

Gallagher to head First Nations Health Society

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COAST SALISH TERRITORY/WEST VANCOUVER

The First Nations Health Society (FNHS) today announced that its board of directors has named Joe Gallagher to serve as the society's CEO. Other senior management appointments announced today include Marilyn Ota, VP Health Planning, and Michelle DeGroot, VP Health Policy and Advocacy.

Gallagher, a member of the Sliammon First Nation, formerly served as the Director of Programs with First Nations Inuit Health and was instrumental in the development of the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan. "Joe brings extensive experience with, and understanding of, the core agreements that we are responsible to implement, said Interim board chair Pierre Leduc "his appointment ensures continuity at the senior management level and ensures there will be no disruption in advancing the First Nations Health agenda."

Marilyn Ota has been appointed the FNHS new VP of Health Planning. "For us, Marilyn was a natural choice," said Board Member Marilyn Rook, "her knowledge of BC's 203 communities and extensive national and international community development experience exemplify the dedication to Indigenous health we are striving to promote." Ota previously held senior positions in several public health companies, including Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. She is currently completing her Masters degree in Public Health at the University of Waterloo and is a member of the Simpcw Nation.

Michelle Degroot is the former director of the First Nations Chiefs Health Committee, and Director of Policy and Advocacy, First Nations Health Council. As the newly appointed VP of Health Policy and Advocacy, Degroot brings over 6 years experience in First Nations health. "Michelle is one of the top minds working towards improving First Nations health outcomes," said board member, John Scherebnyj "her depth of knowledge with regards to policy, research, and federal and provincial systems is second to none." Michelle earned her Bachelor of Arts from Simon Fraser University; she is Secwepemc and a member of the Kamloops Indian Band.

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The First Nations Health Society is the business arm of the First Nations Health Council. The First Nations Health Council was created in 2007 to implement the Tripartite First Nation Health Plan on behalf of BC First Nations. The 10-year plan is mandated to improve the health and wellbeing of First Nations, and to close the gaps in health outcomes between First Nations and other British Columbians.

For more information about the Health Council please visit: www.fnhc.ca or email info@fnhc.ca