



Mr. Terry Smith, Chief Coroner
Chief Coroner's Office
Metrotower II
Suite 800 - 4720 Kingsway
Burnaby, B.C.
V5H 4N2

VIA FAX: (604) 660-7766

Dear Sir:

Re: Death of Curtis Brick, July 29, 2009, Grandview Park, Vancouver

I write to you on behalf of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association ("BCCLA"), Canada's oldest and most active civil liberties advocacy organization. Representatives from our organization have recently had meetings with members of the Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services Society, the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, United Native Nations, Lu'ma Native Housing and the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network to discuss the recent death of Curtis Brick at Grandview Park.

We have heard from witnesses who were at the scene, and from these various organizations, that there are a number of pressing questions surrounding the death of Mr. Brick, many of which boil down to a single concern: That Mr. Brick was treated with less respect and urgency because he was a homeless aboriginal man.

The BCCLA recalls the last time that such a community response occurred to the death of a homeless aboriginal man, namely, Frank Paul. We also recall the death of Francis McAllister raising similar questions of emergency response for the homeless members of the aboriginal community.

When testifying at the Frank Paul Inquiry, coroner after coroner said that he or she wished that the Coroner's Service had called an Inquest into the death of Frank Paul. You, as Chief Coroner, said if the circumstances around Frank Paul's death occurred again today, that you would call an inquest.

The BCCLA understands that the community is demanding an inquest into the death of Curtis Brick to answer their questions about his treatment. As an organization that opposes discrimination in all forms and demands, at a minimum, equal treatment for all citizens regardless of life circumstances, the BCCLA supports this call for an inquest. Deaths like Mr. Brick's are exactly the reason that the Chief Coroner was given a discretion to call inquests – to answer questions the community has about a death, and to see if similar deaths may be prevented in the future.

We urge you to call an inquest immediately to answer the questions the community has about this sudden and unexpected death. Was Mr. Brick treated differently or inappropriately as a result of who he was or his life circumstances? Was his death preventable? What type of treatment did he receive at the hands of first responders and the hospital?

In our respectful submission, this is not a case appropriate for a paper inquiry; the public requires those involved with the death of Mr. Brick to explain their various actions to the community in order to preserve confidence in emergency responders and the fair and equal treatment offered under our healthcare system. Thank you for your urgent attention to this issue.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Eby', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

David Eby
Executive Director