles that could guide the health legislation process. The AFN encourages you to engage with other forum participants to discuss and answer the following questions. You may utilize the space outlined in this guide to note your key points.

The AFN encourages you to speak about these topics at the forum plenary discussions or to send in written feedback directly to the AFN Health Sector at: [health@afn.ca](mailto:health@afn.ca).

### Assessment of Community Health Needs

- *What are First Nations community-level concerns about health and how could federal health legislation address those concerns?*
- *What are the gaps that need to be addressed in federal health legislation?*



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## Community Health Capacity and Strengths

- *How could federal health legislation account for the need to build capacity within regional First Nations and First Nations organizations for health?*

## Challenges and Barriers for First Nations Health

- *What are your main concerns about health funding in relation to federal health legislation?*

## First Nations Visions for First Nations Health Legislation

- *The status quo is not working. How could federal health legislation improve health outcomes for First Nations in the short term? Long-term?*
- *What is the best way for Canada to include the Treaty Right to Health in federal health legislation?*

## Implementation Concerns

- *What needs to be considered for the implementation phase after Canada introduces the proposed federal health legislation?*

## Additional Comments

- *What kind of information do you still require about federal health legislation?*



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## FORUM INFORMATION

### FORUM NETWORKING RECEPTION

The AFN will host a **Networking Reception** on the evening of May 30, 2023, from 7pm to 9pm in the Kensington Ballroom and Foyer. Forum Registration will also be set up at this time. Come by and register for the Forum and then stop by and meet with your colleagues from across Canada, have some refreshments and share some laughs with Janelle Niles and her “Got Land?” Comedy Show.

Janelle Niles is a Black—Mi’kmaq woman from Sipekne’katik, Nova Scotia. Her comedy career began in Ottawa, Ontario, and continues with the Indigenous comedy show **Got Land?**. Janelle has presented her eccentric and captivating humour at Just For Laughs, JFL42, CBC Gem’s **New Wave Of Standup**, Crackup and Arctic comedy festivals, and APTN’s Indigenous Day Live 2022.



### AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL) / LANGUE DES SIGNES QUEBECOISE (LSQ)

ASL/LSQ interpretation will be available in the plenary room, the Soco Ballroom and to our virtual participants. Each morning, there will be a brief presentation providing some information on ASL/LSQ.

### SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION INTO FRENCH

Please note that simultaneous interpretation in French/English is available onsite in the Soco Ballroom and online.

### SPEAKER GIFT – DONATION

In appreciation, a donation will be provided to a local organization in the names of forum speakers. The AFN thanks them for sharing their knowledge and expertise with all attendees; their contributions to the discussion helped ensure a comprehensive and informative dialogue at the forum. The donations will be made to Anishnawbe Health Toronto (<https://aht.ca>), Seven Generations Midwives Toronto (<https://www.sgmt.ca>), and Native Youth Sexual Health Network (<https://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com>).



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## FORUM AGENDA

### MAY 30, 2023

TIME (ET)	ACTIVITY/SESSION
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Registration in the Kensington Foyer
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Networking Reception featuring Janelle Niles "Got Land?" Comedy Show

### DAY ONE - MAY 31, 2023

TIME (ET)	ACTIVITY/SESSION
8:00 a.m.	<b>Registration</b> Location: Soco Ballroom Foyer
8:00 a.m.	<b>Breakfast</b> Location: Soco Ballroom Foyer
10:00 a.m.	<b>Opening Ceremonies</b> Location: Soco Ballroom Foyer <i>Mathieu Courchene, Forum Chair</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elder/Knowledge Keeper Grace Blake (virtual)</li> <li>• Oneida Sign Language / American Sign Language Presentation</li> </ul>
10:10 a.m.	<b>Setting the Context for the Gathering</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Chief Glen Hare, AFN Health Portfolio Holder</li> <li>• Vice Chief David Pratt, AFN Leadership Table</li> </ul>
10:30 a.m.	<b>Opening Panel – Setting The Context</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief Derek Nepinak, Minegoziibe Anishinaabe/ Pine Creek First Nation</li> <li>• Dr. Marcia Anderson, Executive Director, Indigenous Academic Affairs, Ongomiizwin Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing and Vice-Dean, Indigenous Health, Social Justice and Anti-Racism, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Manitoba (virtual)</li> <li>• Dr. Alike Lafontaine, President, Canadian Medical Association</li> <li>• Richard Jock, Chief Executive Officer, First Nations Health Authority</li> <li>• Wade Grant, Chair, First Nations Health Council</li> </ul>
12:00 p.m.	<b>Lunch</b> Location: Soco Ballroom Foyer



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**DAY ONE - MAY 31, 2023**

<b>TIME (ET)</b>	<b>ACTIVITY/SESSION</b>
1:00 p.m.	<b>The Treaty Right to Health and The Legacy of Indian Health Policy (1979): Contemporary Legislative and Policy Considerations</b> <i>Presenters: Dr. Josée Lavoie, Professor, Department of Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba (virtual)</i>
1:45 p.m.	<b>AFN Work on Health Legislation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew Bisson, Health Director, AFN</li> <li>• First Nations Leadership Panel Discussion</li> </ul>
2:15 p.m.	<b>Break</b> Location: Soco Ballroom Foyer
2:45 p.m.	<b>Presentation by Indigenous Services Canada</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candice St-Aubin, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Indigenous Services Canada</li> <li>• Julien Castonguay, Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Information, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Indigenous Services Canada</li> <li>• Nathalie Lachance, Director, Engagement, Indigenous Health Legislation, Strategic Policy, Planning and Information, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Indigenous Services Canada</li> </ul> <b>Address by the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada (virtual)</b> <i>Question and Answer Period</i>
4:15 p.m.	<b>Closing Remarks</b> <i>Mathieu Courchene, Forum Chair</i>
4:30 p.m.	<b>Adjourn for the day</b>

**DAY TWO - JUNE 1, 2023**

<b>TIME (ET)</b>	<b>ACTIVITY/SESSION</b>
8:00 a.m.	<b>Breakfast</b> Location: Soco Ballroom Foyer
9:00 a.m.	<b>Registration</b> Location: Soco Ballroom Foyer





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**DAY TWO - JUNE 1, 2023**

<b>TIME (ET)</b>	<b>ACTIVITY/SESSION</b>
10:00 a.m.	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <i>Mathieu Courchene, Forum Chair</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oneida Sign Language / American Sign Language Presentation</li></ul>
10:15 a.m.	<b>Regional Perspectives &amp; Next Steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moderated Plenary Discussion</li></ul>
11:50 a.m.	<b>Closing Remarks</b> <i>Mathieu Courchene, Forum Chair</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grace Blake, Elder/Knowledge Keeper (virtual)</li></ul>







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