



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Widening health gap for First Nations in Manitoba is a wake-up call to governments, health organizations and academic institutions

Treaty One Territory, MB. – A new joint study on First Nations health in Manitoba reveals the gap has widened considerably in the past 17 years.

The joint study by the First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba (FNHSSM) and the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP) found a First Nation person's life expectancy is now 11 years lower than the general Manitoba population. In 2002, it was seven years lower.

"While the results are startling, they are not surprising. The quote, 'Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets' is very apparent from this report," **said Grand Chief Arlen Dumas**. "The data clearly indicates the provincial and federal health systems are failing First Nations."

The Health Status of and Access to Healthcare by Registered First Nation Peoples in Manitoba study shows that health status and health-care access, along with the inequities between First Nations citizens and all other Manitobans has gotten worse, according to many indicators.

"Unfortunately, poor health outcomes have been normalized or expected for First Nations but that shouldn't be our reality. There is nothing normal or acceptable about this. In fact, it should be considered a crisis in this province," **said Grand Chief Arlen Dumas**.

The widening health gap is related to several underlying factors that negatively affect the health of First Nations citizens including: the ongoing trauma of colonization, generations of racism, poor housing, lack of clean water, and imposed poverty. These factors are not being adequately addressed.

While the health of other Manitobans is improving, First Nations people are not experiencing the same rate of improvement. Health inequity persists. First Nations are being left further behind and are not being meaningfully involved in decisions on health care.

"Health inequity is a direct result of structural inequities. It is obvious and atrocious that paternalistic programs persist – they have never met First Nation needs, nor were they truly intended to, as evidenced through decades of poor health status," **said Grand Chief Dumas**.

Health outcomes won't improve unless the system is redesigned and led by First Nations in all areas of service delivery. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs calls upon both levels of government to prioritize health investments and self-determination discussions immediately.

About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) represents 62 First Nations in Manitoba including the Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dene and Dakota people.

For more information, please contact:

Andrew Thunder

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

Email: athunder@manitobachiefs.com

Phone: (204) 987-4139