



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

TO BE VIGILANT & PREPARED

Ka akwamisiyah
Ta-Mun-Yak akwa Ta-Akom-missyak
Angomiisik akomaydamak
Kapeh mina chi kwayanchiyun
Akepa ba wiya yakapi
Beghā nānūdé ʔq, ts'etaí, súʔnē.



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

OUR MANDATE

The mandate of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, is through the Chiefs-in-Assembly, to devise collective and common political strategies and mechanisms for coordinated action by First Nations and their organizations to:

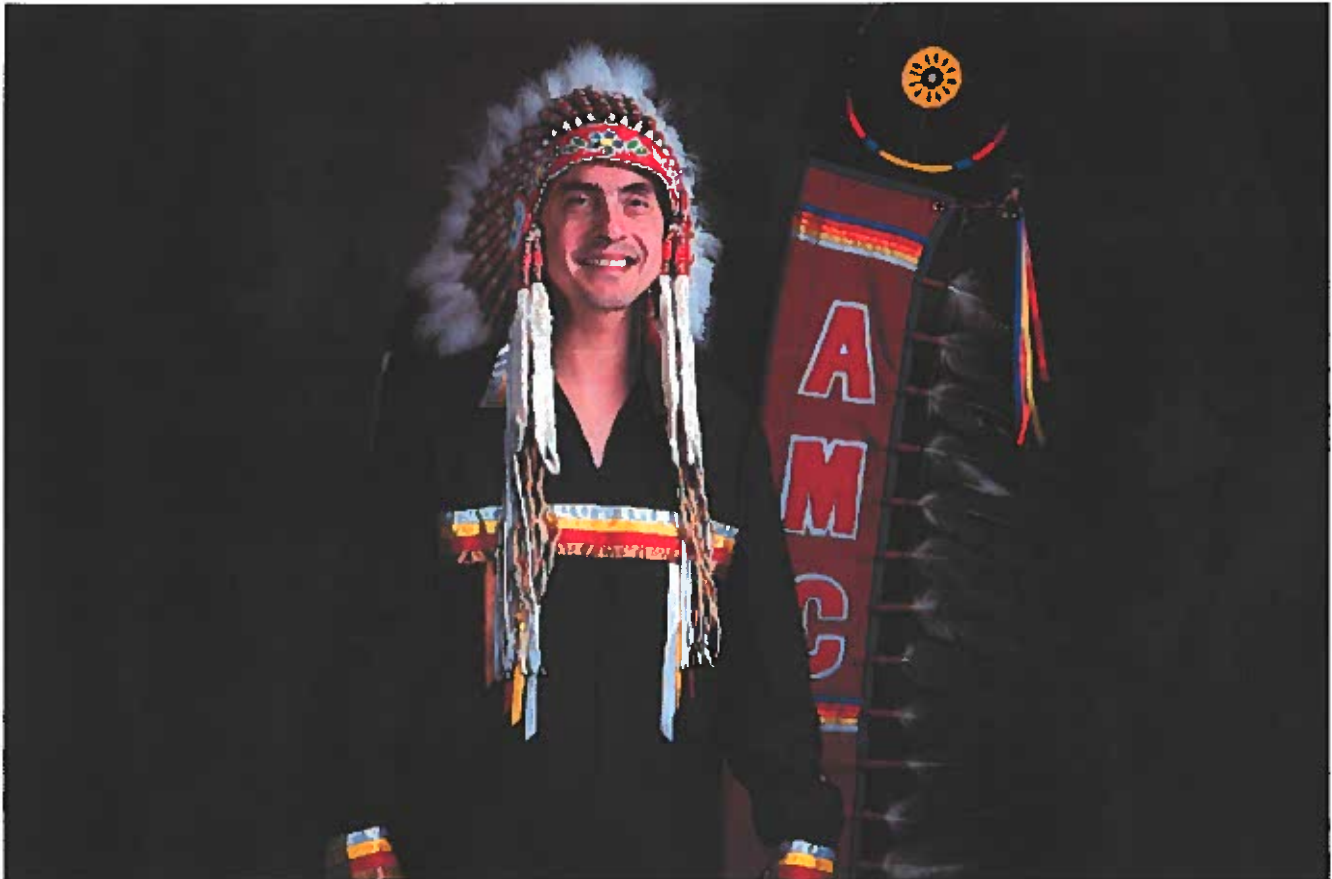
- ▶ promote, preserve, and protect Aboriginal and Treaty rights for First Nation people in Manitoba;
- ▶ preserve and enhance the rights and freedoms of First Nations in Manitoba as distinct peoples;
- ▶ strengthen and restore the foundations of First Nation cultures, traditions, languages, economies, and societies;
- ▶ affirm First Nation rights as peoples to exercise and practice self-determination and self-government;
- ▶ protect the integrity and authority of each First Nation's customs, laws, and practices; and
- ▶ preserve and enhance the role of equal participation of First Nation women within political, economic, and social spheres of First Nation governments and organizations.

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GRAND CHIEF'S MESSAGE

2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CHIEFS IN ASSEMBLY



TANSI, GREETINGS TO CHIEFS, COUNCIL, ELDERS AND OUR FIRST NATION CITIZENS AND PARTNERS.

It is an honour to be serving as your Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC). This past year, the AMC has worked on several events, partnerships and success stories.

The AMC has dedicated employees and senior staff who work to improve quality of life for our citizenship here in Manitoba. While this fiscal year was a productive year for our organization as we worked on a number of innovative projects, the year ended with such uncertainty with the announcement of the COVID-19 pandemic and a provincial state of emergency that was announced by

our leadership and by government in March 2020. We found ourselves in uncharted waters as we watched countries around the world scramble to respond to this pandemic.

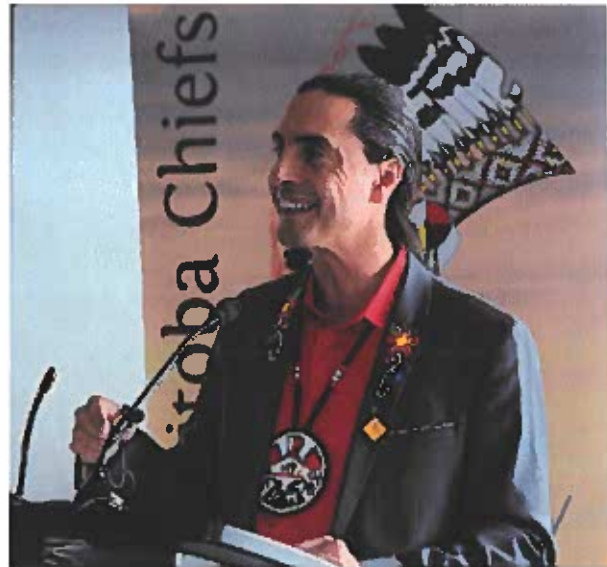
While we are all at risk, we also all have a role in helping to minimize the spread of this pandemic. Some of our First Nation citizens are at heightened risk, due to age, underlying health, geographic locations, or a combination of all those factors. That is the reason this year, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, for the very first time in the history of our organization, had to cancel our 32nd Annual General Assembly and the election for the Grand Chief. It has been postponed until the summer of 2021.

We did so in order to ensure that our Nations remained safe. As such, I look forward to continuing to serve you as the Grand Chief and humbly thank you for the support for this next year.

It has been an amazing year, with many successes in initiating discussions and negotiating funding agreements with and for our First Nations with the federal and provincial governments. The first week of the fiscal year began with discussions on environmental protection on Reserve Lands with regard to regulatory and capacity gaps on reserve and how to address these gaps followed by a presentation in Ottawa to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs where I gave recommendations on how to enhance capacity and retain qualified staff in the delivery of essential services on reserve.

Our office traveled to Ottawa a number of times this year to lobby for First Nations in Manitoba. Our office continued to push for the implementation of the Bringing our Children Home Act – a made in Manitoba solution to address the child welfare crisis in our region. Our office pushed for increased organizational capacity dollars for our provincial organizations and tribal councils. Unfortunately our core operating budgets have not changed and we are still funded with the cuts implemented by the Harper government. My office continues to push for funding arrangements that will not leave our First Nations and their affiliated organization operating under minimal funding. That is why we started work on Regional Transformation with the Department of Indigenous Services of Canada.

Our office was successful in securing funding from Canada on health transformation, education transformation and child services through our First Nations Family Advocate Office. The work done under these files can be found later in this report. We are confident that these efforts will provide our First Nations with the required resources and supports to begin to change the course of health service delivery, education and child welfare in our Nations.



As the Grand Chief, I meet regularly with federal Ministers and bureaucrats to advise them of the positions of First Nations in Manitoba. I take the direction and mandate given to me by the Chiefs in Manitoba through our Assemblies and our Executive Council meetings.

In this last year, our office also worked to facilitate meetings directly between federal officials and individual First Nations so your local governments can move forward on specific projects and initiatives unique to your Nations. The recognition of our sovereign jurisdictions requires that we have our own processes, negotiating tables, and agreements that respect the autonomy of our Nations and our historical relationships with the federal government. AMC offers support, facilitation, and advocacy for your Nations in the spirit of helping to realize the implementation of those Nation-to-Nation partnerships. My office continued to push for governments to honour the discussions we have had in terms of developing and funding innovative ways of recognizing and implementing our sovereign jurisdiction and our inherent, Aboriginal, Treaty, and title rights in the Manitoba region.



Our work in governance reform continues as well. We were pleased to see the approval of the new AMC Constitutional Amendments that improve the way we conduct our Assemblies, our Chiefs Committees and the role of the Grand Chief.

There are many congratulatory notes to be made for events that occurred throughout the year. We have included a section in this year's report to acknowledge these successes including but not limited to the opening of the new Nursing Station in God's Lake First Nation; the York Factory First Nation School Grand Opening; the Microtel Grand Opening in Long Plain First Nation, and the Hometown Hockey Event held in the Peguis First Nation.

Partnerships continue to be a priority. In addition to acknowledging our partners who supported our successful Jingle Mingle Christmas event, we were pleased to meet with the new RCMP Commanding Officer to discuss how we could continue the good work on the Memorandum of Agreement we have that allows us to develop ways in which to improve the working

relationship between First Nations and the RCMP. We continue to develop partnerships for employment and business opportunities through partnerships with Working Warriors, DCR Strategies and the Izzy Asper School of Business. Work continues on establishing a partnership with both the province and the federal government to address the shortfall in service to our incarcerated First Nation citizens. We are working to address this situation and it is why my office invited the Supreme Court Justices to make their first historic tour of Canada that started off in Winnipeg. We will continue to push for solutions that work for our Nations and citizens. Despite all that has occurred with the COVID-19 pandemic and work that was forced to slow down, I recognize the work has only begun with these initiatives. We will continue to support the initiatives our Chiefs direct us to undertake.

This past year saw our office work on a number of innovative strategies to bring economic opportunity and control of services to our Nations. We continued to work on the Indigenous Freshwater Fish Marketing Limited Partnership (IFFMLP) initiative that the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and its member First Nations have resolved to bring to fruition for the benefit of all 1700 inland fishers associated with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC). Aligned with its Look North Strategy, and as part of a larger strategy for devolution and privatization, the government of Manitoba stated that it no longer wishes to own/operate airports located on First Nations land, and are now willing to move forward to transfer ownership and operation of these airports to a First Nations collective. With the support of leadership, our office set out to work with the Province and our membership to offer an initial process for a way forward on transferring ownership of these airports, ferries, etc. to First Nation ownership.

Our office hosted our Annual Jingle Mingle event at the RBC Convention Centre this past December. We had an incredible turnout of over 800 people. Indigenous performers from all over Canada such as Murray Porter, Florant Vallant from Kashtin, Tracy Bone, Eagle and Hawk, the C-Weed Band, Keewatin Breeze, the

Mosquitoz and of course our very own King of the North - Ernest Monias, came to play for all those in attendance. The Grey Cup even made an appearance. All funds raised went to support the work of the EAGLE Urban Transition Centre and the First Nations Family Advocate Office. This event would not have been the success it was without the support of our sponsors, First Nations, the various organization that came out as well as the hard work of the AMC staff who put this all together.

As we as First Nations faced yet another pandemic, there has thankfully been a shift in how the federal government is assisting First Nations to prepare for the COVID-19 pandemic. There is recognition of the vulnerability of our First Nations peoples and the challenges of remote Nations accessing health care and supplies. A \$305-million fund aimed at helping our First Nations leadership deal with the COVID-19 pandemic was announced on March 11, 2020. Through successful regional lobbying efforts, First Nations in Manitoba were one of the first in the country to receive their pandemic response funding. As per direction from leadership, the AMC applied for the off-reserve COVID-19 financial assistance and our office was successful in securing resources to assist First Nation citizenship living in Winnipeg. At the time of this report, we did submit a second proposal to be able to assist First Nations living in other urban centres.



Reflecting on the 2019/2020 year, major emphasis has been on Innovation and Transformation through our Treaties. Treaties are the foundation of our relationship with the Crown through which we can address the challenges our Nations face as a whole. One of the ways that we are working to address these issues is through the pursuit of bilateral funding agreements and arrangements with Canada which will allow our AMC Chiefs to directly engage with Canada. Within these discussions, we are addressing the impacts and high cost of our remote Nations, exploring and capitalizing on economic and resource development, and pursuing major infrastructure investments.

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs is committed to working to improve the lives of our Nations and especially our children by working with our Chiefs and Councils. In memory of our Elders and leaders who have passed on within this past year; we are grateful for their guidance and contribution in working towards healthy and prosperous Nations and Nation-building.

This annual report demonstrates the progress we have made as well as the future prospects we have to provide greater opportunities for our First Nations to protect our rights and strengthen our Nations. This last year was filled with many challenges and successes as the staff and I, together with your support and leadership, continue to coordinate with, advocate for, and assist First Nations working with federal, provincial, and municipal governments to implement our sovereign jurisdictions and build a future of prosperity and well-being for our people.

Each year First Nation leadership in Manitoba gather to discuss important issues that impact our Nations. It is at these tables that Chiefs create unified positions for First Nations in Manitoba—sometimes this includes all First Nations in Manitoba but sometimes it includes positions specific to the needs of those First Nations in certain nation-based, territorial, or Treaty areas. No matter how our individual Nations govern locally, or on which projects different collectives of our First Nations work—we always come together in the end to support one another and show strength in unity.

It is the Chiefs of First Nations in Manitoba that give me the mandate to carry forward positions to all levels of government and be that strong voice that ensures governments are working directly for the benefit of our Nations.

Over the course of this last year, while advancing a collective agenda, the AMC has been able to initiate a number of key projects that will benefit our Nations and citizens—initiatives that will enhance capacity at the community level. These include:

- acting as a flow-through continued engagement on First Nations Universal Health Accord;
- continued engagement on First Nations Regional Education Agreement and Funding Model;
- continued engagement on transformation activities of the Department of Indigenous Services Canada;
- acted as a flow through for monies received for First Nations Early Learning and Child Care to go directly to each of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba;
- MOU signing ceremony between the AMC and Premier Brian Pallister, to work towards the establishment of a Manitoba First Nations Airport Authority;
- advocacy for drawing down funds for First Nations COVID-19 assistance;
- continued legal advocacy to fight hydro rate increases in First Nations;
- hosted the Joint Regional Transformation gathering with the Department of Indigenous Services; and
- hosted a historic meeting with the Supreme Court Justices.

In an effort to improve communication with our First Nation members, funders and partners, the AMC developed new ways of communicating with our leadership that included a dedicated Facebook page and



a new application to be downloaded onto a phone for up-to-date information on the work we are doing. We continue to send regular updates on various government announcements regarding funding, legislative changes, and other initiatives to each of our First Nations.

There is no substitute for grassroots contact with our leaders, our people, and the issues we are striving to address. That is why I continue to take every opportunity to travel to our Nations and work directly with our leadership. I am very grateful for the hospitality and the wisdom that you have shared with me.

I believe that listening to our leadership is a way to ensure effective government. We do this through hosting our bi-monthly Chiefs Assemblies and many of our initiatives and projects have technical advisory groups or Chiefs Committees so that we may hear from a wide range of community members, elected officials and staff.

The list of highlights I have provided can leave no doubt that the AMC had a busy and successful year. These successes are in no small way owed to the contributions of our First Nation leadership and our staff in our Nations and here at the AMC. We take every opportunity to remind all levels of government and other funders of the contributions of our citizens that participate in our committees, at our Assemblies and at our various events throughout the year. Our women, men, young people and Elders are called on more often than those of any other First Nation group to support the work of advancing First Nation rights and interests.

Ta-Mun-Yak akwa Ta-Akom-missyak

I would like to thank and acknowledge our First Nation Chiefs and Councils, the AMC Executive Council, the AMC Women's Council and the AMC Elder's Council. Nothing that took place in the last year could have been achieved without their selfless dedication and vision.

I also want to give a big thank you to our dedicated, hardworking staff that supports the leadership in all areas of activity. I acknowledge the unwavering dedication of the AMC staff in their continued commitment, hard work, and professionalism in advancing First Nation issues and the AMC. I want to thank the staff in each of our Nations for the services they are delivering to our people, including those that volunteer in various capacities. I want to acknowledge the staff of our affiliate organizations who also work with our office to make life better for our people.

We will continue to work towards achieving the mandates given to our office and as set by our leaders of the past. I look forward to a new path forward as we strengthen the relationship we have amongst ourselves and set a higher standard for our relationships with the Crown governments in terms of the recognition, implementation, and accommodation of our Treaties and self-governing agreements.

It's been a privilege to serve our 62 First Nations this past year. It is inspiring to see the resilience, strength and hope that is demonstrated by our Chiefs and Councils, and most of all the citizens of our First Nations. I look forward to engaging with our Chiefs and Councils to move our Nations forward over this next year.

Ekosani, Miigwetch, Wopida, Mahsi Cho,

GRAND CHIEF ARLEN DUMAS



MESSAGE FROM AMC ELDER'S COUNCIL

ANIINI! TANSII!

The Council of Elders have faith and belief that our Nations and people will grow stronger in spirit and embrace who we are to find those connections of our true identity, languages and natural laws.

During this past year, the Elder's Council had opportunity to participate and provide their knowledge at:

- AMC's 31st Annual General Assembly;
- Chief's Assemblies held specific to Jordan's Principle, Bringing our Children Home, and Gaming;
- Chief's Committee meetings on: Health, Emergency Planning, Education, Languages, Governance, Communications, Executive Council of Chiefs, First Nations Women's Council; and the Treaty Commission;
- AMC-Federal Government meetings on Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TRCM);
- Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Membership and Citizenship Forum;
- AMC quarterly Elder's meetings (April, May, June, October, December)
- TRCM Treaty Education Initiative, grade 12 school initiated course and post-secondary course on Treaties Level 1;
- Memorial Ceremony and Feasts for the late Elders Elmer Courchene and Doris Pratt;
- Annual Nibi Gathering;
- Special meetings & Ceremony with Public Interest Law Centre;
- Special meetings and Ceremony for the Wahbanung Document & Health meetings with Turtle Lodge Central House of Learning;



- Zoom meetings on languages, Treaty implementation and general Elder's Council meetings.

The Elders wish to extend a special thank you to each of the First Nation leadership and Nation for their excellent leadership to ensure the safety and well-being of their citizens during this challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In closing, congratulations to the Turtle Lodge Central House of Knowledge in facilitating two years of meetings with Knowledge Keepers and the release of "*Wahbanung: 50 Years After Wahbung: Our Tomorrow – The Resurgence of a People: Clearing The Path For Our Survival*". This is a very important document that we believe all should review and read.

Respectfully,

Elder Florence Paynter, Elder Dr. Harry Bone, Elder Sherry Copenace, Elder James Cote, Elder William Lathlin, Elder D'Arcy Linklater, Elder Joesph Hyslop and Elder Katherine Whitecloud

Kapeh mina chi kwayanchiyun

This offering of humble words spoken to the Spirit was developed together with the instructors and participants at the Turtle Lodge Anishinaabemowin Instructor Language Training in November 2017 and adapted at the Anishinaabemowin camp, August 2018. This is just one example of words of appreciation and invocation to the Spirit.

To Ask in a Humble Way

Hello Creator, Who is so kind, in a humble way, I thank you,

Mother Earth, Who is so kind, in a humble way, I thank you,

You, Also,

The Grandfathers of the all Directions,

In a humble way, I thank you,

I thank you for the gift of Fire, the gift of Water, the gift of the Breath of Life; and also, the gift of Food,

Love us Creator

Anishinaabe Kagiizhiitaagoziwin

Boozhoo Manido, Gaa-kii-zhay-wat-ti-zi-yen, Ki-ka-gii-zomigo, kina-naa-komigo,

Miday Aki, Gaa-kii-zhay-wat-ti-zi-yen, Ki-ka-gii-zomigo, kina-naa-komigo

Kii-na-waaMin-na-waa,

Ni-mishomis-si-tok, En-dis-son-dann-i-mak,

Ki-ka-gii-zomigo, kina-naa-komigo,

Ka-miin-nii-yong, Ishkotay, Nibi, Pa-git-ta-nag-mo-win, Minawaa, mli-jii-win,

Zah-way-na-mish-naam Manido

Source: Wahbanung, *The Resurgence of a People: Clearing the path for Our Survival – A Summary* © Turtle Lodge Central House of Knowledge

MESSAGE FROM AMC WOMEN'S COUNCIL

AS CHAIR OF THE AMC WOMEN'S COUNCIL, IT IS MY HONOUR TO EXTEND GREETINGS ON BEHALF OF OUR COMMITTEE.

