



Assemblée des Premières Nations
Québec-Labrador

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COMMISSION DE LA SANTÉ
ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX
DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS
DU QUÉBEC ET DU LABRADOR

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Imposed sterilizations: a painful part of the history of First Nations and Inuit women

Wendake, September 23, 2021 – Revolting, inconceivable, unacceptable and deeply unfair ... Words fail to describe the disrespectful practice suffered by too many First Nations and Inuit women in Quebec, without their consent, a reality revealed in broad daylight during a report broadcast on the *Enquête ce soir* television program.

While the stories of our women, sisters and daughters are finally being brought to light, the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) and the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) urge the Government of Quebec to take action on this matter by working closely with the First Nations and Inuit.

During the program, it is mentioned that a dozen Atikamekw, Innu and Cree women claim to have undergone permanent sterilization without having requested it, or without having provided their consent in a free and informed manner. Unconsented sterilizations are said to have occurred in La Tuque, Val-d'Or, Sept-Îles, Québec City and Montréal, over a period of almost 40 years, from the 1980s until very recently.

“The Government of Quebec refused to take part in the work initiated by Canada in 2018 to discuss, among other things, the situation of forced sterilization in the country, on the pretext that health is under provincial jurisdiction and that no case had been reported. The problem is that it has taken no steps to gather information on this practice, nor to ensure that it is no longer in force in Quebec, and even less to provide a form of justice to the victims. The gravity of the acts committed across the country clearly merits greater attention from the Government of Quebec, beyond any bureaucratic process,” said Ghislain Picard, Chief of the AFNQL.

“The FNQLHSSC is conducting research on free and informed consent and imposed sterilization among First Nations and Inuit women in Quebec in order to collect data on this subject, in which several First Nations and Inuit organizations collaborate. The scientific direction is provided by Professor Suzy Basile, at the Université du Québec en Abitibi Témiscamingue. I invite all persons who believe they have undergone such an experience to share their testimony, in complete confidentiality, until October 31,” said Derek Montour, President of the FNQLHSSC.

Full details of this important research are available at <https://sterilisationsimposees.cssspnql.com/?lang=en>. In addition, information on rights of users and remedies in terms of access and quality of health and social services can be found on the [FNQLHSSC website](#).

About the AFNQL

The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador is a political organization that unites 43 First Nations Chiefs in Quebec and Labrador.

About the FNQLHSSC

The First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission is a non-profit organization that supports First Nations in Quebec in achieving their objectives in terms of health, wellness, culture and self-determination.

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INFORMATION

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