



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 9, 2020

## **The AMC responds to Provincial and Municipal Partnership regarding Pandemic Measures**

**Treaty One Territory, Manitoba** – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) Grand Chief Arlen Dumas was satisfied with today's Provincial and Municipal announcement to enforce new public health orders to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in order to protect the health and safety of all Manitobans.

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas said "We are experiencing a critical health situation that requires everyone to adhere to regulations put in place under the Public Health Act. It is good to see measures announced to ensure compliance as we need to flatten the curve. We need to take whatever measures possible to ensure that happens given the Health Canada projections we heard this morning that up to 44,000 Canadians could die in the months ahead. But I think it's important to educate first, before handing out fines, especially when it comes to our First Nation homeless population in Winnipeg and other municipalities."

The Province of Manitoba's Justice Department along with the City of Winnipeg announced today "Operation Safe Apart", a pandemic health enforcement strategy that will include pre-set fines for those businesses and individuals violating public health orders that include ignoring social distancing measures. Effective immediately, fine amounts for breaching these emergency orders will be set at \$486 for individuals and \$2,542 for businesses. In addition to this, starting Saturday, April 11, 2020, Community Service Ambassadors will be out to monitor, educate and inform Winnipeg citizens of these public health measures. Measures involving public health officers working in conjunction with local police services, First Nation police services and the RCMP are also in place for municipalities out of Winnipeg.

Grand Chief Dumas said "Several First Nations in Manitoba over the last number of weeks have enacted their own laws and have set in place checkpoints, travel restrictions and curfews. They did this knowing that community transmission could endanger and threaten the safety and well-being of their First Nations citizens. During a pandemic, and otherwise, First Nations have the inherent right to act in the best interests and health to oversee any pandemic response on behalf of their citizens. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Chiefs of Manitoba for their resolute and determined leadership, for asserting their inherent law-making ability by closing their borders, and for taking other strong measures to protect their peoples and their Nations during another crisis. Unfortunately, this type of crisis is not new to the First Nations in Manitoba. We have historically endured many plagues and disasters over the millennia that have decimated our populations; in spite of all the contagions we have been subjected to, we continue to survive as the original peoples of these lands." Grand Chief Dumas concluded.

In Winnipeg, reports of non-compliance can be made by calling 311 or by email at [311@winnipeg.ca](mailto:311@winnipeg.ca) or outside of Winnipeg at 204-945-3744 or by email at [mgi@gov.mb.ca](mailto:mgi@gov.mb.ca).

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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 / Inineu (Cree), Anishininew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.