I wish to acknowledge and welcome new member Councillor Sophie Lockhart, Fox Lake Cree Nation to the Council. Other members of the AMC Women's Council include:

- ▶ Chief Karen Batson, Pine Creek First Nation
- ▶ Chief Lorna Bighetty, Mathias Colomb First Nation
- ▶ Chief Shirley Ducharme, O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation
- ▶ Chief Viola Eastman, Canupawakpa Dakota Nation
- ▶ Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation
- ▶ Chief Vera Mitchell, Poplar River First Nation
- ▶ Councilor Sarah Monias, St. Theresa Point First Nation
- ▶ Councilor Darlene Osborne, Norway House Cree Nation
- ▶ Chief Deborah Smith, Brokenhead Ojibway Nation
- ▶ Chief Doreen Spence, Tataskweyak Cree Nation



The Women's Council provides oversight on issues such as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Human Trafficking/Sexual Exploitation, Gender Equality, Child and Family Matters; and Jordan's Principle.

The Women's Council approach to addressing these issues is to ensure the situation of First Nation women, children, families, and communities improve and that there is movement to restore cultural and social harmony.

In the past few months, we have experienced a slowdown in all aspects of our lives because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have had to develop a communications plan on how to continue the work to the best of our abilities and safest way possible. As a Council, we realized that our meetings had to be held

either by Zoom or via teleconference calls.

I express my gratitude and appreciation for the commitment and dedication of the members of the AMC Women's Council in sharing their knowledge and passion to restoring our sacred place for all First Nations women in Manitoba.

We continue to call on our First Nations leadership in supporting us as together we strive to build healthy, strong, and vibrant First Nation people and Nations.

**Chief Francine Meeches, Swan Lake First Nation,
AMC Women's Council Chairperson**



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF CHIEFS CHAIRPERSON, GRAND CHIEF ARLEN DUMAS

The Executive Council of Chiefs (ECC) receives its mandate from the *AMC Constitution* and via Chiefs-in-Assembly certified resolutions. The Council functions as a source of authority between Assemblies and is composed of the Grand Chief, five Chiefs selected by northern First Nations, and five Chiefs selected by southern First Nations. The membership of the ECC is as follows:

AMC WOMEN'S COUNCIL

- ▶ Chief Francine Meeches, Swan Lake First Nation

SOUTHERN REPRESENTATIVES

- ▶ Chief Cornell McLean, Lake Manitoba First Nation, Interlake Reserve Tribal Council
- ▶ Chief Ken Chalmers, Birdtail Sioux Dakota Nation, Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council
- ▶ Chief Norman Bone, Keeseekoowenin First Nation, West Region Tribal Council
- ▶ Chief Roland Hamilton, Bloodvein First Nation, South East Resource Development Corporation

INDEPENDENT SOUTHERN REPRESENTATIVES (ONE VOTE)

- ▶ Chief David Crate, Fisher River Cree Nation
- ▶ Chief Derrick Henderson, Sagkeeng First Nation
- ▶ Chief Murray Clearsky, Waywayseecappo First Nation

NORTHERN REPRESENTATIVES

- ▶ Chief Marie Wood, St. Theresa Point First Nation, Island Lake Tribal Council
- ▶ Chief John Clarke, Barren Lands First Nation, Keewatin Tribal Council
- ▶ Chief Harold Turner, Misipawistik Cree Nation, Swampy Cree Tribal Council

INDEPENDENT NORTHERN REPRESENTATIVES (2 VOTES)

- ▶ Chief Marcel Moody, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
- ▶ Chief Larson Anderson, Norway House Cree Nation



- ▶ Chief Shirley Ducharme, O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation
- ▶ Chief David Monias, Cross Lake Band of Indians

THE ECC:

- deliberates and provides a record of decisions on a range of issues as mandated by the various resolutions passed at our Chiefs Assemblies;
- acts as the body to vote on resolutions that get carried over from the various Assemblies that, due to time constraints, are not passed at those meetings; and
- maintains linkages to AMC-mandated organizations by issuing a call for names process to fill vacant Board of Director positions.

These mandated organizations include:

- the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC);
- the First Peoples Economic Growth Fund (FPEGF);
- the First Peoples Development Inc. (FPDI); and
- the First Nations Health and Social Secretariat (FNHSSM)

STATUS OF ACTIVITIES

The ECC held meetings during the 2019-2020 fiscal year on the following dates: May 29, 2019, June 19, 2019, October 22, 2019, January 3, 2020, and March 13, 2020. These all achieved quorum and various decisions and motions were passed on the following items but not limited to:

- **Support for First Nations to Develop Criteria for Federal Funding to First Nations in Manitoba** – call on Canada to commit to immediately get out of the way of First Nations in Manitoba, fund First Nations directly and allow them to set their own funding priorities;
- **Call on Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) – Escort Services to Include Two Escort Travel Funding and Appropriate Accommodations** - AMC to draft policy alternatives for First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) to fund all direct and/or indirect transportation, accommodations and multiple escort costs to the NIHB Program;
- **Support for First Nations in Manitoba to use Jordan's Principle Funding for Infrastructure and Capital Costs** - support the transformation of funding from Department of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) for the implementation of Jordan's Principle for First Nations in Manitoba include the use of funding for infrastructure and capital costs to support such services and programs;
- **Call for the cancellation of all AMC related events due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and**

declare a state of emergency;

- **Approve the recommended governance structure for the First Nation Early Learning Child Care (FNELCC Secretariat); and approve that the AMC Secretariat continue to flow funding for Indigenous Early Learning Child Care for fiscal year 2020-2021; and**
- **Approval of the establishment of an ECC sub-committee made up of 2-3 Chiefs along with an Elder to do a critical review and renewal of the AMC Constitution to reflect today's needs.**

The Council has adopted 40 motions to advance the work of the First Nations leadership in Manitoba. We wish to thank the AMC Elder's Council for its continued support and guidance in advancing the work that we do. Our knowledge keepers are essential to ensuring we never forget the spirit and intent of the Treaties and agreements our past leaders negotiated that would last for generations.



MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

STAFF

- Natalie Ballentyne, Interim Executive Director
- Ritchie Arthurson, Director of Finance
- Miranda McIvor, Human Resources Administrator

INTRODUCTION

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) Secretariat core functions are:

Political Infrastructure: Grand Chief; Executive Council of Chiefs; Personnel & Finance Chiefs Committee; Annual, Special and General Assemblies; Chiefs Committees; First Nation Women's Council and Elder's Council.

Administration: Executive Director, Finance, Human Resources, Information Management, Information Technology, Media Relations and Communications.

Strategic Policy Coordination and Analysis: Inter-departmental policy and coordination capacity including conducting the necessary research, community engagement in the development of AMC policy position /documentation; providing briefings to leadership; and meetings on policy engagement with federal, and where required, provincial departments. Under the direction of the Grand Chief and the Executive Director, senior staff implement decisions made by the AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly resolutions and Executive Council of Chiefs motions.

AMC senior staff meet on operational matters, along with and under the direction of the Chiefs Committee on Personnel and Finance, which includes:

- approval and implementing AMC Work Plans and Budgets;
- Financial Management (in accordance with AMC policies and procedures);

- Human Resources (in accordance with AMC policies and procedures); and
- overall performance measurement and evaluation.

The work plan of the AMC Secretariat includes, but is not limited to:

- First Nations Governance
- Education
- Health Transformation
- Climate Change and the Environment
- Economic Development
- Social Development
- Children, Women & Families
- Housing & Infrastructure; On/Off Reserve Housing
- Research Partnerships
- Legislative and Policy Reviews and Development
- Intergovernmental Relationship Building and Partnerships
- Urban First Nations Strategies

The Management Team works with Department of Indigenous Services Canada (DISC), Health Canada (FNIHB) Manitoba Region, various departments within the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg, to negotiate annual work plans and budgets in support of First Nations common issues regarding the areas listed above and ensuring the Secretariat is dedicated exclusively to the social, cultural, educational and economic development of First Nations people.



The organization's annual work plan activities are based on strategic planning by directives to meet First Nations common priorities i.e.:

- Facilitate support to the First Nations inherent right to self-determination through informed participation and decision-making and ratification of outcomes;
- Reflect priorities that deal with First Nation issues at community level in addressing changes to legislation, regulations, policies, procedures and improvements to programs and services;
- Promote opportunities for collaborative partnership with Canada and the Province on basic organizational capacity and support for research activities on common community initiatives and institutional development; and
- Provide appropriate timeframes for achieving and measuring strategic outcomes, organizational performance, effectiveness and financial accountabilities.

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

The AMC Secretariat performs a significant advocacy function to support the directives provided through Chiefs resolutions. In 2019/2020, AMC passed 40 Executive Council of Chiefs Motions and 42 Chief-in-Assembly resolutions addressing common issues.

These directives and activities are developed to identify key issues and formulate alternatives to influence changes to existing and proposed federal and/or provincial policies and programs. Meeting timely deadlines requires regular identification of critical and emerging issues with preparation of the relevant documentation for leadership review and decision-making.

Although the AMC continues to be under resourced, AMC continues to push to meet organizational and program objectives.

LINKAGES TO FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES

The AMC Secretariat provides relevant, ongoing and consistent updates on the activities of the organization through the AMC Website (www.manitobachiefs.com), Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and live streaming of Assemblies, Workshops, Forums and Events via YouTube), and distribution of various publications. The Grand Chief, management and staff attend workshops and meetings and participate at various forums with communities, senior officials, working groups and committees to ensure information is gathered, analyzed and reported to the leadership, particularly on issues that may impact First Nations programs and services.

A central goal of the Secretariat is to support and advocate for First Nation community based needs and action plans focused on strategic outcomes. Preparation of briefing materials is regularly completed on a range of issues with various strategies and reports provided to the Chiefs-in-Assembly, Executive Council, and Chief Committees.

To ensure projects and initiatives are community driven there are also technical working groups which consist of community and/or regional representatives. Feedback and reports are developed for leadership and First Nations members.

AMC monitors regional information and coordination on national First Nation and federal government initiatives, including but not limited to the following areas: Policy and Legislation, Issues impacting First Nations, Women, Children, Families, Urban Strategy, Social Development, federal government restructuring, Federal Budget, and Federal Election strategies.

STATUS OF ACTIVITIES

Senior staff meet to discuss overall issues relating to management, financial monitoring and reporting, AMC Constitution, Chiefs-in-Assembly resolutions, Executive Council motions and funding agreements.

These senior staff also work with the Personnel & Finance Chiefs Committee to review administrative and financial operations. The Personnel & Finance Committee reports to the Executive Council of Chiefs and at the Annual General Assembly on the operations of the Secretariat, including the audited financial statements.

Meetings are held with Senior Officials from DISC (HQ, Region), Health Canada, City of Winnipeg and the Province on key initiatives and projects.

These senior staff also work with the various Program Managers regarding regular reporting on activities, human resource issues and funding challenges.

One of AMC's core functions is to communicate with its members. The AMC provides ongoing monitoring and maintenance of AMC's existing network system. They also collaborate on projects to ensure efficiency in communications to First Nations and the general public. Due to the lack of resources, AMC continues to have challenges with updating the network infrastructure. The IT technician continues to work towards upgrades, creating and revising policies and procedures related to the network infrastructure.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

- AMC/FNFAO Beyond Trauma: Walking with Resiliency 3 day conference April 16-18, 2019
- AMC Chiefs Assembly on Jordan's Principle and Health May 7-8, 2019
- AMC/ISC Regional Transformation Workshop June 4-5, 2019
- AMC Manitoba First Nations Engagement Session on First Nations Water and Waste Management Legislation July 15-16, 2019
- AMC 31st Annual General Assembly July 30-August 1, 2019
- AMC Chiefs Assembly on Gaming October 29-30, 2019
- FNFAO Bringing Our Children Home National Gathering November 25-27, 2019
- AMC Christmas Open House December 11, 2019
- AMC Jingle Mingle December 13, 2019
- AMC Information Session on Bill C-92 January 28, 2020
- AMC Chiefs Assembly on Social Development January 29-30, 2020
- AMC Impact Assessment Act: Enhancing First Nation Capacity February 27-28, 2020
- AMC Manitoba First Nations Flood Preparedness Virtual Forum March 18-19, 2020



JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE SERVICE COORDINATION

STAFF

- Marcel Balfour - Project Manager
- Lisa Dunsmore, Administrative Support
- Curtis Mallet, Policy Analyst
- Roxanne Meawasige, Policy Analyst
- Jaron Hart, Policy Analyst
- Samantha Folster, Policy Analyst

INTRODUCTION

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) Jordan's Principle Service Coordination Unit was created through *Resolution APR-17.12 Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Jordan's Principle Engagement and Service Coordination*. Resolution APR-17. 12 resolved that the Chiefs-in-Assembly continue to endorse and support the work of the AMC Secretariat in working with the various government and First Nation partners to fully implement the spirit and intent of the Jordan's Principle Child First Initiative, both on and off-reserve.

ACTIVITIES

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Manitoba Joint Gathering

The AMC Manitoba Joint Gathering was hosted on June 4-5, 2019 which provided an opportunity for Manitoba First Nations to connect with federal and other partners to develop an understanding of opportunities, challenges and best practices that are occurring in Manitoba First Nations.

It also provided a forum for dialogue with federal and First Nation partners that identified opportunities for collaboration, completion of a satisfactory survey of the

Department of Indigenous Services Canada including the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB).

Project Manager, Marcel Balfour and Policy Analyst Jaron Hart were asked to co-present with Manitoba Region FNIHB Jordan's Principle Focal Point, Joe Gacheru. This included a presentation on the regional work taking place to further implement the Jordan's Principle Child First Initiative followed by a question and answer period.

Jordan's Principle Technical Advisory Group Strategic Planning and Terms of Reference

Through a series of facilitated workshops, the Jordan's Principle Technical Advisory Group created the Jordan's Principle Technical Advisory Group Terms of Reference and Strategic Plan.

The strategic plan clearly identifies where the technical table is, where they want to be and the steps required to achieve their goals. The strategic plan strives to meet the long-term goal of the full implementation of the Jordan's Principle Child First Initiative, both on and off-reserve.

The Jordan's principle Technical Advisory Group Terms of Reference outlines the technical body's objective which is to oversee a Manitoba First Nations approach to the full implementation of Jordan's Principle, including the federal government's response to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decisions and the Province of Manitoba's approach to implementing Jordan's Principle on and off reserve. It also clearly defines membership, recommendation making, Jordan's Principle Technical Advisory Group Roles and Accountability Structure.

Both the Jordan's Principle Technical Advisory Group Terms of Reference and Strategic Plan was approved by the AMC Women's Council in August 2019, and subsequently approved by the AMC Executive Council of Chiefs at their October 22, 2019 meeting.

Jordan's Principle Equity Roundtable

On January 18, 2019, the AMC Women's Council met and was presented with options on how to go forward. They agreed to recommend to the AMC Executive Council of Chiefs that AMC resolution JUL-18.05 be amended with a revised Jordan's Principle Equity Roundtable to include a First Nations Advisory Table and replace the First Nations and Government Senior Officials table with a Senior Tripartite Table.

Since then the Jordan's Principle Technical Advisory Group had been meeting regularly to finalize the Jordan's Principle Equity Round table: Jordan's Principle Technical Advisory Group Terms of Reference and Strategic Plan which was subsequently approved by the AMC Executive Council of Chiefs on October 22, 2019.

The Jordan's Principle Technical Advisory Group have continued meeting monthly following the approval of their Terms of Reference and hosted their first technical meeting in Norway House Cree Nation following an invitation from their Chief and Council and Health Director. Subsequent meetings of the Jordan's Principle Technical Advisory Group included discussion on how best to implement the strategic plan, best practice and information sharing and quarterly meetings with the Manitoba Region FNIHB office and Manitoba Jordan's Principle Specialized Service Providers.

Joint Education and Health Directors Meeting on Jordan's Principle

The Jordan's Principle Service Coordination Unit organized a Joint Education and Health Directors Meeting on Jordan's Principle. The rationale for the joint meeting was to bring together Manitoba First Nations Jordan's Principle Stakeholders, given the Jordan's Principle Child First Initiative is run through Education and Health Directorates throughout Manitoba First Nations.

The Joint Meeting included opening remarks from Chief Betsy Kennedy on behalf of the AMC Women's Council in addition to opening remarks from AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas. Participants were provided an update on the Education Regional Funding Formula and Health Transformation respectively. The remainder of the

meeting included a presentation by Policy Analysts Jaron Hart and Samantha Folster on the regional implementation of Jordan's Principle and subsequent breakout sessions on SOAR Analysis.

SOAR Analysis

The decision was made to utilize the strategic planning tool, strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results ("SOAR") to guide the working discussions focusing on the positive aspects of Jordan's Principle within their community, respective departments, and/or region(s). The overall purpose of the SOAR was to bring both Education and Health Directors that serve Manitoba First Nations, utilizing their expert knowledge in the area of Jordan's Principle and learning about and bring together their shared strengths, opportunities, aspirations in order to identify potential results.

National Bringing Our Children Home Conference

The National Bringing Our Children Home Conference was hosted by the First Nations Family Advocate Office on November 25-27, 2019 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The national conference presented an opportunity for participants to discuss ways of restoring First Nations jurisdiction over our children and families by providing preventative supports. Additionally participants learnt how to maintain independence from the branches of government while engaging on key issues related to families within the Children and Family Services system, including how to navigate the CFS system and numerous team building activities.

Policy Analysts Jaron Hart and Samantha Folster were asked to host a breakout session on the Regional Implementation of Jordan's Principle, followed by a question and answer period. The breakout session was well attended and received positive feedback from participants, further connecting children and families with the Jordan's Principle Child First Initiative.

Evaluation on the Regional Implementation of Jordan's Principle

Resolution JUL-18.05 – Replacing the Jordan's Principle Terms of Reference Officials Working Group (TOROWG) resolved among other things, that the Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the AMC

Ta-Mun-Yak akwa Ta-Akom-missyak



Secretariat to work with representatives from the MKO, SCO, FNHSSM and MFNERC to design an appropriate evaluation process and inform Canada that it will seek to perform an independent evaluation on the regional implementation of Jordan's Principle.

Pursuant to Resolution JUL-18.05 and a remedial solution of *Sumner-Pruden v Manitoba* Summary of Decision, the AMC entered into a research collaboration agreement with the Public Interest Law Centre (PILC) and Dr. Vandna Sinha for the Research Project "The implementation of Jordan's Principle in Manitoba."

Who is doing this study?

This study is commissioned by the Assembly of First Nations, in collaboration with a team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars from fields of study including Social Work, Child and Youth Care, Occupational Therapy, and Law. Our team further includes representatives from [the Jordan's Principle Service Coordination Unit at AMC](#). This team will be guided by an Advisory Committee that includes broad representation from across First Nations in Manitoba.

What is this study about?

This study aims to describe the impact of Jordan's Principle on health, education, and social services for all First Nations children in Manitoba, including those living within First Nations and those living outside of First Nations in urban and rural centers. This study has two parts: 1) An overview of the implementation of Jordan's Principle across Manitoba, and 2) Case studies that give a more in-depth description of Jordan's Principle in a few

communities. The Final Report resulting from this study will present evidence to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on the state of implementation of Jordan's Principle in Manitoba.

How was this study developed?

Based on her prior work with Pinaymootang First Nation, FNHSSM approached Dr. Vandna Sinha about conducting this study and helped to initiate the partnership with AMC. Dr. Sinha assembled a team of experts who developed the study design in partnership with the AMC. The research team will continue to collaborate with the AMC and the Jordan's Principle Service Coordination Unit during all parts of this study, work with an Advisory Committee, and participate regularly in the Jordan's Principle TAG meetings.

Who is the Research Team?

Our Research Team includes Dr. Vandna Sinha (McGill /UofColorado); Dr. Josée Lavoie (UofM/Ongomiizwin Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing); Dr. Marlyn Bennett* (UM/Social Work); Dr. Lucyna Lach (McGill /Social Work); Dr. Alison Gerlach (UVictoria/School of Child and Youth Care) ; Myra Tait* (Lawyer; UM/ Ongomiizwin Research); Samantha Folster* (AMC) . (* First Nations)

What is the timeline for the study?

- Collection & Review of Documents: June - October 2020
- Interviews: June-August 2020
Focus Groups, Surveys: September-October 2020
- Interim Report: January 2021
- Case Studies: January-February 2021

Who can participate in the study?

The research team plans to interview 20-25 Jordan's Principle policy specialists and advocates, case managers, and specialized service providers.

We may also conduct focus groups and surveys, for broader inclusion. We anticipate doing additional interviews for in-depth case studies in select communities.

What are the benefits of participating?

