



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 22, 2021

AMC Honours Jordan River Anderson

Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg, MB – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement today to commemorate what would have been Jordan River Anderson’s 22nd birthday. Jordan, who was born with complex medical needs and multiple disabilities, passed away in 2004 in Winnipeg rather than returning to his home First Nation of Norway House Cree Nation. Several years of jurisdictional disputes, mismanagement and bureaucratic bungling between the provincial and federal governments on who would pay for community-based supports prevented Jordan from receiving care in Norway House Cree Nation, the kind of care that is guaranteed to all other Manitobans without condition.

Grand Chief Arlen Dumas said, “To ensure that these types of jurisdictional disputes and resulting denial of the right to medical care within a patient’s home community never happen to any other First Nation children, the AMC led the regional advocacy to ensure that care, funding and family supports are provided to First Nations children first before questions of provincial or federal jurisdiction and responsibility are considered. Thanks to the legacy of Jordan River Anderson, the *Jordan’s Principle Child First Initiative* is now a national legal rule and core component of Indigenous Services Canada, providing over one-hundred thousand First Nation and Inuit children with substantive equality for specialized services, education, and clinical supports.”

“Jordan’s Principle and the First Nations’ advocacy that has sustained it, has resulted in a national legal initiative guaranteeing children long-overdue supports and services regardless of their residency, and ensuring ongoing support and connection to their communities and to their First Nations,” added Grand Chief Dumas. “Since 2004, the AMC is proud to have played an important historical role in the fight for justice for First Nations children with disabilities and an ongoing role in the development of what has become known as the *Jordan’s Principle Child First Initiative*, a national legal requirement as ordered by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, binding Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and all government agencies to make supports and services to First Nations children the priority rather than the type of jurisdictional bickering in which bureaucrats engage.”

“Today, would mark Jordan’s 22nd birthday. The AMC takes this time to honour Jordan and his family for the sacrifices and hardships they endured due to negligence and the violation and denial of their inherent Treaty and human rights. Though Jordan is not here with us today, his legacy lives on through Canada’s *Jordan’s Principle Child First Initiative*, benefitting over 165,000 First Nations and Inuit children. The legal ruling will benefit First Nations children for generations to come, and we have Jordan and his family to thank for that,” concluded Grand Chief Dumas.

BACKGROUND

Jordan River Anderson was born October 22, 1999 with multiple disabilities and stayed in the hospital from birth. At the age of two-years old, Jordan’s family was informed that he could move to Norway House Cree Nation to live in his Nation among friends and family, to a special home for his medical needs. However, due to jurisdictional disputes between the federal and provincial governments over who would pay for his medical care, Jordan was unable to move home. Jordan stayed in the hospital until he passed away at the age of five-years old.

At the October 30-31, 2019 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) Hearing, Canada’s witness, Dr. Valerie Gideon, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister of the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch at the Department of

Indigenous Services Canada testified that over 165 000 Jordan's Principle approved services have now been approved under Jordan's Principle as ordered by the CHRT.

Dr. Gideon also testified that Jordan's Principle is not a program, it is considered a legal rule by Canada. As Jordan's Principle is a legal requirement, not a program, there will be no sun-setting of Jordan's Principle. There cannot be any break in Canada's response to the full implementation of Jordan's Principle.

For more information on Jordan's Principle, please visit:

<https://manitobachiefs.com/policy-sectors/jordans-principle/>

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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 / Ininew (Cree), Anishininew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.