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JAN 08 2019

Ms. Lisa Lapointe
Chief Coroner
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
PO Box 9259 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9J4

Dear Ms. Lapointe:

Thank you for your letter of November 13, 2018, regarding the Coroner's Inquest into the death of Deanna Renee Desjarlais (BCCS file 2016-0225-0116). The Ministry of Health (MoH) has carefully reviewed the verdict and has outlined its response to the Jury's recommendations below.

Recommendation #8 to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Health:

Engage in cooperative ministerial action within the appropriate framework of privacy and security safeguards to implement an effective continuum of services that foster communication and information sharing among providers of health and social supports and custodial care.

MoH Response:

The MoH is prepared to consider recommendation #8. MoH, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, health authorities and police agencies have developed a provincial information sharing toolkit to guide interagency cooperation in the support of people with mental health and/or substance use issues. The document includes information to support the development of local protocols, and is intended to further integrated approaches between agencies.

Recommendation #9 to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation:

Increase culturally appropriate support services for Indigenous women and provide training for community supports and corrections staff on available Indigenous supports within the community.

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MoH Response:

The MoH, in partnership with the regional health authorities and First Nations Health Authority continue to seek ways to improve cultural safety across the health system, and culturally appropriate services for Indigenous women:

- In July 2015, the MoH, health authorities and the First Nations Health Authority signed the *Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility in Health Services Delivery for First Nations and Aboriginal People (Declaration)* to mobilize the health system to make continual improvements in the delivery of culturally safe care.
- On March 1, 2016, 23 BC Health Regulatory bodies signed the *Declaration of Commitment to advance cultural safety and humility in the regulation of health professionals* serving First Nations and Aboriginal people, demonstrating the systemic momentum of this priority.
- As of May 2018, approximately 25,000 staff across the provincial health authorities, First Nations Health Authority and MoH have completed the San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety training.
- Aboriginal Patient Navigators/Indigenous Patient Liaisons are funded in most health authorities, and the BC Women's Hospital is to offer assistance and support to Indigenous patients through their health care journey through direct patient support and staff education.
- Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) developed a three-year Downtown Eastside Second Generation Health System Strategy¹ implemented in January 2018, that includes improving supports for women in the downtown eastside (DTES), including the development of a women's health and safety strategy; and improving supports for Indigenous people in the DTES, including implementation of an Elders in Residence program and Indigenous cultural safety training for all staff and peers.
- Trauma-informed practice guides² have been developed in consultation with the MoH to provide concrete strategies and practices to guide the professional work of practitioners assisting clients with their complex health needs.
- We are aware that the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (MACIW) announced a Call for Proposals for the Giving Voice 2019/2020 – 2020/2012 project on November 22, 2018. Up to \$20,000 in funding is available for one and two-year community-based events/projects that "Give Voice" to stopping violence against Indigenous women and girls, and to assist with community mobilization and implementation.

Thank you for providing the MoH with the opportunity to respond to these recommendations. The MoH recognizes the importance of information sharing protocols to address the needs of people with mental health and or substance use problems.

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¹ For more information, see <http://dtes.vch.ca/secondgenerationstrategy/>.

² For more information, see http://bccewh.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/2013_TIP-Guide.pdf and https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/child-teen-mental-health/trauma-informed_practice_guide.pdf.

I trust this information will assure you that the Province of BC is committed to high quality and responsive mental health and substance use services. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'S' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

Steve Brown
Deputy Minister