



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMC responds to new public health orders

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and the First Nation Pandemic Response Coordination Team (PRCT) issues this statement in response to the relaxation of Manitoba’s public health orders.

With the provincial government looking at a restriction-free province by Spring, the AMC is calling on the federal and provincial governments to develop a plan of action that will allow First Nations to stabilize the COVID-19 situation in each of their Nations, which would include the immediate development of a roll-out strategy to increase the availability of COVID-19 oral anti-viral treatment and monoclonal antibody treatment for eligible First Nations citizens. The AMC and the PRCT have expressed concern to both Canada and Manitoba regarding a need for urgent planning for the equitable access and administration of such oral and antibody treatments for First Nations citizens who are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness and may be candidates to receive this treatment. The relaxation of public health orders will further put First Nations at risk with potentially serious and lethal outcomes.

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, “Oral treatment and monoclonal treatment for symptoms of COVID-19 are important weapons in the fight against COVID-19 for First Nations citizens who meet the eligibility criteria. First Nations citizens are at higher risk than other Manitobans for severe outcomes from COVID-19 and as such should be prioritized for these medications. While pre-positioning of medications has occurred in First Nation communities with Nursing Stations or Hospitals, data is showing inequitable access in First Nation communities who access primary care through provincial systems. There should be no jurisdictional debate to the provision of health services when it comes to this deadly pandemic. I remind both levels of government that it was First Nations leadership that was effective in developing pathways for equitable access for vaccines and testing. It was First Nations leadership that led the way and therefore, we need to build on these successes as we approach these novel treatments as well.

“I call on Provincial and Federal partners to immediately support the leadership of First Nation experts when considering lifting restrictions as well as planning for these newer oral and antibody treatment to ensure they reach those First Nations most in need. These treatments do not replace vaccines but remain an important part of our arsenal to the overall fight against COVID-19 and its variants. The First Nations PRCT encourages all eligible First Nations citizens to continue to get vaccinated including with booster doses, to reduce the effect of the virus, including serious illness and hospital stays,” concluded Grand Chief Dumas.

For more information on oral and antiviral COVID-19 treatment please visit:

<https://gov.mb.ca/covid19/treatment/index.html>

<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-paxlovid-patient-info.pdf>

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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.