This study seeks to identify and document gaps in the implementation of Jordan's Principle in Manitoba. Participating First Nations will receive detailed documentation of the implementation of Jordan's Principle, and have opportunity to share information amongst case managers, both within and between First Nations in Manitoba. This research may also support the efforts of all Manitoba First Nations to advocate for more effective and appropriate services, including the potential to create a legal precedent. The findings of this study will become evidence in a CHRT hearing, which could result in an order requiring better implementation of Jordan's Principle.

What is required of participants?

Interview participants will be invited to discuss their knowledge about successes and challenges to implementing Jordan's Principle in a 1-hour interview with a member of our research team. Some participants may also be invited to form part of a focus group, or asked to complete a short survey. Participation is completely voluntary, and a participant may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from participation at any time.

What is the study's approach to OCAP Principles?

The Research Team acknowledges and respects the right to self-determination of First Nations in Manitoba, including the jurisdiction to decide about research and project in their Nations and communities. This research is built on meaningful engagement and mutually respectful interaction between the Research Team, JP TAG, and all participants. The research team agrees to respect the privacy, dignity, culture and rights of First Nations peoples as described as First Nations Principles of OCAP.

Specifically, this includes providing copies of interviews for participants to review, correct, and clarify, sharing Report drafts with participating First Nations for their review and comments, and collaborating with AMC on drafts prior to publication. If AMC chooses to pursue data repatriation, we will also transfer data from those participants who have given us their express consent to provide their information, including their identity, to AMC.

How does the study protect the confidentiality of participants?

This study is required to meet rigorous research ethics protocols, including from the Health Information Research Governance Committee and Research Ethics Review boards from several universities. A key consideration of these protocols is the protection of confidentiality of participants. All names of individuals, communities and programs, as well as any major geographic or place names will be removed from the data. At the conclusion of the study, AMC may choose to take possession of the research data. Identifying information will only be shared if those individuals have provided their written permission to allow disclosure.

I'm interested in this study. How can I contact you?

We are interested in everyone's experience and perspective. If you have information you believe is important to include in our study, please contact us directly by email: JPManitoba@gmail.com. While we may be limited in our ability to follow up with every individual who contacts us, we are very interested in hearing from you.

The purpose of this Agreement is to establish the terms of funding and a set of principles that will guide the conduct of the research. The goal of the project is to provide a descriptive portrait of the policy framework and the program supported by Jordan's Principle.

More specific objectives are to:

Jordan's Principle Policy and Procedures

From the onset, the AMC Secretariat was aware of the need for collaborative, innovative approaches to policy change and advocacy as we continue to work toward the full implementation of Jordan's Principle for our region. The sharing of information and collaboration among sectors is paramount, as policies and procedures in a variety of sectors did not have enough time to implement policy change to reflect the introduction of the Jordan's Principle Child First Initiative from both a national and regional level.

In particular, policy changes in the areas of child welfare, culture and language, education, health and social development. Many of these sectors are still playing catch up with respect to updating government, industry and organization policy and procedures to reflect the Jordan's Principle Child First Initiative and its legal obligation.

In fact, voluntary placement agreements are still in place in order to access supports and services through the form of addictions treatment and emergency foster beds due to the archaic policies and procedures still in existence prior to the introduction of the Jordan's Principle Child First Initiative.

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic states of emergency required physical distancing; therefore, virtual meetings were incorporated as the alternative to the Jordan's Principle Technical Advisory Group meetings. Many members expressed the difficulty to work with families while following COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.

Jordan's Principle Case Managers stayed in contact with families and provided information through social media, text and phone calls. Some First Nations faced obstacles when medical supply deliveries were delayed. A common issue all First Nation Jordan's Principle Case Managers faced were the processing of requests. Jordan's Principle requests are either accepted or denied at both the provincial and federal level. Ultimately the Jordan's Principle Service Coordination moves swiftly with focused goals and priorities which provide support in services and closing the gaps in First Nations. These included:

- Establish a governance structure for the Jordan's Principle Capacity Enhancement Centre which will be a one-stop central hub for First Nations in Manitoba;
- Create a suite of tools for First Nations to assist them in short and long-term planning and implementing of Jordan's Principle for their citizens;
- Provide a mechanism for First Nations to include Infrastructure and Capital Projects in the local implementation of Jordan's Principle;
- Analyze and provide options for pursuing a Jordan's Principle law which would, among other things, secure long term Jordan's Principle funding;
- Upon completion of the regional evaluation, identify existing gaps since the introduction of the Jordan's Principle Child First Initiative;
- Ensure regional participation in the Treasury Board submission, and that it is reflective of all the needs of First Nations in Manitoba;
- Work with existing non-First Nations service providers with a view to provide culturally appropriate services and eventually take over the services they provide;
- Have First Nations take over the regional implementation of Jordan's Principle from FNIHB-ISC, Manitoba Region; and
- Ongoing operation of the Jordan's Principle Capacity Enhancement Centre, with full involvement of, and accountability to, First Nations in Manitoba, that includes Alternative Service Delivery of the FNIHB-ISC, Manitoba Region approach to the implementation of Jordan's Principle through its Child First Initiative.

FIRST NATIONS

- 62 AMC member First Nations
- Represent their citizens on and off reserve
- Enhance capacity to provide services

SERVICE DELIVERY SPECIALISTS

- First Nations Case Managers
- Tribal Council Case coordinators
- EUTC Special Needs Advocates
- First point of contact to access services
- Informs the Technical Advisory Group

TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP

- 1 each from: AMC, MKO, SCO
- 1 each from: FNHSSM, MFNERC
- 1 Independent First Nations Case Managers
- 1 Representative from Norway House Cree Nation
- 1 Tribal Council Case Coordinator
- Recommends to the Advisory Group

CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT CENTER

- Board of Directors with reps from: AMC, MKO, SCO, FNHSSM, MFNERC, EUTC, FNFAO
- Works with existing service providers to provide culturally appropriate services and eventually provide those services
- Enhances First Nations Capacity

FIRST NATIONS ADVISORY TABLE

- AMC (1 Women's Council rep)
- MKO (Portfolio or Committee Chief)
- SCO (Portfolio or Committee Chief)
- 7 First Nations reps (Treaty tables)
- Ex officio reps: 1 provincial; 1 federal
- Advises the Tripartite Table
- Makes decisions on issues from the TAG
- Dispute Resolution

SENIOR TRIPARTITE TABLE

- 3 Grand Chiefs: AMC, MKO, SCO
- 1 AFN Manitoba Regional Chief
- 1 Manitoba Minister (Indigenous Affairs)
- 1 Canada Minister (DISC)
- Ongoing political Commitment to Jordan's Principle Equity Roundtable



FIRST NATIONS FAMILY ADVOCATE OFFICE



STAFF

- ▶ Sherry Audet, Reunification Lead
- ▶ Travis Bighetty, Restorative Justice Worker
- ▶ Jason Burnstick, Restorative Justice Worker
- ▶ Mary Burton, Grandmother
- ▶ Pamela Cameron, Administrative Assistant
- ▶ Jennifer Chartrand, Lead Assistant Advocate
- ▶ Lindey Courchene, Executive Assistant
- ▶ Cheryle Dreaver, Lead Family Wellness Mentor
- ▶ Bentley DuBois, Family Wellness Mentor
- ▶ Lisa Dunsmore, Administrative Assistant
- ▶ Mary Favel, Office Manager
- ▶ Shayne Foster-Inglis, Assistant Advocate
- ▶ Ilona Francis, Administrative Assistant
- ▶ Kayla Frank, Policy Analyst
- ▶ Alvin Henderson, Assistant Advocate
- ▶ Kendra Inglis, Advocacy Coordinator
- ▶ Megan Johnson, Assistant Advocate
- ▶ Elisabeth King, Family Engagement Worker
- ▶ Brittany Lavallee, Research/Writer
- ▶ Matthew Macfarlane, Administrative Assistant
- ▶ Lori Mainville, Program Coordinator
- ▶ Lana McKay, Kiipewii'chego
- ▶ Tina McKay, Family Engagement Worker
- ▶ Cora Morgan, First Nations Family Advocate
- ▶ Chris Pelletier, Communications Officer
- ▶ Jonah Powell, Research/Writer
- ▶ Jennifer Roulette, Family Wellness Mentor
- ▶ Stephanie Sinclair, Client Intake
- ▶ Karen Swain, Grandmother
- ▶ Myrna Thompson, Family Engagement Worker
- ▶ Noella Viner, Kiipewii'Cheg

INTRODUCTION

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs officially opened the First Nations Family Advocate Office on June 1, 2015. The office opened in ceremony and was gifted the name "Abinoojiyak Bigiwewag". This translates to "Our Children are Coming Home" in Anishinaabemowin.

The FNFAO provides advocacy to First Nations families that are involved with the Child and Family Services (CFS) system. The goal of the organization is to bring children currently in the system back to their families and home Nations where they belong. Using the guidance of traditional values and teachings, FNFAO offers programs and supports that encompass a holistic approach to healing families and children.

At the FNFAO, we challenge existing government practices and policies to help First Nations families to navigate system involvement. For too long, the practice of apprehending First Nations children in the CFS system has been the first response and has left many families alone and helpless. FNFAO focuses on a preventative approach, and provides opportunities for growth and healing.

As a mechanism outside of the provincial system, the FNFAO receives its direction from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Women's Council, Executive Council of Chiefs and the Chiefs-in-Assembly. With accountability to First Nations leadership, the FNFAO is able to voice concerns and raise issues that commonly affect First Nations children, youth and families. Subsequently, this adds pressure on the provincial and federal governments and its entities to make real meaningful change.

Both levels of government are making changes in the way they are delivering CFS services. In June 2019, the federal government enacted Bill C-92 *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* with said legislation to come into effect on January 1, 2020. The Act gives the illusion that First Nations will have full

jurisdiction over children and families. But instead, among other things, it is a mechanism that allows First Nations to have to negotiate their rights with the provincial and federal government.

Despite both governments' decisions for CFS reform, the AMC with the technical support of the FNFAO continues to advocate for a First Nations response and First Nations led solutions to the challenges we face in the area of child welfare. First Nations hold the knowledge and willpower to support children to understand their identity, language, and culture.

DIRECTION FROM FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP

The AMC First Nations Women's Council provides oversight and direction to Child and Family Matters including oversight of the First Nations Family Advocate Office. Throughout the year, the FNFAO met with the AMC Women's Council 10 times to further get direction on issues and concerns that were identified through the office.

The AMC Women's Council introduced the following resolutions that were supported by the Chiefs-in-Assembly:

- APR-2019.01 Expansion of the First Nations Family Advocate Office to Conduct Investigations;
- OCT-19.02 Permanent Guardianship; and
- OCT-19.03 Death Rate of Children in Care of the Child and Family Services

KEY ISSUES & CHALLENGES

According to the 2018/19 Annual Reports of the Southern First Nations Network of Care, First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority, Métis Child and Family Services Authority and General Child and Family Services Authority there are 10,529 children in care, with 8,064 identified as First Nations. However, the FNFAO estimates that there are closer to



9,000 First Nations children in care as the numbers for First Nations do not reflect First Nations children that are part of the Metis and General Authorities.

With the disproportionately high numbers of First Nations children in care, the CFS system does not work for First Nations people. The system trickles into other governmental institutions and departments such as the education, healthcare, and justice systems, furthering the risk of children being apprehended. However, the FNFAO continues to challenge systems and institutions to ensure better life outcomes for First Nations children, youth and families.

Birth Alerts and Newborn Apprehensions

Since 2015, the AMC has been advocating to end the practice of birth alerts and the apprehension of newborn babies. Through the FNFAO, the First Nations Family Advocate, Assistant Advocates, grandmothers and prenatal support staff have been at the forefront to support expectant mothers who are experiencing a birth alert or newborn apprehension.

If an expectant mother is aware a birth alert has been placed on her by the CFS agency, the prenatal team will provide preventative supports to the mother before and after the delivery of the baby. It is the hope that the mother with these supports, will avoid apprehension once the baby is born. If an apprehension cannot be

avoided, the staff will work with the mother/father to identify a kinship or guardianship placement.

However, if the office receives notice that a mother is experiencing a newborn apprehension at the hospital, an Assistant Advocate and Grandmother will provide spiritual and emotional supports to the family. A song and prayer will be offered followed by gifting a pair of baby moccasins to signify that connection between the newborn with their family, Nation and culture. Often expectant mothers are not aware that a birth alert has been placed on them before entering the hospital. This provincial practice of birth alerts is not a preventative measure. Instead it sets mothers up for failure with little to no supports.

In 2018, during the hearings of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the AMC FNFAO along with the Public Interest Law Centre testified and, among others, recommended to end the practice of birth alerts. After the release of the final report in June 2019, *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, one of the Calls-to-Justice was to end the practice of birth alerts.

In January 2020, the government of Manitoba announced it will no longer issue birth alerts starting April 1, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Manitoba government announced its delay in ending the practice of birth alerts. The FNFAO continues to put pressure on the provincial government to not only end the practice of birth alerts but to also stop the apprehension of newborn babies from the hospital

Youth Aging Out of Care

As part of the advocacy work with children and families, we also hear information from families and youth on their experiences in the child welfare system. With the significant lack of funding provided, agencies are running a deficit resulting in less effective services offered to children and families.

In 2018, the provincial government piloted a project to transition to single envelope funding for CFS authorities and agencies. Though agencies were able to have more flexibility to determine their funding allocations, the budget was based on the 2013-14 fiscal year resulting in the agencies having to focus on covering their deficit rather than increasing much needed prevention supports. Funding provided this year was based on the previous year's numbers for maintenance cost and didn't account for the increase of numbers of children in care. Subsequently, this has resulted in less services and supports for children, particularly, the ones that are aging out of care.

On a number of occasions, the FNFAO received information of youth aging out of care ending up on the streets or being dropped off at the Salvation Army. What this tells us is that children are being set up to fail under the child welfare system. All First Nations children in care deserve supports to help them transition while they age out of care into young adulthood. FNFAO believes youth aging out of care deserve better, that they receive the necessary supports so they can honour their gifts and make a difference in this world.

Permanent Guardianship

With the increase of First Nations children in care, many First Nations are fostered out of their homes, families, Nations and cultures to be placed under permanent guardianship. In the Child and Family Services Act C.C.S.M.c. C80, subsection 38(1)(b), courts are making determinations based on CFS agencies recommendations to where a child should be placed, without notice or consent from First Nations.

Many families are unaware of where their children are placed due to the fact that once a child is placed under permanent guardianship; the parents are stripped away of their rights as a parent. There is a long history of First Nations children being removed from their homes, families, and Nations that stems from the Indian

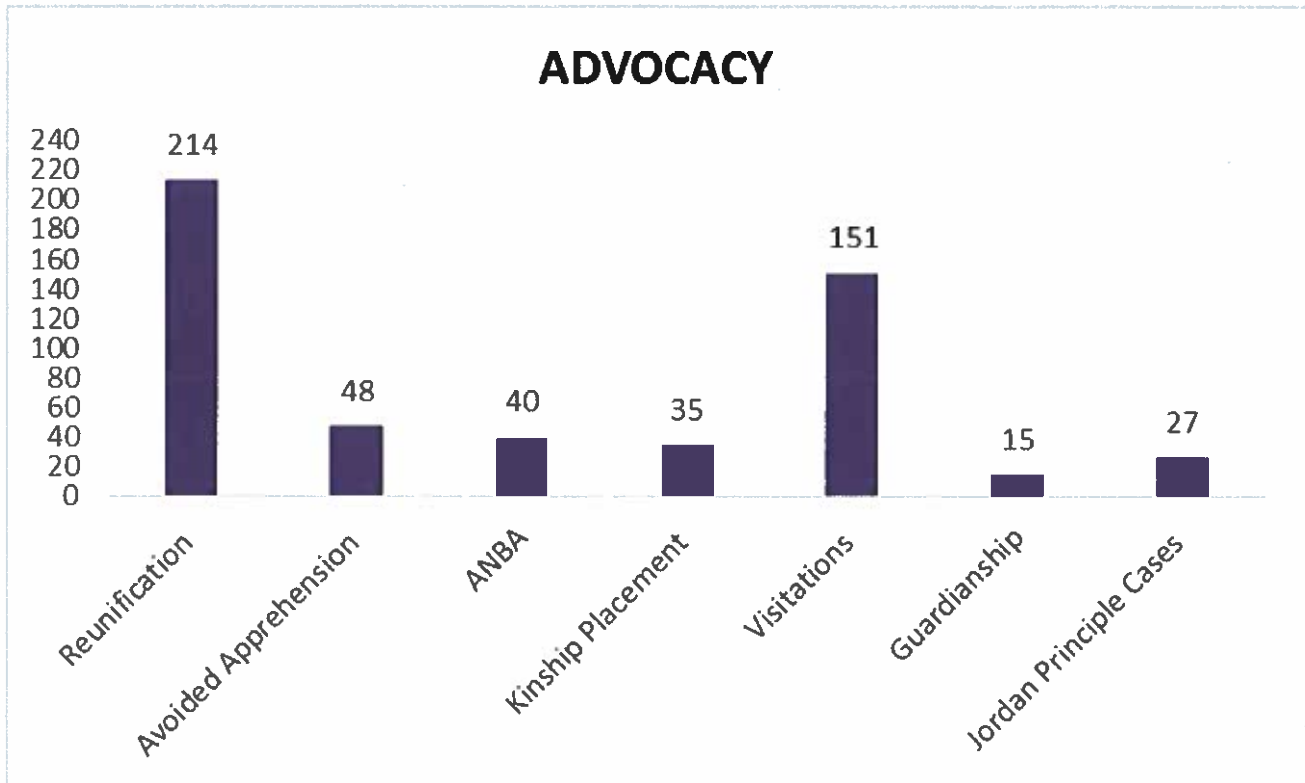


Residential Schools, 60s Scoop and now the child welfare system. To continue the work of bringing our children home, First Nations need to know where children are placed. The FNFAO prepared a letter including a template Band Council Resolution on Permanent Guardianship Orders for First Nations to prevent their children going under permanent order without the consent of the families and First Nations.

Bringing Our Children Home Act

As AMC continues to pursue the *Bringing Our Children Home Act* (BOCHA), a Manitoba First Nations specific federal legislation, the FNFAO provided the technical support to help advance this legislation. By the end of 2019, the AMC hired an MOU Project Director who later provided direction and oversight over the *Bringing Our Children Home Act* and the development of the template laws over children and families.

On February 28th 2019, then Minister of Indigenous Services Canada Seamus O'Regan introduced Bill C-92 *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* to the House of Commons. Instead of honouring the MOU on Child Welfare signed in December 2017, Canada informed AMC that the BOCHA would fall under the federal jurisdiction of Bill C-92. Bill C-92



***ANBA: Avoided Newborn Apprehension**

encompassed all Indigenous people across Canada and directly neglects the Memorandum of Understanding between AMC and the government of Canada, despite promises made by the federal government to work with leadership in Manitoba to develop a Manitoba First Nations specific legislation.

ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2019-2020

Advocacy

For families to access services at the office, they need to attend an orientation. The orientation process assists families in understanding the child welfare system, knowing their rights within the system and the services offered through FNFAO. This year, 161 families attended orientation. After orientation, families schedule appointments with intake. There were over 459 intakes conducted to help assist families and evaluate their case/situation. After each intake, the file is assigned to

an Assistant Advocate, Reunification Team or Prenatal support.

Once the file is transferred from intake, we assist with the following: reunifying children with their parents, families and home Nations; preventing apprehensions; avoiding birth alerts and the apprehension of newborn babies; seeking kinship placements; securing visitations; support with guardianship applications; and ensuring services for Jordan Principle cases.

The following graph demonstrates the efforts of advocacy work and the number of children returned to their families

In addition to the advocacy work with our families, the office provides supports to individuals who are involved with the justice system. The Restorative Justice workers help with mediation by assisting families experiencing conflict or who need assistance with resolving personal issues and building healthy relationships.

The Legal Scaabe helps clients to navigate the legal system and upon request, attend any court hearings or meetings with lawyers.

This year, our office provided support to individuals with their 60s Scoop and Indian Day School Applications. For the months of January and February 2020, the Legal Scaabe assisted 48 individuals with their Indian Day School applications which will amount to an estimated **\$2.7 million dollars in claims.**

Workshops

Workshops and services offered at the office are for First Nations parents, families, youth, men, women, and grandparents. The workshops incorporate First Nations traditions, culture, languages, teachings, holistic health and wellness. This year the following workshops were offered:

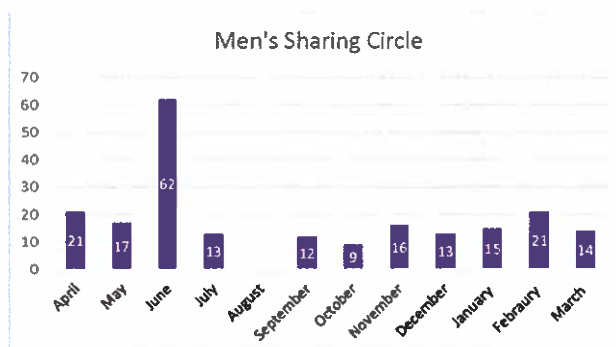
Traditional drum/rattle song is an opportunity for everyone to learn and sing traditional First Nations songs that help participants understand First Nations languages and meanings. The traditional drum circle is offered every Monday and is an open group program. This year, we had over 145 people participated in the drum circle.

