



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 7, 2021

**AMC marks World Health Day 2021 by acknowledging the PRCT, healthcare professionals and a call to end systemic anti-Indigenous racism**

**Treaty One Territory, Manitoba** – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement in conjunction with World Health Day 2021. This year's theme is, "*Let's build a fairer, healthier world for everyone.*"

Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, "On World Health Day 2021, I take this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous leadership of the First Nations Pandemic Response Coordination Team (PRCT) and the invaluable support they provide to the First Nations leadership in Manitoba. I recognize and sincerely thank all healthcare workers in Manitoba from the doctors and nurses in the ICUs, to administrative and support staff and all those who have stepped up for immunization efforts to ensure that all First Nations are prioritized and receive vaccinations in a timely manner. I lift you all up and thank you for your efforts for caring for our most vulnerable during this challenging time."

Grand Chief Dumas continued, "However, there are still many systemic inequities when it comes to First Nations health in this country and much work remains to be done to act on the recommendations of First Nations who came together in an emergency meeting last October to advise government on addressing systemic anti-Indigenous racism in healthcare systems across this country. A recent British Columbia report entitled "In Plain Sight" detailed the extent of anti-Indigenous racism experienced by First Nations in that region. These reports and meetings were a result of calls to action by the First Nations leadership over historic examples of racism that resulted in death of First Nations citizens, as well as several recent horrific examples of anti-First Nations racism portrayed on social media and in the mainstream media."

"While we have seen some policy adjustments resulting from the Brian Sinclair Inquest, and there has been some progress on healthcare transformation in the region there has not to date been a significant improvement on the overall health indicators for First Nations in Manitoba. First Nation citizens continue to die 20 years earlier than other Manitobans. We experience unprecedented rates of diabetes and cancers and inequities and racism has resulted in First Nations being grossly overrepresented in the COVID-19 fatalities."

"We call upon both the federal and provincial governments to make this a healthier world for First Nations in Manitoba and across this country. I encourage them to work directly with our leadership and health staff to develop community-based solutions in real time."

"156 First Nations citizens have been lost to COVID-19 in Manitoba. That is a staggering number. COVID-19 has magnified inequities and vulnerabilities that First Nation citizens face. COVID-19 has had a massive impact on First Nations in Manitoba including our mental, physical, spiritual health and well-being. It is critical at this time to remain focused on First Nations health and improving it. On World Health Day, I call on the federal and provincial governments to continue to support First Nations healthcare transformation, implement the recommendations of First Nations healthcare professionals and work with the First Nations leadership on a collaborative effort to secure healthcare transfers," concluded Grand Chief Arlen Dumas.

To learn more about Manitoba First Nations health here:

REPORT: [The Health Status of and Access to Healthcare by Registered First Nation Peoples in Manitoba](#)

ADVOCACY: <https://manitobachiefs.com/policy-sectors/health/>

ASSEMBLY ON HEALTH: <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/AMC-Chiefs-Assembly-on-Health-June-6-7-2018-Certified-Resolutions.pdf>

POLITICAL UNITY ACCORD: <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/Political-Unity-Accord-on-First-Nations-Health-October-26-2017.pdf>

In Plain Sight: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/613/2020/11/In-Plain-Sight-Summary-Report.pdf>

-30-

**For more information, please contact:**

Stacia Franz  
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs  
**Email:** [sfranz@manitobachiefs.com](mailto: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 / Ininew (Cree), Anishininew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.