



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 2021

AMC and PRCT look forward to ongoing collaboration with the Canadian Armed Forces on COVID-19 vaccination of First Nations citizens in Manitoba

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement in support of Minister of National Defense Harjit Sajjan announcement of detailed “operation VECTOR” plan for deployment of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines for up to 23 First Nations in Manitoba. Minister Sajjan along with Indigenous Services (ISC) Minister Marc Miller at their joint press conference today, announced that the CAF responded to an ISC request and will support vaccine roll-out to some of the most vulnerable and isolated First Nations using the Thompson Airport as a base. Staging and deployment of CAF medical and general duty personal to Thompson began on March 22nd, and distribution of vaccines will occur between March 29th and June 30th. It is anticipated that all on-reserve citizens in the 23 First Nations will be vaccinated by the end of April, according to the timelines announced at this morning’s press conference.

“On behalf of the Assembly, I thank Mister Harjit Sajjan for the detailed plan for deployment and vaccine distribution to the 23 identified First Nations,” said AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas. I take this opportunity to thank Minister Sajjan for the previous CAF efforts and support to First Nations for COVID breakouts in First Nations personal care homes and in some of our more isolated First Nations. These efforts set the stage and created a relationship between the First Nations in Manitoba and CAF personnel for this current vaccine deployment operation to take place as quickly as it has.”

“I also thank Minister Miller for submitting the request to CAF on behalf of the First Nations leadership in Manitoba, and for acknowledging at the press conference the work of the AMC, the PRCT and the leadership of Dr. Marcia Anderson, all of which has made this rapid deployment and vaccine distribution operation possible.”

Grand Chief Dumas continued, “this CAF support was requested as the First Nations Leadership in Manitoba identified the possible devastating effects of a third wave during spring break-up and fire season, when fly-in First Nations could be particularly isolated and vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic.”

“Vaccination clinics will be set up by the CAF in each of the identified First Nations as appropriate and with all due care for cultural protocols and considerations, and will be part of the overall PRCT strategy for 100,000 vaccinations in 100 days for First Nations citizens in Manitoba. I want to personally thank the members of the CAF for taking time away from their families and for stepping up to assist AMC member First Nations as part of Operation VECTOR,” concluded Grand Chief Dumas.

Deployment and distribution details:

- March 19 -20, Planning
- March 22-24, Thompson deployment and staging
- March 29 – June 30, Vaccine distribution
- Up to 200 CAF medical and general duty personnel

- Various military aircraft and vehicles: Hercules aircraft, Chinook helicopters, twin otter, and logistic vehicles

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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.