



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 10, 2020

AMC frustrated by lack of First Nation representation at today's First Ministers Meeting on health care funding and vaccine rollout

Treaty One Territory - The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and Grand Chief Arlen Dumas are disappointed that again, First Nation Leadership did not have a seat at today's First Ministers Meeting (FMM).

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, "To put it mildly, First Nations should have been at the FMM. Our request to be at the table was again denied or ignored which contradicts the principles of inclusivity, respect and mutual collaboration which is even more concerning considering the recent statement from Premier Pallister confirming that there will now not be extra vaccines committed to First Nations. Why First Nations are not at the table, and subsequently blindsided by major changes to our access to vaccines is beyond inexcusable. There cannot be a true partnership with the provinces and territories on health care if First Nations are not included on a government-to-government basis."

"In the first case, the AMC does not appreciate the Premier speaking on First Nations' behalf especially without any attempt at consultation. It is our sovereign right to speak for ourselves. We do not have confidence in this provincial and there is a vast lack of accountability over current federal health transfers for insured health services, primary and public health care to benefit First Nations in Manitoba."

"It is known that most of the Regional Health Boards are comprised of business representatives with little to no First Nations representation or health experts and that needs to change. During this unprecedented public health emergency of COVID-19, our First Nations have been hit the hardest with increased numbers of infections and disproportionate hospitalizations and intensive care as documented by the Manitoba First Nations COVID-19 Pandemic Response Coordination Team. First Nations leaders and health experts have come to the forefront and championed the path forward in leading the provincial health care system to respond to the health needs of First Nations on and off-reserve. It is high time that First Nations not only be at the table, but lead the discussions especially surrounding First Nation health."

"Further, we need federal and provincial investments now to aid First Nations in ensuring equitable and fair distribution of the vaccine and for a well-funded health workforce, equipment and supplies, and socio-economic infrastructures in place to support COVID-19 responses and immunization strategies. We should have been at the FMM today to advocate our issues directly to all the Premiers

and Prime Minister, instead, we are forced to rely on a known divisive and racist Premier that repeatedly misrepresents our interests.”

AMC’s long-standing position has not changed: “Any funding that is allocated on or on behalf of First Nations should go directly to First Nations and not funneled through the province, notwithstanding Section 92 of the Constitution Act, 1982 and the division of powers. We need to be in control of decision-making in the health care system and affiliation resources in this province.”

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Stacia Franz

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

Email: sfranz@manitobachiefs.com

Phone: 204-292-1504

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