



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMC expresses heartfelt condolences for the 22 young women featured in report by MACY

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba - The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) offers condolences to the families and friends, on the loss of life of the 22 young women that are featured in the *Stop Giving Me a Number and Start Giving Me a Person Report* released by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY) today, and the hundreds of other children who have died in the Manitoba Child Welfare system. Of the 22 young women identified, 20 are Indigenous.

The MACY report examines 22 instances where young women died by suicide, and who were receiving child welfare services at the time of their death. The report states that since September 2008, 159 children and youth ages 9-17 died by suicide in Manitoba. These numbers are particularly staggering when we consider that suicide is preventable. We can anticipate that of the 159 children a disproportionate number of them are First Nations, as there are over 11,000 children in care in Manitoba and 9,000 are First Nations.

“The numbers of children dying due to the lack of culturally appropriate services and supports is absolutely abhorrent,” said AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas. “The AMC has over 30 years of resolutions designed to motivate meaningful change for the wellbeing of children and youth. The provincial and federal governments continue to ignore First Nations solutions resulting in this tragedy. This has gone on for far too long.”

Grand Chief Dumas continued: “First Nations leadership in Manitoba has been fighting for restored jurisdiction over children and families and will continue to fight. It is abundantly clear that the Province of Manitoba does not have the political will to work with the AMC to make meaningful change as a top priority. Suicide is obviously a real issue in the foster care system and one that should not be dismissed. It is concerning that we continue to place our First Nation children in these situations and they continue to experience fragmentation from their families, services and culturally appropriate systems of care. Our First Nation children never belonged there to begin with.”

“Our First Nations leadership is committed to Bringing Our Children Home and we will continue to fight for them. This province needs to work with our office on innovative ways on how we deal with children and youth suffering from trauma from the CFS system.” Grand Chief Dumas concluded: “We need to evaluate how this government is implementing and integrating their CFS reform measures into the daily work CFS staff. Our children cannot continue to die from preventable deaths due to government cost cutting and layers of band aid approaches.”

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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 / Ininew (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.