



## BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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**BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY**  
**March 9-10, 2023**  
**Hybrid - In person & online via Zoom**

**Resolution 13(b)/2023**

**SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR TITLE AND RIGHTS HOLDER TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION FOR THE OPIOID OVERPRESCRIBING AND THE OVERDOSE CRISIS**

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**MOVED BY:**

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**SECONDED BY:**

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**DECISION:**

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### **WHEREAS:**

- A. Title and Rights Holders are aware that the government of British Columbia is taking legal action against Purdue Pharma and other opioid manufacturers to hold them accountable for knowingly misrepresenting impacts of opioids on patients and aggressively marketing them;
- B. First Nations leadership sees the long-term impacts of highly addictive opioids in our communities and the over prescribing to our people leading to other toxic drug habits;
- C. British Columbia continues to experience an unprecedented, escalating overdose and drug toxicity crisis, in which First Nations people were 5.4 times more likely than non-First Nations to fatally overdose in 2021;
- D. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:

**Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 2023**

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**Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief**

**Article 7(1):** Indigenous People have the right to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person;

**Article 24(2):** Indigenous People have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right;

- E. First Nations communities see the far-reaching impacts on our people through increased homelessness, poverty, opioid addiction, and fatalities of toxic the drug supply;
- F. Title and Rights Holder see the opioid crisis as an epidemic in all of our First Nations communities and off-reserve populations;
- G. In 2018, the government of British Columbia launched a class-action lawsuit to recover healthcare costs of the overdose crisis and passed the *Opioid Damages and Healthcare Costs Recovery Act*, and in 2022, amended the Act to enable the federal government to join the lawsuit;
- H. Although the class action lawsuit includes federal and other provincial and territorial governments, it excludes First Nations governments; and
- I. The governments of BC and Canada began in 2022 to settle these lawsuits against pharmaceutical companies, including a \$150 million settlement with Purdue Pharma in 2022.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly fully supports Title and Rights Holders to take legal action against the Province of British Columbia, Provincial Health services and the federal government for lax regulation and oversight that resulted in widespread over prescribing of highly addictive opioids to First Nations people, and providing unquestioned, excessive coverage for these dangerous opioids; and
2. That the BCAFN Chiefs Council directs the Regional Chief and staff to work with the federal and provincial governments, as well as the First Nations Health Authority, to advance compensation to Title and Rights Holders for the ongoing overdose crisis and related devastation and costs.

**Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 2023**



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**Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief**

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