

May 11, 2022

Honourable Jean Yves Duclos MP
Minister of Health

Dear Minister Duclos

Re: Indigenous Women Tell Senate Committee of Forced/Coerced Sterilization

The members of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) have this week, like many others, been focused on abortion services in Canada and around the world as the United States appears to be poised to limit access to important reproductive health. It is doubly concerning to find that Indigenous and vulnerable women in Canada have suffered and been subjected to an invasive procedure without their informed consent as outlined in the Senate Human Rights Committee hearings (Globe and Mail Friday May 06, 2022).

It is difficult to understand how this practice is still being used in Canada when advanced health and human rights policies are in place!

The call to ensure that “women's rights are human rights” is echoing loud and clear as we face these alarming reports. Women must have the right to their own bodies.- period, Full stop.

Our members urge you, without delay, to implement policy that will address this egregious practice and adhere to human rights declarations made by international bodies and the advice of experts on the issue. Canada must do better than this.

Sincerely
Patricia Leson, President
National Council of Women of Canada

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Canada is the traditional territory of Indigenous and Metis People. We are grateful to join with others in peace and hope, advocating for an improved quality of life for women, children, families, and society.

Note: The original draft of this letter was prepared by Monica Cullum, NCWC Justice Convenor.

C: Honourable Marc Miller, Crown-Indigenous Relations
Senator Yvonne Boyer, Senate of Canada
Honourable Marcia Ien, Minister Status of Women, Gender Equality and Youth
Don Davies, New Democratic Party (NDP) Health Critic
Lynne Giroux, CEO, Native Women's Association
Karen Vecchio, Conservative Party of Canada, Women and Gender Equality Critic
Lori Idlout, New Democratic Party (NDP) Indigenous Services Critic
Kathryn Wilkinson, President Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)