



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 6, 2021

Joint Statement on Vaccine Distribution Launch to First Nations

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and the Province of Manitoba, in collaboration with Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin (KIM) and Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) make the following announcement in regards to the vaccine distribution. Tomorrow, January 7th, 2021, the first shipments of the Moderna vaccine will begin to be shipped to Manitoba First Nations. Further, an additional allocation of 5300 doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for First Nation people in Manitoba has also been committed and will rollout the week of February 23, 2021.

*Note that this is in addition to the initial allocation of vaccines committed. With this additional commitment, logistic planning has begun to immediately deliver vaccines to all 63 First Nations in Manitoba.

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas said, "We at the AMC, through our Pandemic Response Coordination Team (PRCT), are pleased to make this announcement in collaboration with the Province of Manitoba. This is just the start of the vaccine rollout and we appreciate the patience of everyone in allowing our First Nations health experts to provide us the necessary guidance in this endeavor. I further want to commend our Chiefs for their diligence and commitment to providing information and assistance day in and out to ensure that our PRCT is supported."

"Together, we are building a COVID-19 immunization plan that will protect all of Manitoba's health care workers and most vulnerable people, no matter where they live in our province," said Premier Brian Pallister. "We are proud to have built a solid and respectful partnership with First Nations leaders and their medical experts so that this critical work can move forward safely and effectively. The vaccines being delivered starting tomorrow are another historic event in our province's response to the pandemic."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had an effect on every aspect of our lives, but what has not changed is the willingness of Manitobans to step forward, work together and find solutions to some of our most difficult challenges," said Hon. Heather Stefanson, minister of Health and Seniors Care. "Developing a comprehensive, equitable and rapid plan to immunize First Nation communities is certainly a challenge. Today, we are proud to be part of a solution that will save lives, protect vulnerable Manitobans, and support a healthier province for us all."

MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee said, "On behalf of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, I commend the First Nations leaders for their ongoing advocacy and diligent work in protecting their communities from COVID-19. The vaccine provides us with some hope that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and we are hopeful that all First Nations people who want to receive a vaccine will be able to do so in the near future. I also want to thank the First Nations health experts who are working closely with the province to develop plans for getting the vaccine to the people who need it most. This is no small task and it's encouraging to see leaders and experts working collaboratively on this issue."

The following initial priority groups are identified as follows:

- a. Essential health care workers providing services in remote and isolated communities who cannot access the provincial vaccination supersites;



- b. Residents and staff of personal care homes and elder care facilities;
- c. People over the age of 60 living in remote and isolated communities; and
- d. People over the age of 70 living in non-remote communities.

First Nation experts and representatives from the AMC, MKO and SCO will continue to work with the Manitoba Vaccine Task Force on prioritization and sequencing in the weeks and months to come to ensure that all citizens have priority services to protect as many citizens as possible, as quickly as possible.

Grand Chief Dumas concluded, “the hard work of First Nations leadership in Manitoba throughout this pandemic has prepared us for this day. This announcement builds on the clinical and operational leadership of the Manitoba First Nations PRCT, the success of the Rapid Response Teams and it further highlights the importance of First Nations specific health information to guide decision-making here in Manitoba. We are thankful for the collaborative relationship with the Federal and Provincial governments and celebrate that tomorrow the first shipments of the Moderna vaccine will be heading out to our Nations.”

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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.

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