Men's sharing circle is offered as a support group and safe space to discuss issues specific to First Nations men. The men's sharing circle helps to determine solutions through a First Nations lens, using traditional concepts and practices to learn, grow and heal. Men have the opportunity to hear from guest speakers and Knowledge Keepers each week. This year, FNFAO had approximately 213 men participated in the sharing circle.

On June 12, 2019 the AMC hosted a Father Family Law Forum in which a number of participants attended. There were no sessions conducted in August.

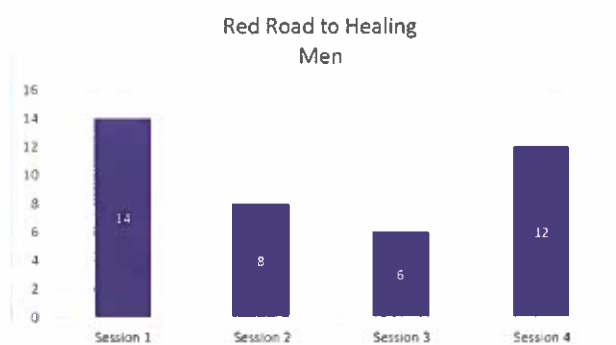
Red Road to Healing is offered to both women and men separately, taking a positive approach to relationships,

healing, caring for our well-being, mental, physical and spiritual health. Red Road to Healing emphasises the strengths and roles of women and men in our



community. This year, FNFAO had 4 sessions that includes over a 10 week period. After each session, participants received a certificate upon completion.

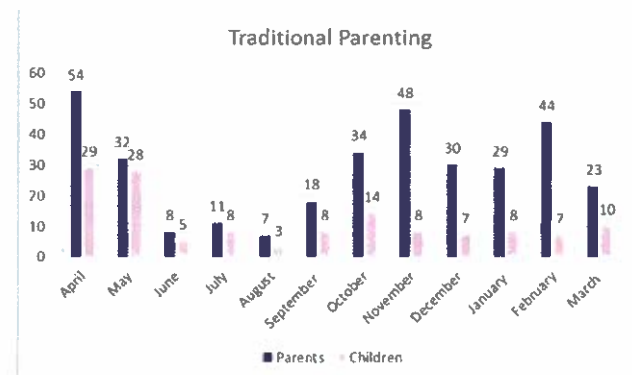
Traditional Parenting is offered for mothers and fathers as a safe space to learn about a variety of topics including; the Seven Sacred Teachings, Star Blanket Teachings, life skills, bonding with baby, nutrition,



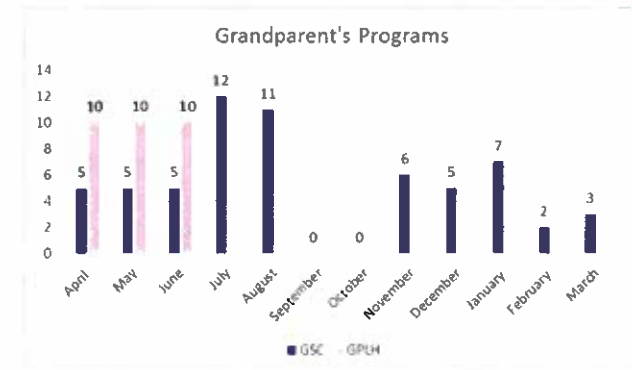
breastfeeding, baby safe sleep, building a birth bundle, birth planning, caring for your Sacred Bundle and belly button, soft spot and moss bag teachings, and ways of play. Parents are able to attend traditional parenting with their children. The graph below shows the number of participant including the number of children that attended per month.

Pregnancy Support Circles

From June to October 2019, the FNFAO offered a pregnancy support circle for expectant mothers.



Grandparents Programs



For the grandparents programs, FNFAO offers a grandparents sharing circle (GSC) and most recently, a Grandparent Peacemaking, Leadership, and Healing (GPLH) program.

For the months of April to June 2019, the Grandparent's peacemaking, leadership and healing program was offered as a closed group for 8-weeks. The program was temporarily cancelled in September and October to allow

for planning and restructuring. Moving forward, the two programs will be combined.

FNFAO: Celebrating four (4) years of Bringing Our Children Home

On June 1st, 2019, the AMC FNFAO celebrated four years of Bringing Our Children Home. The FNFAO released its 4-year progress report that outlined and demonstrated how far the office has come within a short period of time. Growing significantly from two staff in the beginning to over 30 staff now and has allowed FNFAO to help support more First Nations families and children.

To honour First Nations families for their strength and courage in the child welfare system, the FNFAO hosted an Anniversary Celebration at the Thunderbird house in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The celebration took place on June 7, 2020 where families were invited for a fish fry and variety of different activities for families and children.

FNFAO Database

With the increase of clients seeking support from the office, the FNFAO is developing a one of a kind database to help address the needs of clients and to better streamline services. Within the last year, the database developer has been working with various teams at FNFAO to gather all information that is needed to be included in the database. As it stands, the database is expected to be operating in the 2020/21.

Quality Assurance

In August 2019, the FNFAO management team met for a 2-day strategic planning session. Discussion took place on identifying goals and benchmarks and how to better streamline services. Further, in October of 2019, all staff at the FNFAO participated in a PATH exercise to identify our vision for the office.

These preliminary discussions with the staff helped informed the process for Quality Assurance. The plan for quality assurance is to identify the best practices of FNFAO and implement quality standards. The process began with the FNFAO Staff Questionnaire and Survey



on Best Practices, and Recording and Reporting Systems. Each staff members of FNFAO was able to reflect and clarify their best practices in their job position and what they need to support those best practices. As part of the questionnaire of quality assurance three key priorities were identified: Communications, Workplace Culture and Systems. The FNFAO continues to meet regular on quality assurance to identify and implement short term and long term goals.

SUPPORTING FIRST NATIONS

This year, the FNFAO had the opportunity to visit a number of First Nations to do presentations on the work of the office and how the office can support First Nations families and children. All together, staff visited:

- Berens River First Nations
- Bloodvein First Nation
- Black River First Nation
- Pauingassi First Nation
- Little Grand Rapids First Nation
- Brokenhead First Nation
- Hollow Water First Nation
- Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation
- Tataskweyak Cree Nation

INVESTIGATIONS

The FNFAO heard from parents who have lost their loved ones in care who are seeking support and advocacy to receive closure and justice. On behalf of families, FNFAO would liaise between the hospital, medical examiners office, the police service, and the CFS system so that families can receive answers to their questions regarding the death of their loved ones. As the office continued to see an increase of these requests, the FNFAO brought attention of these cases to the AMC Women's Council.

On April 23, 2019, the AMC Women's Council met and discussed the potential of expanding the mandate of the FNFAO to include an investigations unit that would examine the deaths and critical incidents of First Nations children in care. For too long, First Nations children have died in the child welfare system or have gone missing. Barriers and challenges for families seeking answers, continues to rise and families are left with a lot of unanswered questions. Families are grieving without any closure or change in the CFS system regarding the circumstances causing the death of their loved one.

According to the annual report of the Southern First Nations Network of Care, First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority, Métis Child and Family Services Authority and General Child and Family Services Authority, approximately 657 children passed away within a 10-year time span (2008-2018). There are various reasons of the cause the death that ranged from medical issues, accidentals, suicide, etc.

The AMC Women's Council brought this issue to the AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly and resolution APR-2019.01 *Expansion of the First Nations Family Advocate Office to conduct Investigations* was passed.

Bringing Our Children Home National Conference, November 2019

On November 25-27, 2019, the FNFAO hosted the *Bringing Our Children Home National Conference* which saw over 500 First Nations participants. The National Conference was an opportunity for participants across the country to gain knowledge on how First Nations in Manitoba are leading the path to restore First Nations jurisdiction over children and families.

Each day different keynote speakers presented on various topics including jurisdiction, sovereignty, and protecting loved ones. Participants also had the opportunity to attend breakout session which focused on prevention activities that can be implemented within their Nations.

Christmas Open House and Hampers, December 2019

On December 19, 2019, the FNFAO hosted its annual Christmas open house with the AMC. Families, children, and the public visited the offices to have snacks, conversation with staff, and voted on which FNFAO staff member had the most festive office. Donations were accepted in which helped the office purchase Christmas Hampers. Through the year, the FNFAO also did 50/50 draws that contributed to the Christmas Donations. All together, FNFAO delivered 34 large Christmas hampers to families who had received services from the FNFAO, including a Christmas present for each child.



Support for the Bringing Our Children Home Act

At a March 2019 AMC Women's Council meeting, discussion took place that identified a number of action items to advance BOCHA as a separate legislation from Bill C-92. The FNFAO prepared a communication strategy to provide awareness of BOCHA and the implications of Bill C-92 that included the following:

- letter campaign to federal Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators;
- postcards to the Prime Minister;
- social media meme; and
- a video.

In April and May 2019, the AMC and FNFAO presented to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal People and the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs on AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly position to advance BOCHA. The recommendations included that the Committees take a position in favour of First Nations in Manitoba that:

1. Bill C-92 be abandoned or not to support it, and to call on Canada to establish a good faith and honourable process that explores developing a bill with First Nations in Manitoba and the AMC that is reflective of the *Bringing Our Children Home Act*. Such a bill would include recognition and incorporation of inherent First Nations jurisdiction, customs and law and development of policies.
2. Alternatively, we asked that amendments to the bill to exclude First Nations in Manitoba, and commit to working with them and the AMC to develop a bill that gives effect to the *Bringing Our Children Home Act*.

However, despite AMC efforts for First Nations in Manitoba to have their own federal legislation, work continues on the development of template laws so that First Nations can restore jurisdiction. In the meantime, AMC is still working with the AMC Women's Council, Elder's Council and Steering Committee to revise the Bringing Our Children Home Act.

Grandmother's Walk, May 2019

On May 10, 2019, the AMC FNFAO hosted a Grandmothers Walk to honour Mothers and Grandmothers who have lost their children to the child welfare system, and to bring awareness of the negative impacts of Bill C-92: *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth and families*.

For the Grandmothers walk, approximately 2,000 participants gathered from the four directions: North, East, South, and West. At 10:00 am, people met at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and then to the Oodena Circle. A water ceremony, round dance and messages was heard from the AMC Grand Chief and the First Nations Family Advocate.

National Day of Action, May 2019

In support of the National Day of Action, the AMC and FNFAO assisted in organizing a Manitoba protest alongside a number of protests happening across Canada. The National Day of Action brought together First Nations leaders, Treaty people and allies to reject Prime Minister unilateral laws and policy changes. Specifically, Bill C-91 *An Act respecting Indigenous Language*, Bill C-92 *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth and families* and Bill C-97 *An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget*.

On May 27, 2019, First Nations joined together to rally various local Liberal Members of Parliament offices throughout Winnipeg. The group met at Indigenous Services Canada Regional Office to walk to the Manitoba Legislature Building. This was an opportunity to create awareness of the implication of the government's legislations.

MOVING FORWARD

Through all the success and challenges of the FNFAO, the office continues to move forward to support First Nations families and children. Families and children who continue to be impacted by the CFS system are in need of change to stop the cycle of children being removed from their families and Nations. FNFAO provides cultural supports to families so they are able to heal from past traumas. FNFAO acknowledges that many families struggle due to the decisions of the government, who thought they knew what was best for First Nations people. First Nations are working hard to rebuild their families and Nations. Generations of First Nation children are counting on us to ensure they have a future that is grounded in their culture and traditions as an Inniniwak, Anishaabeg, Anishininiwak, Denesuline and Dakota Oyate.



EAGLE URBAN TRANSITION CENTRE



STAFF

- ▶ Jarred Baker, Program Manager
- ▶ Darlene Littlejohn, Office Manager
- ▶ Ann Sanderson, Client Intake and Resource Coordinator
- ▶ Randy Keesic, Client Intake and Resource Coordinator/Security
- ▶ Barry McPherson, Employment Transition Counselor
- ▶ Marcy Raven, Adult Housing Counselor
- ▶ Leah Spence, Youth Housing Counselor
- ▶ Monique Curci, Mental Health/Addictions Counsellor
- ▶ Carl Maytawashing, Traditional Elder
- ▶ Chris Prince, Support Services Lead
- ▶ Carmen Letexier, Support Services Administrative Assistant
- ▶ Brian Campbell, HPS Team Lead Service Coordinator
- ▶ Corinne Edwards, Follow Up Support Worker
- ▶ Monica Kithithee, Follow Up Support Worker
- ▶ Mathew Usenko, Follow Up Support Worker
- ▶ Elissa Gabriel, Eagles Nest Project Coordinator
- ▶ Fred Beardy, Eagles Nest Project Coordinator
- ▶ Sydney Bee, Community Transition Counselor
- ▶ Alvin Henderson, Community Transition Counselor
- ▶ Nicole Starr, Community Transition Counselor
- ▶ Raven Hart, Community Transition Counselor
- ▶ Ryan McKay, Jordan's Principle Off-reserve Lead Advocate
- ▶ Chris Sutherland, Jordan's Principle Off-reserve Advocate
- ▶ Rachel Apetagon, Jordan's Principle Off-reserve Advocate
- ▶ Sharon Wilson, Jordan's Principle Off-reserve Advocate
- ▶ Allison Saunders, Jordan's Principle Off-reserve Advocate
- ▶ Kevin Fontaine, Conflict Resolution Navigator
- ▶ Valerie Olson, Patient Navigator
- ▶ Ann Thomas, Patient Navigator
- ▶ Dawn Slater, Program Assistant
- ▶ Bobby Muswagon, Project Manitouwabi Housing Support Worker
- ▶ Jerry Tom, Project Manitouwabi Housing Support Worker

INTRODUCTION

The EAGLE Urban Transition Centre (EUTC) was established in Winnipeg in March 2005 by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to provide services to urban First Nation and Indigenous People. EUTC was established to address the concerns of lack of affordable housing, addictions, crime, unemployment, education, discrimination and lack of supports for community members living and relocating to Winnipeg. EUTC serves as a hub of information for Indigenous clients seeking transitional support while living in and/or relocating to the City of Winnipeg. The EUTC offers an accessible client-friendly environment where community members may utilize onsite self-help resources or one-on-one assistance from trained counselors on employment, housing, disabilities, family, health and social. The EUTC also responds to several inquiries and requests for information from rural community members, Indigenous organizations and service providers on a regular basis. Our office maintains an up-to-date inventory, print and electronically, of resources, programs and services available to assist Indigenous people with day to day issues including housing, social assistance, addictions, health, youth programming and supports in the areas of training, employment and education. On an as-needed basis, the EUTC counselors provide referrals corresponding to specific clients' needs and circumstances. The EUTC also provides clients with access to on-site resources including; computer, internet access, printing, faxing, local phones calls, refreshments, and access to the Elder Advisory services through the EUTC Healing Room. The EUTC Healing Room is used for weekly Sharing Circles, cleansing/smudging, individual client and staff counseling and meeting with partner organizations. As a culturally appropriate resource, EUTC employs 100% Indigenous staff who are trained, qualified and have lived experience. Essential to our work, is relationship-building gained through respect and empathy, which are all needed to effectively work with individuals who are vulnerable. EUTC has grown

substantially since its inception. EUTC now employs 30 staff and has more than 6 programs operating annually.

ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In the 2019-2020 fiscal year EUTC provided services to more than 10,000 walk-in clients and Eagles Nest continues to have a waiting list for the 75 spots we have available. EUTC provides services to the Indigenous population who are seeking transition support while living in or relocating to the City of Winnipeg. If EUTC cannot provide the resource needed the staff advocate or direct the clients to the appropriate organizations. EUTC has provided transitional in person counseling sessions to approximately 2500 clients and have established over 300 partnerships to meet the needs of our clients. EUTC has done approximately 50 presentations on the following topics:

- Fire Safety
- Food Handlers
- CPR
- Rental workshops to educate clients on their right and responsibilities

EUTC completed the following activities in 2019 – 2020 fiscal year:

- Supported approximately 300 community members with our clothing drive
- Provided meals for over 1500 community members
- Assisted 34 youth obtain employment
- Assisted 51 Adults obtain employment
- Advocated for over 2000 medical needs.
- Youth program and Adults participated in medicine picking and drum making
- Adults participated in a cultural retreat and monthly sweats
- Youth attended sweats and other ceremonies monthly.



The EUTC staff and organization have provided client transitional support and services which include:

- Intake and Assessment
- Advocacy (Health, housing EIA, justice, education, employment etc.)
- Referrals to housing resources
- Access to Elders for Spiritual Guidance and Healing
- Assistance to obtain identification
- Guidance and referrals for medical concerns
- Access and referrals to employment and training service organizations (resume writing, interview skills, job search techniques)
- Access to on-site resources: computers; printer, telephone, internet, resource library
- Suicide prevention training and counseling.
- Counseling and referrals to treat addictions

The staff continues to participate in workshops and training sessions to advance their skills/knowledge and provide quality services for our clients. EUTC continues to meet the needs of the clients through the dedication of the Indigenous staff who are committed to empowering our clients to live the good life they deserve.





KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

One of the key issues is that so many of our community members are struggling with addictions. Not all the community members we work with are ready to address their addictions so we have a harm reduction approach we use at Eagle Urban Transition Centre. The emerging trend of Meth is increasing and creates safety issues for the staff and community members. The staff explore new training as new trends surface with the First Nation citizens we support. Although the staff are trained on the use of Meth, it still creates problems because of the effects the drugs have on the community members. While under the influence the people can be easily irritated and are paranoid which creates safety issues for the staff and community member. These challenges have been addressed with training and implementation of policies and procedures to keep everyone safe.

EUTC supports urban First Nation citizens to obtain housing but some of the barriers are the lack of affordable housing, lack of identification and lack of a rental history. EUTC and AMC are exploring options of a Tiny Village with End Homelessness Winnipeg. The village would consist of trailers that were previously used by Manitoba Hydro for their camps. It would include 200 trailers, washrooms and kitchen facility. The plan would

be to have resources on site for the people living in the village and the supports would be a partnership with other community organizations. There is a shortage of affordable housing for the community members that we serve so this is something we needed to explore.

There is a strong need for housing but it should be specialized housing that is being sought after. The housing needs are great but are different between the age groups. The following is examples of the specific needs:

- Housing to support youth aging out of care
- Housing for the homeless population
- Housing for people with addictions
- Housing for Seniors

It is difficult for someone to make positive changes in their life if their basic needs of food and shelter are not being met.

Eagle Urban Transition Centre looks forward to building new relationships and supporting our off reserve First Nation citizens to live the good life they deserve.

EUTC - EAGLES NEST PROGRAM

The Eagles Nest program provides personal and professional skill development to Indigenous youth within Winnipeg, Manitoba. From January 2019-December 2019, the Eagles Nest program received 237 applications, 94 were accepted, 51 successfully completed, and 43 have near completed the program. Staff always encourage youth to stay in close connection so that they may have the opportunity to re-join training to update their certificates. Youth who do not complete the program are welcome back to complete their portfolios, obtain more life-skills or overcome any barriers.

We provide a set of life-skills that help youth gain personal ethical skills to become the best employees they can be. We offer professional certificates to enhance a better opportunity to gain employment within the City of Winnipeg and by the end of the 12-week program, youth graduate with a professional resumes and cover letter.



Below is a summary of supports that staff at the Eagles Nest program has provided within the last year:

- referrals to subsidized housing, emergency housing or referrals to treat addiction;
- one-on-one counselling (mental & emotional health);
- referrals/Advice to Justice and Health related matters;
- referrals to EIA (employment & income assistance);
- one-on-one training (resumes, cover letters, interview skills, job searching techniques);
- access to Spiritual healers and/or Elder (spiritual health);
- access to Ceremonial grounds (sweat & naming ceremonies, water & pipe ceremonies);
- access to on-site resources (computers, land-line, internet, printer, faxing);
- referrals to partnered program organizations (RAY, SEED, Ma Mawi, etc.);
- advocacy with housing, employment, education, justice, family, CFS, and housing related issues;

In addition to the services provided, the Eagles Nest program continues to strive on providing a safe and positive environment for growth. Youth ages 15-30 years old meet Mondays-Fridays 9am-3:30pm at the St. Johns Leisure building where the program is delivered. With the tremendous support from the City of Winnipeg-the Indigenous Relations Program, staff are able to provide a nutritional program, cultural education and many skill life opportunities.

The objective of the Eagles Nest program is to assist 60-75 youth annually with professional and personal goals that will help youth return to school or gain employment.

