



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 9, 2022

AMC statement on NDP MP call for Canadian Armed Forces Support in First Nations in MB

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement in response to NDP Member of Parliament Niki Ashton open letter calling on Indigenous Services Canada to immediately work with the Province of Manitoba to call on the Canadian Armed Forces to provide emergency medical services in northern Manitoba.

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, “this open letter and comments by Niki Ashton to the media is for political optics. Ms. Ashton did not reach out to First Nation leadership before sensationalizing the issue of hospital closures and need for emergency staffing. She did not make calls to leadership asking what supports they require that would enable them to address the crisis with community based solutions.”

On December 29, 2021, the regional hospital in Gillam and the health centre in Leaf Rapids were shut down for the first week of January.

“We require long term investment and solutions that are First Nation driven. The call for military support disrespects the efforts taken to date by First Nation leadership, the First Nations Pandemic Response Coordination Team and health leaders in our First Nations” stated Grand Chief Dumas.

AMC with the FNPRCT has had several meetings with the federal government on surge supports for this latest Omicron COVID outbreak in a number of First Nations.

“We remain very concerned how the long-standing inequalities and insufficient investments in health infrastructure and staffing have positioned First Nations to deal with yet another pandemic that put First Nation at a higher risk for more severe outbreaks and outcomes. We need immediate partnerships, planning and resources to ensure health services and access to critical infrastructure remain available. Calling in Canadian Armed Forces is a stop gap solution that does not take into consideration what First Nations need and want,” concluded Grand Chief Dumas.

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About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Inineew (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.