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## **Independent Health Assessment of Tokitae, the Miami Seaquarium Orca, is Issued**

*The assessment was completed by independent experts Dr. James McBain, DVM and Dr. Stephanie Norman, DVM, PhD.*

**MIAMI (June 2, 2022)** – Today, results from an independent health and welfare assessment of the 57-year-old Orca, Tokitae, also known as Lolita, were publicly issued. The evaluation was led by esteemed marine mammal experts, Dr. James McBain, DVM and Dr. Stephanie Norman, DVM, PhD., and was conducted after Miami-Dade County, The Dolphin Company and the nonprofit Friends of Lolita, announced an independent review strategy in April 2022.

The initial assessment of Tokitae’s recent medical history and current regimen of care was conducted on May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> and demonstrates the improvement of Toki’s hematology and chemistry values, as well as appropriate medications and a plan to discontinue current therapy once she is fully stable. Chief Veterinary Consultant to The Dolphin Company, Dr. Roberto Sanchez and Attending Veterinarian at the Miami Seaquarium, Dr. Shelby Loos, were also in attendance.

“Just 45 days after transferring ownership of the Miami Seaquarium, my administration was proud to work with our partners and secure the independent evaluation of Tokitae,” said Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava. “My priority remains the health of Tokitae, and each of the animals housed at the Miami Seaquarium, and we are encouraged by the initial findings of this independent assessment.”

“We remain fully committed to ensuring Toki receives the highest quality care and to providing transparency in regard to her health and wellbeing,” said Patrick Pearson, the new General Manager of Miami Seaquarium.

The independent assessment took place in collaboration with Friends of Lolita, a nonprofit founded by philanthropist and environmentalist Pritam Singh, and Executive Director of The Whale Sanctuary Project, Charles Vinick.

“We are very pleased that we have been able to take this first step to have an independent assessment of Toki’s health and welfare in a spirit of complete cooperation with The Dolphin Company,” said Friends of Lolita founder Pritam Singh. “This is a major accomplishment in identifying what is the best path forward for Toki. Our team looks forward to continued collaboration with Miami-Dade County, the Miami Seaquarium, and The Dolphin Company to ensure the ultimate health of Toki.”

The initial findings recommend the Miami Seaquarium staff maintain Tokitae’s current level of around-the-clock care, closely monitoring her ongoing health. Drs. McBain and Norman will continue to perform regular, on-site health and behavior assessments, and issue public updates. This assessment and any subsequent reports will be made available at [www.friendsof lolita.org](http://www.friendsof lolita.org).

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**Independent veterinarians conducting Tokitae's health assessment:**

James McBain, DVM. Dr. McBain, Retired Vice President of Corporate Veterinary Services for SeaWorld and Busch Garden Parks, is considered a pioneering expert in marine mammal veterinary medicine and the world's preeminent orca veterinarian.

Stephanie Norman, DVM, PhD. Dr Norman is a veterinary epidemiologist and wildlife veterinarian who has been involved in the field of animal health, disease, and conservation for more than 20 years and has served as a wildlife epidemiologist for NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service.