



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs  
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 25, 2020

## **Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Support More Testing Sites in Manitoba**

**Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg, MB** – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) is issuing this statement in response to the need for an increased number of testing sites in Manitoba.

This week it was reported that Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal, Manitoba's senior Liberal MP was "unpleasantly surprised" that Winnipeggers have experienced long lines and delays in getting COVID-19 testing after Ottawa provided more than \$100 million to Manitoba to expand capacity.

"As we see increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases in Winnipeg and other areas of Manitoba and going into the flu season, we want to know that people can be tested in a timely manner and that there is the testing capacity we need across the province," said AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas. "The line-ups we are seeing are concerning and as the weather turns, we need to consider those who do not have vehicles or rides to testing sites, the standing lines of people who have to wait outside. Testing needs to be accessible, timely and safe."

Earlier this week, Minister Vandal shared information on his social media that showed federal support in the amount of \$109 million was sent to Manitoba specifically to increase COVID-19 testing capacity. This federal support was part of the federal government's \$19 billion "safe restart" program, \$380 million of that was directed to Manitoba. That support should have tripled the total number of tests performed each day in Manitoba.

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs adds their voice to concern about testing in Manitoba and asks the Premier and Province to consider Manitobans' safety and ability to access testing. The AMC encourages Manitoba to increase testing sites, ensure everyone especially vulnerable populations can access testing safely and indoors, and to look at what other provinces and countries are doing to increase their testing (i.e.: using facilities such as convention centres to ensure physical distancing and safety from cold weather).

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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.