



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 31, 2021

AMC acknowledges International Overdose Awareness Day

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement to acknowledge International Overdose Awareness Day. Marked on August 31, 2021, International Overdose Awareness Day is the world’s largest annual campaign to end overdose, remember without stigma those who have died and acknowledge the grief of the family and friends left behind. Overdose disproportionately affects First Nations and Indigenous peoples. The AMC remembers all First Nations citizens who have died because of an overdose and sends condolences to the grieving families.

Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, “On International Overdose Awareness Day I send my condolences to all First Nations families and all families who have lost a loved one due to overdose. Those who have died were someone’s Mother, Father, sister, brother, close family member, or fellow First Nations citizen, and we remember them for their contributions to their Nations, families and communities.”

“There is an opioid crisis in this country that has impacted all provinces and territories with some, including Manitoba, impacted more severely than others. Manitoba has experienced record numbers of overdose deaths over the last few years. Since 2016, there have been 1,162 overdose deaths in Manitoba. Many of these deaths were due to a tainted street supply – including the use of Down and the mixing of fentanyl with other opioids and stimulants. The uncontrolled use of fentanyl and other highly addictive drugs is leading to many deaths and a public health emergency in Manitoba and must be managed as such.

Grand Chief Dumas added, “To reduce overdose deaths, the AMC supports the Harm Reduction Network of Manitoba and safe consumption sites, as well as treating addictions as a health issue rather than a criminal issue. It is encouraging to see that all the federal leaders running to be Prime Minister in the upcoming general election have committed to a health approach rather than a criminal justice approach to addiction.”

“On International Overdose Awareness Day, the Portage la Prairie Harm Reduction Network, in partnership with the Portage la Prairie Bear Clan, will be hosting an event at the Bear Den at #2 -624 Oak Bay, to provide overdose prevention and naloxone training. We are thankful for this training and to have treatment centres such as the Bruce Oake Recovery Centre in Winnipeg. Medically-assisted detox recovery and treatment centres within our First Nations also needs to be adequately resourced. In addition to the methadone programs, there needs to be ongoing supports and firm leadership from the province on safe consumption sites. The AMC will be meeting with the new Premier in the near future to discuss a range of health and criminal justice issues, and collaborative approaches to prevention and the overdose public health emergency,” concluded Grand Chief Dumas.

-30-

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 / Inineew (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.