Below is a summary of certificates and opportunities that the Eagles Nest program offers:

- Food Handlers Certificate Level 1;
- CPR/First Aid Level C Certificate;
- Mental Health First Aid Certificate;
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (Asist);
- WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Material Information System);
- Non-Critical Incident Management Certificate;
- LIFT Ethics Certificate-Better Business Bureau;
- EUTC Housing Certificate;
- Money Management Certificate;
- Daily Skill Development activities;
- Volunteer Opportunities;
- Recreation & Land-Based Education Activities;
- Indigenous Cultural ceremonies, Language and traditional skill building;
- Tours of Post-Secondary Institutions (Adult Ed and/ Colleges).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that shut down all Winnipeg facilities in March 2020, staff and youth at the Eagles Nest program adjusted program delivery. Coordinators created a private Facebook page for staff and youth to communicate going forward until the City facility reopens. Virtual tours, live presentations, and teachings are posted up on the private Facebook page every day of the week. The Eagles Nest program has closely partnered with the Wichii Oskiiaga program (supports youth in care), and staff from both programs have been supporting youth online and one-on-one through the pandemic (while respecting physical distancing). During the third phase of re-opening businesses and increasing larger crowds to 15 or more, staff successfully coordinated their first Social Distance Gathering picnic and youth have asked to have one Social Distance Gathering once per week (youth were

asked to complete the provincial online self-screening before accessing gathering grounds). A Sweat ceremony was also delivered with a limited amount of youth in the sweat ceremony (hand sanitizing stations were created, and staff encouraged social distancing of 6' at both gatherings). The Eagles Nest currently has 18 active youth in the program, and due to COVID19 there are high rates of student unemployment; 12 youth are on EIA, two youth have seasonal jobs, and four youth currently have full-time employment. We continue to support these youth in every way that we can.



EUTC - FRESH START PROGRAMMING

FRESH START HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM

Fresh Start Housing First Program works with 40 Indigenous individuals who are assigned to a follow-up support worker and work together to achieve the community member (clients), goals and build a relationship.

Fresh Start has three follow-up Support Workers and a Team Lead who navigate through the systems for the community member by linking them to additional supports. For the fiscal year 2019 – 2020, Fresh Start had 38 active community members whose first priority is to find safe and affordable housing within the city limits and each follow-up support staff will sit down with the community member and develop strategies for the best options available for housing.

The most frequent barrier faced by the Fresh Start housing team is the amount that provincial employment and income assistance (EIA) provides for rent and utilities. The amount of \$576.00 with utilities and \$563.00 without utilities does not go a long way so the Fresh Start program supplies a top-up of \$200 per month. Our Housing First program is supposed to be a two year program but our clients are lacking the life skills such as cleaning, cooking, budgeting, boundaries, understanding building house rules, and what it takes to be a good tenant. Most of the times the community members have no tenant history or bad tenant history and the Team Lead along with the follow-up support worker utilize a tool called Residential Tenancies Orders System. It gives more information about our community members and it allows us to be prepared when meeting landlords and housing agencies.

The Fresh Start housing program has housed 35 community members with social housing such as Manitoba Housing and SAM Management. The team has built and maintained most of our partnerships with the private market housing with Armour Management, Elite Property, 4ABC Investments, Pillar Management, WAFA Ltd, Bestway Agencies, Sussex Realty Ltd, Oak & Apple

Property Management, Sam Tourond, Sukki-K7 Corp, Marlborough Hotel, Charlie Zibriski and Shijie He.

Our goal is to get our community members into social housing as the rental top-up Fresh Start provides isn't long term. Fresh Start tries to place clients in private market housing in order to rebuild the community member's tenant history and this also keeps community members responsible and committed to the Fresh Start housing program. Fresh Start is having fewer evictions due to our relationship with our community members and to the landlords we work with.

Up until March 2020, due to COVID Pandemic, Fresh Start staff had maintained home visits with our community members and sometimes depending where they are in their life skills, the home visits can be done two or three times a day. The follow-up Support Workers advocate for treatment in detox centers, and access to mental health supports. Again before March 2020, Fresh Start staff was meeting once a month with a team from WRHA called HOCS to talk about our caseloads and fast track our community members into the different treatment programs. Fresh Start staff believe that the biggest issue impacting success is that our clients become lonely once we house them and they cannot cope being in a home. Our community members have survived so long being on the streets, incarcerated or in shelters it becomes a regular routine for them and good or bad the relationships they build or form they can't seem to stay away from these negative influences.

NEW BEGINNINGS HOUSING PROGRAM

New Beginnings is a non-housing first program and our team consist of an Adult Housing Counsellor, Youth Housing Counsellor, Mental Health/Addictions Worker, and Manufacturing/Employment and Training Counsellor.

The New Beginnings program has training sessions such as CPR, food handlers, non-violent crisis intervention and Assist suicide training.

New Beginnings also provide job training equipment like safety boots, vests, hard hats and gloves.

Our Mental Health/Addictions Worker meets with our community members and together they work out a plan for treatment and staff provides support to any action plan created for the client. The Adult and Youth Housing Counsellors work close together and they can see anywhere from 100 community members per month and housing is a lot more difficult to find as the New Beginnings Program does not offer the rental top-up and only work with what EIA provides of either \$576.00 with

utilities or \$563 without utilities. The program accepts walk-ins or referrals from different agencies such as Doorways, Child and Family Services, Mental Health staff and other caring individuals who are calling to helped their friends and family who needs housing.

The New Beginnings team also advocates for EIA, landlords/tenant issues and social housing management. For the reporting year of 2019/2020, they assisted over 110 community members find housing.



WICHII OSKIIAGA YOUTH MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Wichii Oskiiaga in partnership with the EUTC Eagles Nest program is a 12-week holistic youth mentorship program for Indigenous Youth age 17-21 who are aging out of care of the child and family services system.

Youth mentees receive guided support and mentorship while transitioning to independence on matters including housing, education, training, finance, employment, resourcing and community support. Youth have a chance to connect to traditional culture, medicines, men's and women's teachings, ceremonies, traditional family parenting and land-based learning. Youth participate in personal development and Life Skills Workshops, and create an individual goal setting plan with a mentor.

Upon graduation youth learn how to complete a successful resume and cover letter that identifies all the training that they have completed. The best thing about Wichii Oskiiaga and Eagles Nest is that youth that are unable to finish for whatever reason are invited back to complete their training and workshops when they are ready to do so. Everyday youth check-in with mindfulness as they are invited to smudge and give gratitude for the day. Youth learn to use their voice for advocacy everyday by stating three things they are grateful for and one thing they want to work on. Youth utilize the four component of the Medicine Wheel to learn more about themselves and their surroundings. For example, when examining the Emotional aspect, we ask 'did someone say I love you to you today?' For the physical component we ask 'did you eat breakfast, sleep in a warm bed and drink water today?' For the spiritual side we ask 'did you give thanks to the Creator today or have a smudge to start your day off in a good way?' For the mental component, we ask 'did you learn something new today?' When they can answer yes to all four of those questions daily, their self-esteem grows as well as their ability to think positive.

Eleven youth in total graduated from Wichii Oskiiaga Youth Mentorship Program including four females and seven males. In Phase 1, nine youth applied including four females and five males, all were accepted. Six youth graduated from phase 1 on August 13th, 2019 including four males and two females. In Phase 2, 11 youth applied and were all accepted. Five youth graduated Phase 2 including two females and three males. In Phase 3, our numbers doubled and 20 youth applied including 13 females and 7 males. We have 11 expected graduates including seven females and four males for Phase 3 which will bring our graduates up to 22 in one year.

Seven female Mentors and one male Mentor supported the youth and fourteen Mentors in total participated or volunteered with youth. Mentors met with youth weekly to support, inspire and motivate youth to achieve their goals. All Mentors are graduates of Eagles Nest and volunteer 2-4 hours per week to support youth. Mentors are trained on how to be good relatives to youth mentees by learning the seven guiding principles of generation, generosity, compassion, respect and quietness. Mentors can add their gained skills and knowledge to their resumes.

Eight out of eleven youth volunteered with the Community Builds project and helped build the Indigenous Garden at Assiniboine Park. Youth also volunteered at the Jordan's Principle Christmas Dinner to feed children with special needs and their families. Youth Mentors and Mentees participated in a goose and elk harvest. Youth learned land-based skills and were able to take home their harvest. It was beautiful because youth cried over the ability to participate and celebrate First Nation ways of knowing and being.

Ten youth received their spirit names, clan and colors. Youth participated in over 164 group activities and 53

cultural activities including sweat lodges, two spirit teachings, pipe ceremonies, feast, medicine picking and women's teachings and full moon ceremonies. Youth learned how to care for their hair, their moon time and about the berry fast as various first rites of passage.

The program is helping our youth get connected in so many different ways including housing, culture, language, employment and volunteer opportunities and overall feeling good about themselves and helping them to see themselves in a much more powerful way. This is a huge accomplishment for these youth who have been in a system that did not allow their culture and identity to thrive. Five youth from Phase 1 and 2 registered for Eagles Nest as a training program and successfully completed it and will be Mentoring in Phase 4. The youth that started Phase 3 have not graduated yet because of the COVID-19 pandemic, they are currently working on graduation goals with their Mentors.

Youth Mentees and Mentors received training certificates in:

- Food Handlers Level 1
- WHMIS
- Mental Health First Aid Certificate
- CPR/First Aid Level C Certificate
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (Asist)
- Non-Critical Incident Management Certificate
- LIFT Ethics Certificate-Better Business Bureau
- EUTC Housing Certificate
- Money Management Certificate

Campus Tours included:

- University of Winnipeg
- Youth Build
- Red River College
- Urban Circle
- Herzing College
- Adult Education Centre
- Yellowquill College

Life Skills Trainings:

- What is Life Skills?
- Indigenous Learning Styles
- Traditional Family Parenting
- Indigenous Learning Styles
- Effective Listening
- Principles and Values
- Action Plan
- Creating a Vision Board
- Karpman's Drama Triangle
- Healthy Relationships
- Who is Driving My Bus?
- Colonization and decolonization
- Traditional Family Parenting
- Johari Window

RESOURCES UTILIZED

EUTC In-house supports including youth housing; R.A.Y (Resource Assistance for Youth); Y.E.S (Youth Employment Strategy); Momentum Program; Manitoba Housing; Manitoba Public Insurance; SEED Winnipeg

CHALLENGES

Addressing youth homelessness during the pandemic was a challenge because many youth resource offices were closed.

Youth that are aging out have many challenges that they can overcome, the key challenge is getting them stable with housing, mental health and addictions support.

Success looks different for youth aging out of care. Youth self-harm less, youth are gaining coping skills and structure in their lives. Youth are using less substances and are working on becoming emotionally, mentally, spiritually and physically fit in their everyday lives. Youth aging out of care are a part of our community and are now feeling connected due to this program.

AMC/WRHA PATIENT ADVOCATE UNIT

STAFF

- ▶ Kevin Fontaine, Conflict Resolution Patient Navigator
- ▶ Valerie Olson, Patient Navigator
- ▶ Ann Thomas, Patient Navigator
- ▶ Dawn Slater, Program Assistant

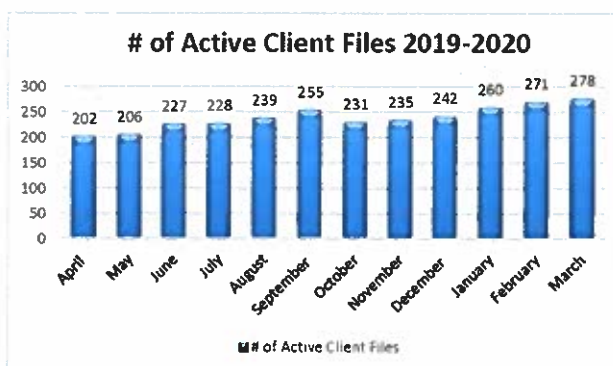
INTRODUCTION

The 2019-2020 fiscal year marks the 13th year that the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) Indigenous Health Services (IH) has collaborated with the Patient Advocate Unit. In this fiscal year, the WRHA and AMC reviewed and enhanced a portion of our agreement to best serve our internal reporting practices, and all other mandated goals and objectives remains active. An essential component of our agreement is to provide patients an opportunity to speak on their issue(s) with recommendation(s) with the support of a Patient Navigator. Therefore, AMC and WRHA-IH have entered into a new agreement with new reporting structures. The communications process continues between the Indigenous Health Programs and AMC with extended support to all First Nations patients in the areas of advocacy and navigation services. This includes a continued enhancement of AMC Patient Advocate Unit relationships with the various WRHA departments to ensure quality services and the medical needs of First Nations are met. All referrals to and from the WRHA's Central Intake continue as previous years, in addition to direct type referrals received at AMC.

The Patient Advocate Unit is located within the Eagle Urban Transition Centre and this setup is critical in terms of accessing in-city services, as there are other programs required for rural to urban transitioning of First Nations citizenship. The collaboration of this internal programming at EUTC helps and benefits our citizenship by having to work on different issues such as housing,

mental health, traditional healing, etc, prior to accessing other services required such as EIA, in-city transportation, medical confirmations, etc.

At the end of our fiscal year, COVID-19 Pandemic hit our country, province, city and Nations. It basically stopped operations of the general population, including all AMC programs and projects. In planning for the pandemic, AMC developed a Pandemic Team in seven different areas, including Health Programs, Education, Economic Development, etc. to best address the needs of all Manitoba First Nations during these unprecedented times. The Patient Advocate Unit were assigned a seat on one of the seven Pandemic Sub-Committee's (Community Wellness Team) to best provide for services and education awareness during the pandemic. Mental Health and Community Services were more the focal points of this sub-committee and setup an online community information website for all Manitobans to utilize, more specifically First Nations on and off-reserve. At the end of this fiscal year, these committees were just getting operational and structured. Our intent and objectives during this period was to provide all First Nation citizens with information and available services to access, in addition to having staff available at all times to address emergency crisis situations and to direct clientele.



****Client files are carried over to the next month if they are still opened. Files are opened and/or closed every month****

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

The following are some examples of key issues and challenges that the Patient Advocate Unit staff encounters throughout the year. It may seem repetitive, as we work and collaborate on the same general issues, and our efforts include trying to change government policy. This would enhance parts of policy within the systems we deal with, which is a very difficult task; however, some changes to certain policies are adjusted to ensure First Nations are receiving benefits. This is critical to an individual's health and wellness when transitioning into a new environment for their respective health care needs.

A) Housing continues to be a major barrier to First Nations accessing and securing housing units, as many different factors within this process hinder a proper and fast application.

There are many reasons for housing issues and the following are brief examples of these issues:

- Long waiting lists with low-income housing authorities;
- No identifications (birth certificates, social insurance number, Manitoba Health card, etc.);
- Clients having difficulties with their Option "C" forms (Revenue Canada/Income Tax) as required by most housing authorities;
- Racism and discriminatory attitudes towards First Nation applicants, including private and public housing authorities;
- New Housing policy change, Manitoba Housing applicants were allowed 3 choices of selecting units and it is now changed to 1 choice. While WRHC Housing policy you must have Option C & application fee of \$22.00 & while other low rental requires Option C & rental history; and
- Private rental; our clients must have damage deposit and 1st month rent;

B) The office of the Public Guardian and Trustee of Manitoba (PGT) continues to be an area of concern to our First Nation citizenship.

In this past fiscal year, we continue to encounter issues that pertain to one's health and wellbeing. In the sense that our First Nations members under Form 21 and 22 (Certificate of Incapacity, Order of Committee ship) under the Mental Health Act and the Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act. Individuals under PGT continue to lodge complaints regarding issues such as financial and mental abuse. These are the two main areas they experience when dealing with assigned PGT staff. Some of the examples our members encounter throughout the year, are:

- Lack of financial support on a weekly, bi-weekly basis. Some clients are only given paltry sums of money and can't afford essentials in life such as food, hygienic supplies, clothing, etc.
- When requesting financial support, members are ridiculed and belittled and are often subjected to these abuses on a regular basis.

C) Home Care (on and off reserve): Many First Nation citizens seeking home care services in Winnipeg don't realize or understand the basic functions and differences between On and Off-Reserve. Home Care Services in Winnipeg is based on medical needs, through assessments done by a medical team and more importantly, an Occupational Therapist. There are 5 different levels of care that is available; the OT determines which level of care each individual requires while completing their home care assessments. While (On-Reserve), level of care is determined by either a Home Care Coordinator and/or one of the Health Care Nurses or Community Health Representatives. The care received on-reserve is a combination of their medical needs and in-home personal responsibilities, such as house cleaning, personal errands, etc. This is the big difference between the two systems and a great majority of our clientele have a difficult time to comprehend between the two systems and this often frustrates individuals, as they are too used to the on-reserve system.

D) Legal Issues – Manitoba Justice: throughout the year, the Patient Advocate Unit receives multiple types of justice referrals. Many of the referrals received are for

complaints against hospitals and/or individual doctors and medical teams (staff/units). In addition, PAU receives many legal referrals that aren't of a medical nature and are then referred to the appropriate agency.

In the past year, we have encountered many challenges and barriers to equitable health care for First Nation patients. Medical relocation case files were again the most prevalent and pressing issues that we received through the WRHA referral system.

Other common barriers:

- Assisting our clients with applying for Employment and Income Assistance in city clients wanting to remain on EIA from their respective Bands;
- Transit Plus (formally called Handi-Transit); Taxi Companies (Duffy's, Unicity, etc.);
- Elders: Elder abuse, transportation, medical equipment, medication & foot care;
- Dialysis Units are overcrowded & clients missing dialysis treatments;
- Third Party Referrals;
- Racism and Discrimination within all aspects of our mandate; In-Hospital, EMS/FPS, Police, Housing, EIA;
- Non-Compliant Clientele;
- Escorts not reliable & when escorts misbehave, they are sent home leaving our clients without escort to attend dialysis or medical appointments;
- Non dialysis medical cases – such as Cancer, cardiac, CNICB/Blind cases are difficult & time-consuming with cases that require a lot of attention & follow up;
- Disabilities cases Manitoba Public Insurance, Workers Compensation Board, Employment Insurance, Brain injuries – each case is difficult as there are multiple protocols in place that need to be followed & conducted in order to properly give the client opportunity to receive benefits

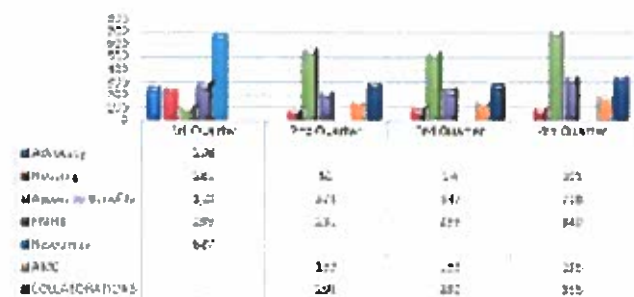
within their respective issues;

- Legal Issues Court orders (restraining orders, family disputes & family matters);
- Non-Insured Health Benefits with appeals, vision, dental, equipment, wheelchair motorized, out of country medical insurance;
- Furniture and Moving costs;
- Employment & Income Assistance provide No start-up costs for our clientele.

First Nation patients within WRHA facilities face the following challenges and key issues:

- Individual complaints;
- Issues within the system;
- Policies of FNIH/NIHB; and
- Policies of other entities directly related to health care.

of Services and Supports Provided



Reporting data was changed during the year which explains the empty slots.

****These are stats based on our reporting system by the WRHA, please note these numbers include our carried over files of services and supports provided from the previous month and new services and supports provided during the Quarters****

LINKAGES TO FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES

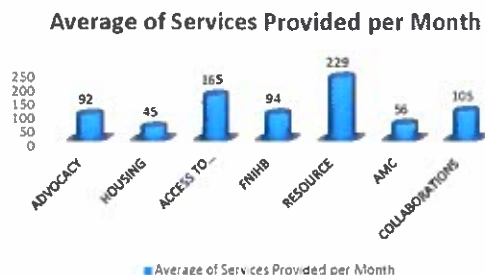
Linkages to all First Nations is routine year after year, with regular networking with First Nation Chief & Councils and Health Directors and their respective First Nation staff is a regular and ongoing task in which we are committed to in terms of bringing awareness and promoting healthy lifestyle choices.

Most importantly, we continue to support First Nations within all WRHA facilities in all areas of the medical field and we continue to connect First Nations with health care professionals with their respective medical issues.

However, Linkages to First Nations continues to be challenging in the sense that PAU program information only reaches out to a minimal audience. This includes Chief and Councils, Health Directors and Transportation Coordinators. The Patient Advocate Unit and Indigenous Health continue to roll out program information to all WRHA facilities. It is imperative that WRHA departments and staff are fully aware of the AMC WRHA-IH collaboration. It's been 13 years that the Patient Advocate Unit has been in operation and people are still learning of the program, due to many factors.

In addition to receiving referrals from Indigenous Health's Central Intake, we receive many referrals directly from First Nation communities.

STATUS OF ACTIVITIES



These are not actuals but average of the services we provide a month to our clients. Please note based on our reporting system, some of these numbers are carried over from the previous month

The Patient Advocate Unit staff attends on a regular basis, the following:

- Regular monthly Collaborative Action staff file reviews at the Health Science Centre with Indigenous Health programs;
- Monthly Advocacy Support Committee meetings, during which program issues are discussed; and

- Indigenous Renal Health Collaborative Care Workgroup, the goals are to increase client participation in recommended courses of their treatment plans as developed with various health care teams and collaborators.

The working group has engaged in many discussions on First Nations issues that affect the quality of care of individuals as well as dialogue on different enhancement concepts. This working group will continue meeting, evaluating its progress and determining if it's feasible to continue.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Throughout the 2019 fiscal year, the Patient Advocate Unit continues to have many individual success cases on the various referrals received through the WRHA's Central Intake and the AMC office. It is also imperative to state that not all cases worked on have been successful due to various issues within the systems we currently deal with throughout the year. These systems impair success and are designed to fail our First Nations, and these are areas that we continue to advocate on and attempt to address in various forms to bring policy change that best addresses the issues and concerns of First Nations membership.

The following are some examples of the successes of the Patient Advocate Unit staff, as follows:

- Housing clients into both private and public housing throughout the city.
- Securing financial income such as EIA Benefits, Disability Benefits, Workers Compensation, etc.
- Securing Manitoba Public Insurance claims, both long term and short-term benefits, and life-long benefits for catastrophic claims, etc.
- Continued collaboration and networking with First Nations and organizations, and all three levels of government and their respective agencies that we collaborate on throughout the year.
- Participate in Case Management/Systems meetings with medical staff to help our clients

understand health care process, procedures & terminology.

- Chief Medical Examiner's Office (CMEO) issues when dealing with passing of loved ones, dealing with family disputes and/or assisting family with funeral arrangements.

This includes completing many medical relocation cases, which are long drawn out processes to successfully complete. Many of the triumphs that we experience don't receive the attention they deserve due to the nature and privacy rights of individual patients.

The Patient Advocate Unit continues to collaborate with the following throughout the year:

- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority's various Departments such as the Renal Dialysis Units, Renal Social Work, In-Hospital Medical Clinics, etc.
- Employment and Income Assistance and Manitoba Housing: staff sit on the Access to Supports Committee and discuss pertinent issues with their application processes and other issues within their system.
- First Nations and Inuit Health Branch's Transportation Referral Unit, of which this department is also a member of our Advocacy Supports Committee and participates in our bi-weekly Case File Reviews held at Health Sciences Center. This table is crucial for First Nations, as all dialogue pertains to issues that directly affect First Nations in terms of NIHB Policies and Practices within the Transportation Referral Unit.
- Cancer Care Manitoba: there is no official working agreement in place, however, we collaborate on numerous case files and refer clients vis-vis. This relationship is very important and we continue to build both our relationship with the organization and our First Nation people. This relationship provides First Nations with representation and also gives us the opportunity to speak on issues affecting our

population provincially.

- Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) Corporation: Most dealings this year are factual cases within their various departments and collaboration between PAU and MPI continues. This relationship provides First Nations with navigation of MPI services on individual cases.
- Kidney Foundation of Canada Board of Directors: this National position provides First Nations with a voice to speak on Renal Health and Policy, as renal health in First Nations across the country are very high in numbers and First Nations citizens represent a large number of clients.
- Manitoba Transplant Committee: this committee meets monthly and dialogue on this committee focuses on organ transplant(s) and policy within this area.

The AMC PAU embraces the challenges and strives to support our First Nation citizens by advocating, developing partnerships and bridging services through effective service coordination to ensure quality services for all First Nation people. We strive to provide awareness of the PAU Program Services to various agencies, First Nations and Governments and this includes building relationships with agencies in an effort to provide the most efficient and patient-centered service delivery. This is an ongoing process that is done each and every year.

Contact: Patient Advocate Unit, 2nd Floor 275 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2B3, (204) 987-4120 or fax (204) 944-0582

TREATY RELATIONS



STAFF

- Gail Flett - Treaty Relations Coordinator

INTRODUCTION

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) Coordination, Facilitation and Communication work plan is funded by Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA). The budget and work plan is a five-year multi-flexible agreement and now in year three. The activities are directly linked to the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TRCM) that is intended to support their mandate to “strengthen, rebuild and enhance the Treaty relationship.”

AMC's role in the TRCM is to provide political, Elder, technical and advisory supports to the Grand Chief, Chiefs Task Force, Manitoba Leadership and Treaty Commissioner in relation to TRCM. The political representatives who participate include the Grand Chief/designate and AMC Chiefs Task Force on TRCM.

The AMC representation to the TRCM Governance Committees includes a Joint Senior Officials Committee with one or all members of the Chiefs Task Force; the GCO/Designate; an Elder; and the Treaty Relations Coordinator. For the Operational Management

Committee the representation is GCO/Designate and Treaty Relations Coordinator. The Technical Working Group and Research includes the GCO/Designate and Treaty Relations Coordinator.

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that created the TRCM is a partnership with INAC/CIRNA. AMC continues to maintain and uphold its relationship with CIRNA on the Treaty Relations Commission office.

The AMC Chiefs Task Force and Technical team will resume discussions with CIRNA on the joint development a new MOA, discussions on term of office and statutory funding; and it is anticipated that higher level discussions between the AMC Grand Chief and Minister of Crown Indigenous Relations will take place.

On December 11, 2019 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's mandate letter to Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations Carolyn Bennett highlighted two key areas of interest to the Manitoba First Nations, one, a new Royal Proclamation on Reconciliation and two, co-develop with Indigenous Peoples a new distinctions-based process for the ongoing review, maintenance and enforcement of Canada's Treaty obligations between the Crown and Indigenous communities.

This work will be supported by a new National Treaty Commissioner's Office that will be designed and established with Indigenous partners. The Grand Chief, Chiefs Task Force and Minister Bennett will need to discuss our relationship to any new National Treaty Commission.

LINKAGES TO FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES

A key responsibility associated with AMC's coordination activities includes Elder advisory and guidance; the AMC Council of Elders participates at AMC and TRCM key activities, gatherings and meetings. The Chiefs Task Force is informed of TRCM activities; Treaty Commissioner Loretta Ross ongoing provides updates to the AMC Grand Chief, the Executive Council of Chiefs, Chiefs Committee on Education, Chiefs-In-Assembly, the First Nations Directors of Education and the Treaty Recognition Tables as requested.

STATUS OF ACTIVITIES

AMC Council of Elders

The Elders meet on a quarterly basis at two-three days per meeting to provide guidance and assistance to AMC staff, leadership on a variety of topics. Meetings are coordinated in synergy with TRCM. The Elders Council currently consists of eight Elders. The Elder representative from Adhesion to Treaty 5 Island Lake Region is yet to be identified.

The Elders participated in the following key meetings:

- AMC/CIRNA Treaty Commissions, April 2019;
- AMC Chiefs Assembly on Bringing Our Children Home, including a private meeting between the AMC First Nations Women's Council and former Minister O'Regan;
- AMC 31st Annual General Assembly, July 2019;
- AMC General Chiefs Assemblies: Gaming (October) and Bringing Our Children Home (November) and Income Assistance (January);
- Chiefs Committee: Task Force, Executive, Education, Governance, Health, Emergency Planning and Children;

- TRCM-Manitoba Museum Ceremony honoring museum Treaty Exhibit artifacts and annual Rising Up Ceremony for sacred objects hosted by Roseau River First Nation;
- Indigenous Services Canada Citizenship, Membership Forum;
- Nibi Annual Gathering;
- TRCM general operations, Treaty Education Initiative sessions and Level 1 Post-Secondary Education on the Treaties;
- Memorial services and feasts;
- The Elders are invited to bring greetings and blessings to other events hosted by the Province of Manitoba, Education Institutions, Public Interest Law Centre and the Red Cross of Manitoba;
- The Council of Elders quarterly meetings were: April 9-10, May 16, June 11-12, October 1-2, and December 10-12;
- February meeting/discussions on the January 2020 AMC Resolution - Increase in Treaty Annuity Payments;
- Due to Covid pandemic, the March 2020 meeting was cancelled; and
- June 18, 2020 Zoom Meeting.

TRCM Governance Structure - Committees

In accordance with the MOA, AMC participated in the following meetings:

- Joint Senior Officials: were held on April & December 2019;
- The sub-committee on Treaty Education Initiative meetings held quarterly;
- The Research Committee meetings are discussed with the Elders Council and continue by Zoom; and
- Operational Management Committee, July 2020.

AMC Communication with CIRNA

CIRNA HQ officials assigned to work with AMC and TRCM includes Debra Alivisatos and Shahwar Pataudi; a meeting was held on April 9, 2019 with discussions on Treaty and Treaty Relationship as reiterated by the AMC Council of Elders including Grand Chief Dumas who provided a reminder of our worldview that Treaty is forever, and that Treaty must not be seen as a program; and the GoC must see First Nations as full partners moving forward and in resetting of a true Treaty relationship. While AMC Treaties operates under a multiyear agreement, the resources are targeted to TRCM Governance and does not support in-depth legal and technical Treaty research that is required.

Communication and Reporting to Manitoba Leadership

Issues and direction through Briefing Notes are brought to the attention of the Grand Chiefs' Office, Chiefs Task Force and Executive Council of Chiefs for immediate action. The annual reporting is done as part of the AMC Annual

Report presented to the Manitoba leadership at the AMC Annual General Assembly. Reporting on AMC Resolutions is provided through the AMC Status of Resolutions Report.

The current Chiefs Task Force on TRCM consists of Chiefs Norman Bone, Keeseekoowenin, Treaty 2, Chief Murray Clearsky, Waywayseecappo, Treaty 4 and Chief Larson Anderson, Norway House, Treaty 5.

Renewal Process of the Treaty Commission (TRCM)

AMC Chiefs Task Force and Elders will have discussions with the federal government on TRCM Renewal to broaden the mandate through a new Memorandum of Agreement. TRCM is now in its third Renewal operating within the existing MOA and mandate to do public education, research and facilitation. AMC continues to dialogue with the Federation of Indigenous Sovereign Nations on their Treaty Table developments as facilitated by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner. Ongoing dialogue and legal work is expected to occur as we move ahead with discussions on the future of Treaty Commissions.

AFN National Strategy on Treaties

The sector is called Lands and Claims that includes Specific Claims, Treaties, Comprehensive Claims, and Additions To Reserves; the Director is William David with Aaron Asselstine as Associate Director. A Forum on Specific Claims Reform was held November 2019 in Winnipeg (for further information see AFN website).

National Treaties No. s 1-11 Annual Gathering

The current National Treaty Spokesperson is Eric Tootoosis of Poundmaker Cree Nation, Treaty 6, Saskatchewan. The last Annual Gathering was hosted by Treaty 9 in August 2017. Treaty No. 11 Territory is planning to host the 2021 Annual Gathering.

Meeting of Treaty Area and Organization Representatives

The FSIN hosted three Zoom Meetings in May, June and July 2020 with Treaty Area and Organizational Representatives with intent to discuss Treaty within the Prairie Region that will move to developing Inherent and Treaty Rights Implementation Strategies.

Recognition of Indigenous Rights for Self-Government Discussion Tables (RIRSD)

Presently there are over 80 discussions tables across Canada; in Manitoba, there are 12 active Treaty Recognition Tables within the Treaty 2 Territory, Treaty 5 Territory and the Dakota Nations; information for some of these tables is publicly available under CIRNA; Treaty Commissioner Ross continues to present on her role as Treaty Commissioner and the TRCM mandate.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Quarterly AMC Council of Elders Meetings, including Zoom Meetings and spiritual ceremonies;
- On-going dialogue with Crown Indigenous Relations HQ on the TRCM partnership, importance of Treaties, Treaties relationship and role of Elders;
- Observance of Treaty Table meeting with the Federation of Indigenous Sovereign Nations of Saskatchewan and Crown Indigenous Relations HQ team facilitated by the Office of Treaty Commissioner;
- Treaty Think Tank meeting participation hosted by Onion Lake Cree Nation;
- Treaty 5 Sovereign Nations Annual Summit observation hosted by Black River First Nation;
- AMC Chiefs Task Force on TRCM meetings/dialogue;
- AFN 40th Annual General Assembly; 4th Annual Water Symposium; and Specific Claims Meeting;
- Observance of Treaty Commissioner presentations to the Island Lake Old Post Treaty Gathering, TRCM Treaty Education Northern Institute, and first AMC Entities & Affiliates Treaty Education two day session;
- Natural Resources Technical meeting participation hosted by Prince Albert Tribal Council; and
- AMC Treaty Annuity Payment Resolution, January 2020 and draft discussion paper "Treaty Annuities Clauses in the Numbered Treaties: Increasing the Annuities Payment for the Numbered Treaties in Manitoba."

MOVING FORWARD

As guided by the Chiefs Task Force, AMC will pursue a discussion table with CIRNA on renewal options for TRCM. Continue discussions with the Manitoba Treaty Recognition Tables and Treaty Areas on Treaty 150.

Network with the FSIN/OTC on Treaty Commissions including providing guidance to the Alberta Treaty 6, 7 & 8 on an Alberta Treaty Commission. Assist the National Treaty No. 1-11 Sovereign Movement in planning the 2021 Annual Gathering in Treaty No. 11 Territory.

Once COVID-19 pandemic restrictions ease, AMC will coordinate the Chiefs Gathering on "**Renewal, Relationship, Rights, Responsibility**" that was originally scheduled for March 24, 2020 on the following agenda items:

- Ceremony (pipe carriers: Treaty 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 & Dakota Nations; water ceremony);
- Opening Ceremonies (Grand Entry, Messages, Teachings from the Pipe Carriers, Unity by Knowledge Keepers);
- Welcoming Remarks (Objective of Gathering, Rules of Engagement);
- Inherent Right/Sovereignty (Elder Bone and Council of Elders);
- Numbered Treaties in Manitoba and the Dakota Relations (Treaty 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, Dakota and the Recognition of Indigenous Rights of Self-Government);
- Lands: Cede, Yield & Surrender (Elder AJ Felix);
- Land Discrepancy Court Case (Chief Sheldon Kent, Black River First Nation);
- Peoples, Citizenship, Rights (Sharon Venn, International Cree Legal Advocate);
- Mandate & History of TRCM (Loretta Ross, Treaty Commissioner);
- AMC January 2020 Resolution – Increase in Treaty Annuity Payments and AMC Draft Discussion Paper, June 2020;
- Next Steps & Setting up an ongoing process for dialogue on Treaty Matters in Manitoba, Canada
- Reflections / Closing comments;
- Closing Ceremonies.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH ACCORD

INTRODUCTION

Through several resolutions, the Chiefs in Assembly mandated the Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) to initiate discussions with the Federal and Provincial Governments on the development of a collaborative process that would lead to tripartite or double bi-lateral solutions for a framework on health. The AMC is also mandated with scoping the jurisdictional authorities that will result in dismantled federal departmental structures and the development of First Nation entities that are legally empowered to exercise these expanded authorities; consistent with the inherent right of self-government.

In order to form effective relationships that will provide First Nations input and involvement in the regional redesign of the FNIHB Manitoba Region, including the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, and also the Department of Indigenous Services; the AMC proposed a Two Track discussion approach, albeit both are complimentary and simultaneous.

- Track 1 focusses on the formal discussions and negotiations between First Nations and government for a renewed health delivery system and jurisdictional framework taking a population health approach (ongoing and now proposed as Tri-Partite Planning & Negotiation Structure).
- Track 2 focussed on creating a shared vision, through creating possible scenarios, to discover a path towards a “good life” for First Nations in Manitoba. This track is called “Wahbung-Our Tomorrows Imagined”. This work will inform a needs-based health strategy and provide supporting evidence for the jurisdictional framework in collaboration with regional partners.

OVERVIEW

In 1971, the Chiefs of First Nations in Manitoba signed Wahbung: Our Tomorrows, a position paper that represented a fundamental step towards self-determination of First Nations people in Manitoba. The document outlined an agenda for action, including First Nations’ inherent right to design and have full authority over their health, education, and child and family services systems, informed by First Nations worldviews, laws, and approaches.

In 2019, nearly 50 years after this seminal document was created, the Wahbung: Our Tomorrows Imagined project continues this important work and re-energizes the movement towards this desired reality. With First Nations’ leadership, guidance from spiritual teachings, and coaching by Reos Partners, an all-First Nations scenario team worked together to create four scenarios about how the next fifty years could unfold for First Nations in Manitoba. The team included Elders, Knowledge Keepers, youth, and First Nations leaders in health, education, community development, and child welfare representing both rural and urban experiences.

The scenarios are supporting conversations to identify options for what could be done to achieve Mino Pimatisiwin (the good life), ranging from community level health services to negotiations with the Government of Canada.

There are 63 First Nations in Manitoba and 5 distinct Indigenous linguistic groups. This diversity had made it challenging not only to articulate a shared vision for the future First Nations in Manitoba want to create, but also to agree on the path for how to get there.

Together, the scenario team discussed their views on the following questions:

- Perspectives: How do we see, from our different perspectives, the complex current reality of our lives?
- Scenarios: How could – not will, not should – our lives unfold over the decades ahead?
- Options: How could we deal with this unpredictable but influenceable situation?
- Vision: What must we do to build a good life?

Together, the First Nations technical leadership of Wahbung (AMC, MKO, SCO and FNHSSM) and Reos Partners co-created a methodology that leveraged the strengths of both First Nations knowledge and cultural systems with Reos' scenario methodology. Through this "braided" approach, the scenario team created four scenarios for how the future could unfold for Manitoba First Nations.

The four scenarios describe how the wellbeing of the First Nations in Manitoba could unfold over the next 50 years across seven social determinants of health: Self-determination; Language, Culture and Spirituality; Land and Environment; Social Services; Health Systems; Employment, Economic Development and Income, and Education.

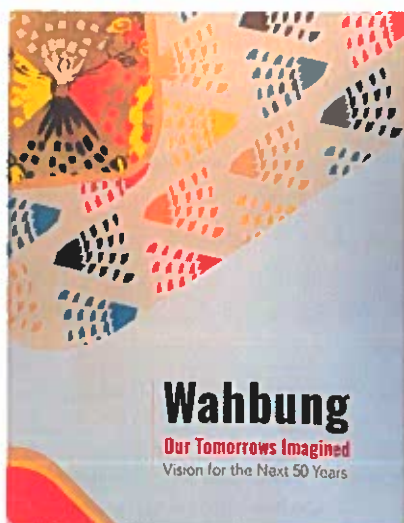
ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

- Workshop 1 – Perspectives – Gimli – Nov 29 to Dec 1 @41 participants – "Wahbung, Our Tomorrows Imagined, Summary of Conversations about Our Tomorrows, Conducted between Sept & Nov, 2018 – Draft Nov 19, 2019"
- Workshop 2 – Scenarios – Gimli – Feb 7 to 9 @ 47 participants – "Wahbung, Our Tomorrows Imagined, Revised Draft – Perspective Document – Jan 28, 2019"
- Workshop 3 – Options – Wpg – March 7 & 8@ 52 participants - "Wahbung, Our Tomorrows Imagined, Scenarios for the Next 50 Years – DRAFT March 6, 2019"
- Workshop 4 – Visions – Wpg – May 2 & 3 @ 49 participants - Wahbung, Our Tomorrows Imagined, Strategies & Options for Mino-Pimatisiwin – March 31, 2019" & "Wahbung, Our Tomorrows Imagined, Scenarios for the Next 50 Years" – went to print April 2019
- Launch – June 17 – Turtle Lodge @ 25 participants – presentation of "Our Tomorrows Imagined, Vision & Roadmap for the Health of MB FN into 2030"
- CTFoH 1st meeting – October 29th- introductory meeting
- Inter-governmental workshop - November Session – Wpg – Nov 12@67 participants – "Wahbung, Our Tomorrows Imagined, Scenarios for the Next 50 Years" – went to printlate October & distributed at November session. Advisory groups met, ToR & Scope of Work
- March 19th– launch of Elders Report at Turtle Lodge

SUMMARY OF POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIOS

(1) Dominion

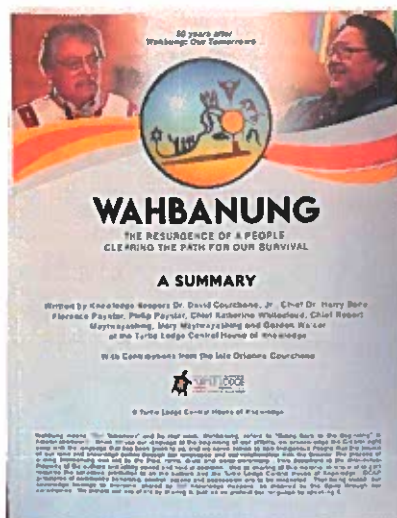
Today's status quo conditions and trends in First Nations' wellbeing continue into the future. Canada increasingly shifts from a "mosaic" to a "melting pot" that is dominated by Western culture, which erases First Nations distinctiveness and autonomy. Big oil maintains its strong influence globally and in Canada. As the dominant Settler society bulldozes and absorbs minorities, the few First Nations whose choices fit well with the dominant system thrive, but most are increasingly marginalized. This scenario could be imagined as such:



Health

Health status and disparities in life expectancies worsen in this scenario secondary to the undermined health systems on reserve and urban health systems being ill-equipped to meet First Nations' needs. Complete Federal divestment in the direct provision of health care results in the Province being primarily responsible for delivery of health care services, with a focus on acute rather than preventive care.

Culturally insensitive services result in reduced uptake of primary care, as does a decrease in the provision of services available on reserve. The incidence of chronic illness in adults such as type II diabetes increases, resulting in an increase in secondary complications such as peripheral vascular disease, infection, amputation, chronic kidney disease, and heart disease. The prevalence of these diseases may dramatically increase due to the increase in incidence plus the medical establishment's increasing ability to manage acute conditions, thus sustaining the lives of patients suffering from very advanced disease burden without providing the chronic management to decrease individuals' level of complications. Premature mortality due to injuries and substance abuse increases as the social determinants of health and cultural losses worsen.



Health Care System Performance

Metrics measuring health care system performance incorporating measures of safety, effectiveness and access universally decrease due to progressively insufficient resources unable to meet the increased demand of First Nations citizens on the provincially-run health care system on and off reserve. On reserve, access suffers as primary care appointment slots are completely consumed, resulting in a shunting of primary care visits to emergency room care. Continuity of care suffers, and as disillusionment and chronic disease

burden increases further, the ability for the health care system to provide high performance care further erodes. Notwithstanding this, a few primary care providers continue to provide care to the best of their abilities to those most in need, and so are able to maintain an inequitable level of health care somewhat better than none at all.

Expenditures

On-reserve provision of health care increasingly shifts toward delivering acute care with "all health care expenditures [being] spent on sickness and hospitalization". Cost of care per First Nations citizen continues to rise as chronic care and cultural appropriateness is neglected, and as populations increase. Treatment for many illnesses, including end-stage renal disease by dialysis, increases dramatically, further increasing the cost burden on the provincial government. Relocation to major urban centres for increasingly extended courses of treatment for cancer, end stage renal disease, and other illnesses further increases per capita cost burden.

Self Determination

As the provision of health care services is entirely assumed by the provincial government, self determination over health care provision and outcomes is severely compromised. Some pushback against the establishment may allow for preservation of traditional medicines and healing, allowing for some baseline maintenance and potentially improvement in self-determination over time.

Client Satisfaction

Satisfaction with a health care system delivered entirely by the province could be very low, a function of the insufficient and decreasing chronic care and preventive medicine services, lack of cultural sensitivity, and fewer resources allocated to traditional healing [p.10]. "Health status and disparities in life expectancies worsen", and as such drive the poor opinion of the affected citizens.

(2) Dreamcatchers

Global forces – including climate change, technology, and globalization – lead to massive changes in how all cultures are practiced, how all services are delivered, and how all societal systems function. Economies and living environments are heavily disrupted by environmental crises and rapid growth of automation, artificial intelligence, and internet connectivity. First Nations people are affected by the same changes, leading to a redrawn picture of First Nations wellbeing. Cultural mixing in a highly connected environment leads to First Nations culture being expressed in completely different ways, while some of the old ways are lost. The change is rapid. There is tension between those wanting to reinvent cultural practices and those wanting to preserve the old ways.

Health

"Virtual technology and artificial intelligence lead to better physical health through improved access to immediate and timely care and reduced medical errors", with "holistic healing and traditional medicine... available separately from the main, government-controlled health care system.

" This assumption is based at least partly on improved connectivity in the north, suggesting that the remainder would likely lack the standard of care and suffer sub-standard health outcomes.

Health Care System Performance

The safety, effectiveness and access of the health care system under the Dreamcatchers scenario would demonstrate significant improvements over the present system. Accessibility improvements are assumed to be significant, supported by recent data in other jurisdictions.

Expenditures

An increase in efficiencies surrounding health care delivery results in a decrease in expenditures. Other causes of changes in expenditures are not defined within the scenario, resulting in significant uncertainty.

Self Determination

Factors contributing to the extent of self-determination are multitudinous and interacting: Increased access to technology allows for better access to this updated form of primary care, empowering individuals to address their own chronic care and preventive medicine endeavours. However, government still exercises control over the delivery of primary health care, and while innovative programs are available to promote indigenous culture and traditional teachings, they may or may not be viewed as satisfactory by all. In sum, the effects on self-determination and their relative importance are difficult to predict with confidence.

Client Satisfaction

Client satisfaction may be a function of health outcomes, system performance, expenditures, and self-determination, as well as cultural appropriateness and other factors. It is likely that the strong efficiencies and outcomes suggested would be the primary drivers of client satisfaction in this scenario, leading to improvements in client satisfaction.

However, the potential for delivery of culturally inappropriate care through homogenous digital tools based on primarily western databases and approaches should not be ignored. This may be taken in stride by those more integrated with the digital age, but those embracing a more traditional way of life may be less than satisfied.

(3) All My Relations

First Nations and the Canadian Government build a more fruitful relationship through negotiations in good faith. They follow the worldview of interconnectedness expressed through the words, "all my relations", or Mitákuye Oyás'in, a Dakota word meaning "we are all related". First Nations co-exist with settlers in a negotiated relationship of mutual respect for jurisdiction of First Nations and Canadian laws, leading to greater autonomy over services and better wellness for First Nations people, but still operating within a framework defined by the Canadian Government. Treaties are ultimately respected and implemented, and the Canadian Government retains overall control of the funding and institutions that underpin First Nations services and status. Capitalism is maintained as the driving economic system, but with some more progressive social and tax policies resulting in decreasing income inequality across Canada.

Health

Improvements in culturally appropriate care, federal funding ensuring health equity, an increase in Indigenous caregivers, and more integrated partnerships between First Nations and federal and provincial governments, as well as more carefully monitored health care variables, each contribute to gradually improving health outcomes for First Nations citizens.

Health Care System Performance

System performance metrics are actively monitored by First Nations, resulting in improved outcomes. Many other factors also contribute to the improved performance, including "improved communication" and increased resources available to narrow former inequities.

Expenditures

Expenditures necessarily increase to accomplish the stated outcomes with a significant initial investment to address outstanding health inequities and infrastructure gaps, then rising gradually thereafter with population growth and inflation.

Self Determination

Maintaining relative independence between the delivery of primary care and preventive medicine in First Nations communities and the funding of the service delivery by the federal government allows for improved self-determination for First Nations at a community level. Individuals are also able to make use of culturally appropriate primary care services, further increasing self actualization. {5} Control of health care funding by colonial government still causes some degree of tension, and dependence of First Nations on provision of advanced medical care by non-First Nations providers (such as tertiary care centres in Winnipeg) implies an incomplete control over self-determination.

Client Satisfaction

Patients generally receive primary care consistent with their present needs, physically, mentally, and spiritually, as well as effective preventive care. Sufficient resources are available to address health inequities. Client satisfaction improves as self-determination and related factors improve.

(4) Sun, Grass, and Waters

First Nations gain the space and opportunities to assert their sovereignties and to reclaim their relationships with the land, water, air, and animals. The words "Sun, Grass, and Waters" become widely accepted as the basis for this new reality, meaning the freedom to truly follow the First Nations way of life, with the Sun representing Creation, the Grass representing Mother Earth and Turtle Island, and Water representing all life. The Canadian economy shifts away from oil, creating economic opportunities for First Nations in clean energy.

The coming 50 years bring a stream of shifts in whose priorities are represented in the services First Nations receive, then later fully realized and restored First Nations' constitutions based on Natural Law. The transition period is difficult and benefits are not equally distributed between Nations. Tensions arise as Nations have different opportunities and make different choices, but First Nations use the traditions and ceremonies to maintain relationships and share resources.

Health

The protracted and variable transition of First Nations' movement toward full self-determination described in the Sun, Grass, and Waters scenario suggests significant improvements in the delivery of health care to First Nations in 2042, decades from now. In the mean time, fragmented services and challenging politics continue to hinder the delivery of primary care and preventive medicine services on reserve.

A balance between holistic and Western approaches is struck for health care delivery, with higher level care provided between Nations and from the Province via service purchase agreements.

Health Care System Performance

The difficult transition period is marked with decreased system performance indicators — access is variable over different First Nations, as is safety and effectiveness, given varying levels of resources and approaches to cultural appropriateness. Heterogeneity between First Nations with regard to resources available create dramatically different outcomes.

Expenditures

Expenditures in this scenario are a function not primarily of need, as in the other scenarios, but of availability. Because First Nations operate relatively independently, gains to scale are not fully realized, and per-capita spending to achieve given health outcomes may be higher than otherwise, dependent upon cooperation between nations and efficiency of systems operations.

Self Determination

The extent of self-determination is determined by the resources available to First Nations and inter-nation cooperation, and is balanced against external obligations attached to resources. As given, self-determination improves markedly, contributing to the provision of culturally appropriate Indigenous and Western care in a balance determined by the individual.

Client Satisfaction

Satisfaction improves to the extent that an individual's needs may be provided for, physically, mentally, and spiritually, in their home communities. This may vary between communities and over time during the struggle toward full self-determination. This variable being a function of multiple unknown factors and which would likely vary significantly between communities, it is difficult to predict the long-term levels of satisfaction.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS & NEXT STEPS

The least preferred option is a continued future in "Dominion" or remain in status quo. It is the most expensive option with worsening health outcomes, reduced control and satisfaction. All collective efforts must stray away from this potential future. The most preferable future is working toward full self-determination while strengthening existing partnerships and building in technologies that support improved health and wellness outcomes.

In framing those future authorities and structures, First Nations will need to consider multiple jurisdictions and several complex health system layers in collaboration with provincial and federal governments. A few examples include:

1. Legal Considerations – Treaties, legislation, policy and the "division of powers"
2. Fiscal Considerations – current costs and future sustainability, distributed resources, economies of scale and need-based funding arrangements

3. Workforce Considerations – education and training needs, employment standards and distribution, union agreements, clinical and program leadership

4. Ethical Considerations – patient safety, clinical standards, health equity and quality improvement

5. Morale Considerations – the right and control over one's personal decisions and community priorities

6. Social Determinants Consideration – the health of the individual is influenced by more than the health care system

Up until now, all of these considerations have been decided for us by one or both levels of government with little to no influence from First Nations. After fifty years of political advocacy and leadership, we are finally in a position to plan, design and negotiate new arrangements in health service provision and control. This, coupled with simultaneous federal and provincial health transformation projects, is a timely opportunity that First Nations have not seen before; and must act quickly but deliberately and as informed as possible.

The first question at hand is "how much money will First Nations need to operate their own health care system?" The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs has engaged the expertise of Validus Healthcare Analytics to better understand current funding and expenditures, health transfer payments as well as future projections for a need-based health care system. Preliminary data (see summary next page) suggests that just under one billion (\$980,158,000) is spent on First Nations in Manitoba living on-reserve; equating to \$10,459 - \$11,000 per First Nation on-reserve resident (compared to \$4,498 non-First Nation).

This includes both federal and provincial health expenditures and suggests that health care costs for First Nations in Manitoba are twice that of the average Manitoban. Early estimates for the 2019/20 Canada Health Transfer (CHT) payments are \$95,236,370 while provincial expenditures are \$459,118,000 creating a negative variance of -\$363,881,630 (insured health services are considerably subsidized by provincial governments). There is much more work to be done in understanding multi-jurisdictional funding arrangements and expenditures but there is cause for concern that current CHT payments are significantly lower than need. If current CHT payments were to flow directly to First Nations, communities would be placed at risk for sizeable deficits in purchasing insured health services.

Given the complexities and various factors to be considered, it is recommended that First Nations in Manitoba formally engage in a comprehensive Tri-Partite initiative with both levels of government and community partners (see page 11 for proposed planning structure). The following pages offer our Shared Vision, Strategic Directions and Guiding Principles (rolling draft). Work will continue on articulating roles and responsibilities, selection criteria and processes for each of the proposed tables/teams. Once approved in principle by the Chiefs in Assembly, work will commence immediately with First Nation technical partners and the Chiefs Task Force on Health to validate the planning process and invite participants, with a formal launch planned for October 2019.



EDUCATION

STAFF

- ▶ Lyn Blackburne, Director of Education
- ▶ Andrew Thunder, Business Policy Analyst Researcher
- ▶ Roxanne Meawasige, Policy Analyst/Researcher
- ▶ Jonah Powell, Junior Policy Advisor/Researcher
- ▶ Linda Ackegan, Administrative Assistant

INTRODUCTION

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Executive Council of Chiefs, and the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) are mandated by Resolution Nov-17.05 which called for the restoration of the AMC CCOE to provide direction on First Nation education matters. In 2019, the AMC CCOE was directed to work on all regional First Nations education activities, including the regional education funding formula/model and a Manitoba First Nations Regional Education Agreement.

OVERVIEW

The AMC Education Directorate was re-established on November 15, 2019 and Lyn Blackburne was hired as the Education Director. Overall, the AMC Education Directorate has provided regional policy analysis and advocacy with representation at the local, provincial and national tables. The main focus for education in 2019-2020 has been finalizing the interim funding formula/model and the Manitoba First Nations Regional Education Agreement in preparation for the Negotiations process.

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Manitoba Regional Education Agreement

The AMC Education staff has been working with First Nations leadership, First Nation Education Directors, the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre and various others to create a Manitoba Regional Education Agreement in order to transform First Nations elementary and secondary education on reserve. Beginning in 2019-20, Canada was to implement a new formula-based funding approach aimed at ensuring students attending First Nations schools are supported

by predictable base funding that is more directly comparable to funding in provincial education systems. AMC staff worked to ensure that this new approach aimed to create a more financially stable environment for First Nations education, enabling better quality and more consistent supports for students, schools, educators, Nations and First Nations education organizations – conditions that help improve student outcomes.

Developed in recognition of Manitoba First Nations' inherent and treaty rights to education, the Agreement sets out that Canada will provide funding to First Nations in Manitoba over a 5-year period to bring the shift towards First Nations control of First Nations education on reserve. This year, AMC has obtained legal review and revisions on this Regional Education Agreement from Fox Fraser LLP, which are currently ongoing and near finalization.

Interim Funding Formula/Model

The Interim Funding Formula (IFF) that replaced Indigenous Service Canada's (ISC) outdated, proposal-based programming was to provide sufficient, predictable and sustainable funding to First Nations, schools and systems. The IFF proposed by ISC was rejected by the AMC Technical Task Force and a modified IFF was co-developed by ISC and the AMC Technical Task Force supported by MFNERC technical staff.

The modified IFF was co-developed based on the principle of equity for all First Nations including consideration for northern, remote and isolated, and smaller schools. The funding formula is based on:

- Provincial comparability as a starting point towards sufficient, predictable and sustainable funding;
- Additional funding for Language and Culture and other First Nation cost drivers – transportation formula, and Private Home Placement (where applicable); and
- Provincial tuition (where applicable).

The AMC is in negotiations with ISC to ensure the modified IFF includes adaptations and enhancements that best reflects the unique realities of First Nation schools and students in the Manitoba region. The AMC is now in the process of setting up a negotiations table to work towards the full implementation of a funding formula that will improve the outcomes of First Nations students and address the many years of inequity and underfunding.

COVID-19 Pandemic

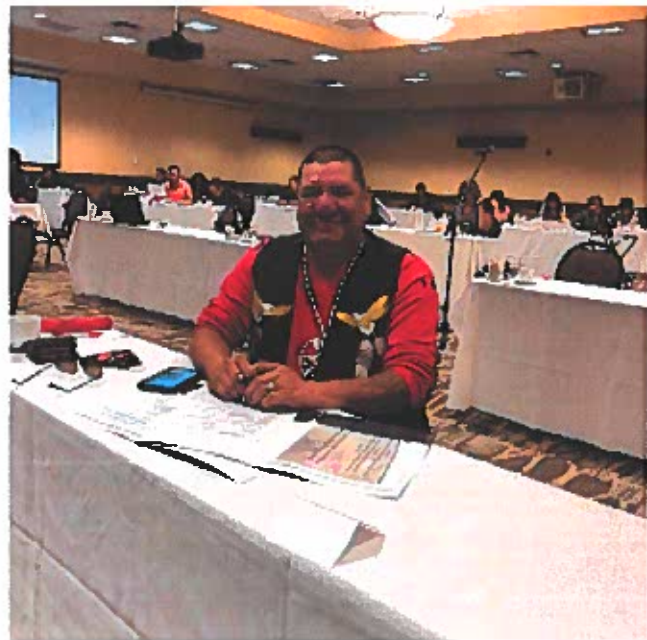
On March 23, 2020, the Province announced that all N-12 schools would be postponed for three weeks. On March 31, 2020, the postponement extended for the duration of the 2019-20 academic year. On June 3, 2020, Education Directors discussed certain types of services that were needed for an adequate reopening. This included Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and funding for additional costs. The AMC Education Department developed a spreadsheet to determine all of the immediate and ongoing costs that First Nation schools will incur as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The AMC has identified a total cost of \$1.3 million per school and is advocating for additional funding to ensure these costs will be covered.

ACTIVITIES

Manitoba First Nation Education Directors Meetings

The AMC Education Directorate continues to arrange and facilitate monthly meetings for the Education Directors based on their needs and concerns for their respective First Nation. There have been various presentations and information sessions on the following:

- Services offered within the province to support First Nations;
- Updates from the AMC Education Secretariat on proposals and political advocacy for additional funding for post-secondary education (PSE) related to supports for our PSE students surrounding the pandemic needs to include rent, food, travel and all related living expenses;
- Technical supports for all students in First Nations with resources such as tablets and laptops;



- Updates provided from the Assembly of First Nations national level meetings of the National Indian Education Council and the AMC CCOE;
- Updates from Manitoba First Nation Education Resource Centre on the Interim Funding Formula, Special Education, Language and Culture, and Indigenous Early Learning Child Care initiative; and
- Presentations from our post-secondary institutes on programming and services available.

AMC will be hosting an in-person Education Directors meeting in July 2020 to develop two Safe Return to School planning templates; one for larger school population and one for smaller population to ensure preparation for the school term which is to resume in September 2020.

Zoom Meetings and Teleconferences

The Covid-19 Pandemic brought about a new way of communicating with one another. Numerous meetings were conducted over Zoom or teleconference on a weekly basis with the Education Directors, Indigenous Services Canada, the Assembly of First Nations National Indian Education Council (NIEC) and AFN Chiefs Committee on Education as well as regional meetings with the Chiefs Committee on Education and the

Negotiations Team, the provincial School Divisions, the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate and a provincial Response Planning Committee.

We also met weekly with the Manitoba First Nation Education Resource Centre and conducted our own staff meetings until we were allowed back at work on a rotational alternate schedule for all staff at AMC. There was also a Manitoba high cost special education program review facilitated by IndSight Consulting for the AFN NIEC, this was a one day session with two different groups one in the morning and another in the afternoon. AMC was also included on the Limited No Connectivity conversations with the province.

Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE)

Resolution Mar-18.05, A Renewed Approach to Reassert First Nations Jurisdiction in Education which calls for restoration of various responsibilities of the AMC CCOE to direct and oversee regional activities and research on First Nations education that will include ensuring First Nations control of their own education and to inform Canada and the AFN of the position of the Manitoba Chiefs on Education; Re-establishment of a Technical Task Force comprised of advisors from existing First Nations education authorities and AMC Secretariat. The Chiefs Committee on Education includes:

- ▶ Chief Lance Roulette, Sandy Bay First Nation;
- ▶ Chief Vera Mitchell, Poplar River First Nation;
- ▶ Chief Karen Batson, Pine Creek First Nation;
- ▶ Chief Craig Alexander, Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation;
- ▶ Chief Wayne Desjarlais, Ebb and Flow First Nation;
- ▶ Chief Clarence Easter, Chemawawin Cree Nation;
- ▶ Chief Murray Clearsky, Waywayseecappo First Nation;
- ▶ Chief Glenn Hudson, Peguis First Nation;
- ▶ Chief Derrick Henderson, Sagkeeng First Nation; and
- ▶ Onekanew Christian Sinclair, Opaskwayak Cree Nation.

The CCOE continued to meet before the pandemic and meetings resumed via Zoom conference during the pandemic, many issues were discussed related to PSE

funding, the Post-secondary partnership program, the CCOE Terms of Reference, funding Yellowquill to develop a community based teacher education program accredited by a Manitoba post-secondary institute, Special education, and the Centre of Excellence.

The following resolutions were passed at the Executive Chiefs Council from the CCOE recommendations:

ECC MAR-20.06 That the Executive Council of Chiefs (ECC) appoint Chief Wayne Desjarlais, Ebb and Flow First Nation to the AFN Chiefs Committee on Education.

Motion: Chief David Crate

Second: Chief Norman Bone

ECC MAR-20.07 That the Executive Council of Chiefs (ECC) accept the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) recommendation to include Lyn Blackburne, AMC Education Director on the Negotiation Team.

Motion: Chief Shirley Ducharme

Second: Chief Norman Bone

ECC MAR-20.08 That the Executive Council of Chiefs (ECC) appoint Grand Chief, another Chief and/or direct the AMC Secretariat to hire a professional Negotiator to facilitate the negotiation process.

Motion: Chief Norman Bone

Second: Chief David Crate

ECC MAR-20.11 That the Executive Council of Chiefs (ECC) appoint Chief Leroy Constant, York Factory First Nation as the northern representative to the MFNERC Board of Directors.

Motion: Chief Norman Bone

Second: Chief Shirley Ducharme



Technical Task Force

The Technical Task Force developed a proposed Regional Education Agreement that sets out how the AMC and Canada will continue to work together to make policy changes and education reform to support successful education outcomes, with their last meeting held on February 20, 2020. The AMC Technical Task Force as well as the Education Directors reviewed and provided input on the draft REA and the decision was made that upon final completion the REA would be sent to Indigenous Services Canada for negotiations, and that the subsequent Negotiations Team will begin their work, and continue what the Technical Task Force had created.

The Technical Task Force included:

- Davin Dumas, Fisher River Cree Nation (South Cree);
- Greg Halcrow, Cross Lake Band of Indians (North Cree);
- Crissy Courchene, Sagkeeng First Nation (South Ojibway);
- Freddie Wood, St. Theresa Point First Nation (North Ojibway-Cree);
- Carrie Sutherland, Peguis First Nation (South Ojibway);
- Bev Fontaine, Opaskwayak Cree Nation (North Cree); and
- Rene Roulette, Sand Bay First Nation (South Ojibway).

Regional Funding Formula/Model and Agreement Negotiations Team

At an inaugural technical Negotiations Team meeting held on March 5 & 6, 2020, in Buffalo Point First Nation, a number of the Negotiations Team members met to discuss the current state of the draft Manitoba Regional Education Agreement and to consider the process for the Negotiations Table. At a later meeting on March 11 & 12, 2020, the Negotiations Team reviewed and revised the proposed draft REA.

The Negotiations Team includes:

- Negotiator and Table Lead – Dennis White Bird, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs;
- Negotiation Team:
 - Representatives from the AMC CCOE;
 - Chief Wayne Desjarlais; and
 - Chief Lance Roulette.
 - Alternatives:
 - Chief Karen Batson or
 - Chief Vera Mitchell.
 - Representative from Independent First Nations:
 - Chief Glenn Hudson.
 - Representatives from the Technical Task Force:
 - Davin Dumas; and
 - Greg Halcrow.
 - Technical Support: Representatives from AMC as needed:
 - Marcel Balfour; or
 - Natalie Ballentyne.
 - Representatives from MFNERC as needed:
 - Virginia Arthurson; or
 - George Merasty.
 - Elder: Representative from the AMC Council of Elders:
 - Florence Paynter.

AMC will continue to advocate for our First Nations of Manitoba as we continue to fight for adequate, sustainable and stable funding for students K-12, post-secondary and development of our own colleges and university.

CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT (FORMALLY KNOWN AS INTERVENTION PROJECT)

STAFF

- ▶ Melanie Everette, Special Projects Coordinator, Capacity Enhancement Team Lead
- ▶ Clayton Burka, BBA, Business and Economic Development Officer
- ▶ Jimmy Thunder, MBA, Business and Economic Development Officer

INTRODUCTION

In November 2017, the AMC was approved for a pilot project as the first phase of the development of a First Nations approach to replace Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Default Prevention and Management Policy (DPMP). The AMC would work on the development of a process that will promote First Nations collaboration, capacity enhancement and resources development by focusing on the following:

- Enhance the Nations capacity so leadership and their administration can quickly and effectively resume day to day operations while taking back full control of their funding and prevent any chance of future defaults;
- Identify and address any underlying causes of default that may include policy, capacity development, management, community engagement, governance.
- Pilot the development of alternative solutions to the current practice of hiring third party/ for profit companies that do not develop First Nations capacity but rather control the First Nations administrative functions: and

The main goal of the project is to assist First Nations in enhancing their capacity and to provide administrative and technical supports. The Capacity Enhancement Project, formally known as the intervention project, is designed to provide support in a manner that respects the ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP)

of the information that is shared during their participation of the program. As such the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs strives to respect the privacy of the program participants. Confidentiality of the First Nations records, files and finances are respected.

In the early stages of the pilot project the capacity enhancement team worked with five First Nations as identified in the initial proposal. First Nations who were in a form of intervention or those who required assistance reached out the AMC to request assistance in several different areas, including working with Grand Chief Arlen Dumas to advocate on issues. The team adjusts the project work plan for each First Nation based on the needs and areas identified by the Nations.

When the team is engaged by a First Nation, an overview presentation is made to the Chief and Council on how the Capacity Enhancement Team can support their Nation and what occurs as part of this process. Leadership identifies how they would like to move forward and provide the team with direction on the areas that are a high priority for their Nation.

As of March 2020, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the team was required to adjust the way they operate with each First Nation to ensure the team continues to provide support.

This is a new way of working together that will benefit all First Nations in Manitoba. The end goal of the project is to affect change in the way government policies affect our First Nations as it pertains to Default Prevention and Management Policy and create a process that will benefit First Nations and their citizens.

KEY ISSUES & CHALLENGES

Government processes and policies continue to slow the progress of First Nations in Manitoba. Issues include but are not limited to the Default Prevention and Management Policy (DPMP), policies that do not allow

for long term planning, citizenship records that do not keep up with population growth (which can impact funding allocations), chronic underfunding that impacts development & growth, as well as many other areas that do not allow for First Nations to self-determine. Because each Nation is unique, it is important for leadership to direct the outcomes in their Nation.

At the request of the Chief and Council, the team provides support at meetings with government officials, funders, project partners, service providers and others as required.

Default Prevention and Management Policy Issues

Grand Chief Arlen Dumas strongly advocated for First Nations who were under intervention. There are First Nations who have been in a form of intervention for over a decade. Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)/Crown-Indigenous Relation and Northern Affairs (CIRNAC) made changes to the DPMP policy that has removed third party management and de-escalated any First Nation under the Third Party Funding Agreement Management policy to Recipient Appointed Advisors (formerly known as co-managers) or Recipient Managed - Management Action Plan. Although there are no longer any First Nations in Manitoba under third party management, the impacts of third party management continued and still continue to interfere with progress in the Nations.

The role of the Recipient Appointed Advisors (RAA's) must be clearly defined to prevent any confusion from operating like a third party manager. In order for leadership and their administration to make informed decisions they must have access to their information and communicate regularly with their recipient appointed advisors, auditors, contractors, and other service providers. There are instances where information is difficult to obtain, communication is limited, and in some circumstances proper consultation is lacking. It is unacceptable that our First Nations are required to operate under these conditions.

Human Resources

Lack of sufficient funding does not allow for First Nations to recruit and retain staffing levels. Certain funding allocations do not allow for full time positions which then causes a staff person to assume more than one role within the Nation. This leaves a gap for leadership who often have to become administrators of their Nations which keeps the leadership from advocating to move their Nations forward. The Capacity Enhancement team understand the importance of human resources in an administrative setting and work closely with leadership on this area.

Technology Issues

Due to lack of proper resources many First Nations are forced to operate with obsolete network infrastructure & computer equipment that are often not compatible with current computer systems and software. Unstable connectivity can make it difficult to receive or send correspondence, submit proposals/workplans/budgets, and work with upgraded financial systems. Opportunities have been missed due to the connectivity issues, including calls for proposals, change in information, missed or changed deadlines, meeting requests as well as other areas of importance. Slow and lagging systems have also resulted in information arriving late or not at all, funder files and forms cannot be opened, entering information in online formats is difficult and causes delays due to having to reenter information that is lost.

The team works to ensure there is regular communication with the Nations we support. Information is sent by email, text, messenger, fax and mail. A process must be maintained to ensure all required information is reaching the leadership and their administration.

Traditional Lands & Territories

There are many outstanding land claims that could benefit First Nations in the pursuit of growth and contributing to help build the Nation's economic development ventures. First Nations population growth is not recognized as funding is renewed year to year.

In order to accommodate population growth, First Nations must expand in areas where they can build homes and achieve economic growth. Government processes require an excessive amount of time to process land claims. In many cases across Manitoba, First Nations are still waiting to receive approval.

Community Infrastructure and Housing

Due to chronic underfunding in this area, there is not enough resources to build administration offices, maintain housing or meet the needs of the Nation in a timely manner. Leadership is often left to make difficult decisions based on the allocation of funding they receive. It is our experience that this weighs heavily on our leadership as they work to provide solutions for their citizens.

It is important for leadership to have the ability to conduct business on behalf of their citizens in an effective manner that allows for all types and levels of communication. In some cases, there is lack of office space for leadership and administration to effectively operate in and hold meetings with staff, citizens, funders, contractors, etc.

Road infrastructure and Environmental Impacts

First Nations face all types of environmental impacts. This includes flooding, winter roads, fire, tornadoes, pandemic viruses, etc. First Nations have always advocated for long term solutions. However, the Nations are forced to continue to deal with the same issue year after year, costing financial resources. The current system in place takes away from financial resources that can be better utilized as determined by the Nations. Working with the Nations on improved response times and long-term solutions will allow for better use of resources.

LINKAGES TO FIRST NATIONS

Through the capacity development project, the AMC would like to work on connecting member First Nations leadership with one another to facilitate collaboration and share experiences through Nation to Nation engagements.

These connections can help our Nations share information on their best practices, provide mentorship, seek advice, and create partnerships. This support system results in staff and citizens connecting and working together across Manitoba on many common issues. After many discussions with leadership, staff and citizens, there is a common goal to have a healthy and prosperous future for generations to come. There is a need for transformation to begin between the Government of Canada and First Nations in Manitoba.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The AMC Grand Chiefs office and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Secretariat Inc. are always readily available to assist the First Nations with advocacy, citizen engagement, support and resources. The persistence and advocacy of the Grand Chief is an essential component to many initiatives of this project as well as the initiatives that are defined by the Chiefs-in-Assembly.

Through the hard work and dedication of the leadership and their staff, the AMC Capacity Enhancement team have accomplished a number of goals set by leadership. Our Nations are strong and have capacity to do what is best for their citizens.

The team brings valuable resources that leadership can utilize and the team is always willing to seek added resources as requested. The AMC Capacity Enhancement Team is very honoured to be working with our First Nations in Manitoba and has had the pleasure of being a part of and witnessing the successes of strong leadership, staff and their citizens. It is the teams hope that we learn from and build on those successes to develop a First Nation led approach to creating our own policies and directives.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

STAFF

- Myrle Ballard, Ph.D., M.Sc., B.Sc., B.A.
Emergency Management Services Engagement
Coordinator

INTRODUCTION

During the last decade, there have been numerous emergency events caused by natural and anthropogenic disasters in various regions in Manitoba, which resulted in many First Nation communities to be evacuated and to declare state of emergencies. Some of the natural disasters have been tornados, winter storms, severe weather storms, forest fires, and flooding. An anthropogenic event that results in Nations declaring emergencies was the fugitives-at-large in northern Manitoba that resulted in some First Nations going into lock-down. The most current emergency is the COVID-19 pandemic which also resulted in all First Nations in Manitoba instituting lock-downs, border patrol and curfew protocols. Disasters can be classified into natural disasters, anthropogenic disasters, and hybrid disasters. Disasters can have different characters and their impacts can vary, however, the commonality among disasters, is their severity. Many First Nations are usually the most severely impacted during emergencies due to lack of infrastructure, lack of- or incomplete emergency management plans, lack of human capacity, and lack of resources to name but a few.

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

One of the key issues is the COVID-19 pandemic which has shut down or slowed down almost every aspect of



our livelihoods and economy. The lock-down of First Nations due to COVID-19 has resulted in the cancellation of travel, which ultimately closed and restricted access to the First Nations. Virtual communication is an alternative, however, the challenge is the connectivity of the First Nations. Despite the current situation, the challenges, key issues, and lessons learned will be integrated and analyzed as part of the outcomes for the Emergency Management Services (EMS) engagement.

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2019/2020

During 2019-2020, 59 of the 63 First Nations received funding to conduct their EMS community engagements. The EMS Engagement Coordinator assisted First Nations with their community engagements upon request. Communities utilized a variety of methods for engaging their community members such as questionnaires, focus groups, workshops, and community reporting. The EMS Engagement Coordinator also provided information to First Nation leadership upon request.

GAMING

STAFF

- ▶ Marcel Balfour, Senior Policy Analyst

INTRODUCTION

The AMC supports First Nations in Manitoba in the area of Gaming by focusing on the advancement and affirmation of the First Nations' right to Gaming, and to seek to expand opportunities to increase gaming revenues. The reason increased gaming revenues are sought is to have First Nations use them in areas that they get little or no funding so they can improve the socio-economic conditions on reserve. The Department of Gaming Development works with gaming consultants and legal advisors who provide supports for and take guidance, direction and advice from:

- the AMC Grand Chief's Office;
- the AMC Chiefs Gaming Committee; and
- the Sand Hills Casino Board of Directors.

The AMC Gaming Committee consists of:

- ▶ 1 Northern Chief representative – Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation (Chair)
- ▶ 1 Southern Chief representative – Vacant
- ▶ Aseneskak Casino representative – Chief Clarence Easter, Chemawawin Cree Nation
- ▶ South Beach Casino representative – Chief Sheldon Kent, Black River First Nation
- ▶ Sand Hills Casino representative – Chief Francine Meeches, Sand Hills Casino
- ▶ VLT holder representative – Chief Leroy Constant, York Factory First Nation
- ▶ Non-VLT holder representative – Chief David Monias, Cross Lake First Nation

The AMC also provides administrative support to the Sand Hills Board of Directors, which consists of:

- ▶ 1 AMC Chiefs Gaming Committee representative – Chief Betsy Kennedy (Chair),

War Lake First Nation

- ▶ Host First Nation representative – Chief Francine Meeches, Swan Lake First Nation
- ▶ Aseneskak Casino representative – Chief Elwood Zastre, Wuskwi Sipihk First Nation
- ▶ South Beach Casino representative – Chief Larry Barker, Hollow Water First Nation
- ▶ 2 Board appointed – Vacant

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Manitoba generates over \$500 million per year in gaming-related gross revenues. However, the casino revenues received by most First Nations across the province are negligible – only \$10,000 to \$20,000 per year. Furthermore, Manitoba continues to exclude First Nations from gaming development in Winnipeg, the largest and most lucrative gaming market in Manitoba. Among provinces across Canada with a First Nations gaming framework, Manitoba generates the smallest per capita benefits to First Nations.

A major issue in trying to improve gaming revenues is the requirement to work with the government of the province of Manitoba. First Nations have to work with the Province because it sets all policies, legislation and regulations for First Nations gaming. This has been a challenge for First Nations who have consistently made efforts to work with the Provincial government to foster meaningful dialogue and develop mutually beneficial agreements. However, the Government of Manitoba has made it clear that it has limited interest in discussing First Nations gaming, and continues to restrict First Nations access to gaming markets.

In 2018, the Government of Manitoba announced a pause on new gaming development, including the ability to establish, move, or expand operations, pending the outcome of a Provincial Gaming Review. This has impacted many First Nations and goes against the inherent First Nation right to gaming. The AMC has

repeatedly asserted that First Nations and First Nations Gaming concerns need to be included and addressed as a part of this Provincial review. Despite repeated requests, Manitoba has not included First Nations or the AMC in the scoping, development, or undertaking of this review.

The litigation against the Province has continued in its discovery phase. The province has been slow in producing documents necessary for discovery, which has extended the litigation timeline.

The challenge of working with the province of Manitoba has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting gaming facility closures. The Province has used the public health emergency to overstep First Nations authority and continues to show disregard to First Nations leadership by avoiding consultation.

ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2019-2020 the AMC Chiefs Gaming Committee and the Sand Hills Board of Directors held meetings throughout the year to, among other things, discuss, review and provide direction on:

- The ongoing gaming litigation;
- A Jurisdictional review of gaming;
- A proposed Manitoba First Nation Gaming Strategy;
- The historic timeline of First Nations gaming in Manitoba;
- The need for a review of First Nations Gaming;
- An analysis of a Manitoba First Nations Gaming Authority;
- Previous Northern and remote Allocations from South Beach;
- The potential relocation of Aseneskak Casino;
- Planning for and support to the AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly on Gaming, October 29 and 30, 2019;
- Discuss AMC gaming litigation budget;
- Provide direction on Hemisphere's independent



Gaming Market Analysis;

- Direct the AMC Grand Chief to seek additional funding for lost revenue as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic closures; and
- Discuss response to the Province's imposed smoking ban for First Nations VLT siteholders.

Gaming Litigation: *Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs et al v Manitoba and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries*

In late 2017, AMC commenced a lawsuit against the Government of Manitoba and the Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation, alleging various breaches relating to the defendant governments' actions taken in respect of gaming in the province. Litigation was not AMC's preferred course of action. However, since the government has refused to discuss a new gaming framework, the AMC saw no other option than to take this step on behalf of Manitoba First Nations.

At the April 25 to 27, 2017, Chiefs-in-Assembly the Manitoba Chiefs passed a resolution to file the lawsuit against the Province of Manitoba and its agent, Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation (MLLC). The Resolution APR-17.13, Litigation Against Manitoba regarding Sand Hills Casino, resolve that the Chiefs-in-assembly retain Olthius Kleer Townshend LLP to pursue litigation against Manitoba regarding Sand Hills Casino.

The original statement of claim was filed in the Court of the Queen's Bench on October 17, 2018.

As a result of a change in legal counsel, a revised Statement of Claim was filed on February 27, 2018, to refine and strengthen the claim.

In response, the Government of Manitoba, and MLLC filed their Statement of Defense on June 29, 2018. AMC then filed a Reply on September 24, 2018.

As part of the discovery process, representatives from Torys LLP and JFK have been working on data collection from Manitoba. Unfortunately, the Province has been consistently slow in producing documents for discovery, which has caused the collection of items to take much longer than originally anticipated.

By October 2019, AMC has completed its document disclosure, producing approximately 3,500 documents. However, Manitoba's documentary productions remain outstanding in part. After a long period of inactivity from Manitoba, they have finally confirmed their intent to produce all outstanding documents in August.

Manitoba has also finally offered to put forward Rick Josephson, former Executive Director of Manitoba Gaming Control Commission, for discovery (questioning) while its documents were outstanding, on the understanding that we could also ask Mr. Josephson further questions when all the documents were produced. Mr. Josephson's initial discovery will take place on October 21, 2020.

A proposed Manitoba First Nations Gaming Authority

On October 28, 2019 at the AMC Chiefs Assembly on Gaming, the Chiefs-in-Assembly passed resolution OCT-19.06, *Development of a Manitoba First Nation Gaming Authority*. The Chiefs directed the AMC and the Chiefs Gaming Committee to research and develop a proposal for the development of a First Nations Gaming Authority in the region.

In early 2020, research began and on June 11, 2020, the Chiefs Gaming Committee engaged with Chadwick Consulting Ltd., and met to review research and

background information on the Canadian gaming legal framework, how its applied in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and previous work undertaken to determine the feasibility of a Manitoba First Nations Gaming Authority that would assume conduct and management responsibilities for First Nations Gaming under Manitoba legislation. The Chiefs Gaming Committee is continuing to review the research and discuss the benefits and limitations of developing a Manitoba First Nations Gaming Authority under the current provincial and legislative framework.

Revenue Sharing with First Nations and the province of Manitoba

Revenue sharing agreements between First Nations and provincial governments have been made in regions across the country as a way to promote economic reconciliation and to invest in First Nations services and infrastructure. In regions such as BC, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta, a portion of all net revenue generated by provincial gaming activities is distributed to First Nations to help improve childcare, housing, road upgrades and economic development. In Manitoba, no arrangement like this currently exists.

At the Chiefs Assembly on Gaming in October 2019, the Chiefs in Assembly passed a resolution OCT-19.13 *Gaming Revenue Sharing*, which directed the Grand Chief's Office and the Chiefs Gaming Committee to review and analyze the Ontario and British Columbia models for gaming revenue sharing and to advocate for a similar arrangement in Manitoba. On November 14, 2019 Grand Chief Arlen Dumas issued a press statement, calling on the Provincial government to engage with First Nations in meaningful discussions in the area of gaming, noting the successful net revenue sharing arrangements in other regions. The Chiefs Gaming Committee and the Grand Chiefs office are researching and collecting information for a provincial net gaming revenue sharing agreement in preparation for a meaningful discussion with the Province of Manitoba.

The AMC Secretariat is also supporting the Chiefs Gaming Committee in the review and analysis of a

potential new revenue sharing model for small First Nation VLT sites.

While First Nations retain 90 per cent of VLT revenues under the current model, because First Nations must pay for the cost of the machines, this results in little to no revenue for small sites.

COVID-19 Lost Revenue

VLTs, Casinos and other gaming activities regularly provide an important source of revenue for ongoing services and infrastructure development that First Nations rely on for the benefit of their members. Following the initial outbreak of COVID-19 in Manitoba and the subsequent gaming facility closures, the Chiefs Committee on Gaming met to discuss a plan for lost gaming revenue. Concerned about the social and economic impact of the closures, the Chiefs Gaming Committee passed a resolution to direct the Grand Chief to advocate for additional federal funding to cover the costs of lost gaming revenue. The Grand Chief wrote a letter to Justin Trudeau on April 1st, and followed up with a letter on April 15th. The Office of Indigenous Services Canada responded with the expressed intent to address the letters. The AMC has informed each First Nation, and encourages them all to seek to submit their lost VLT revenues to Canada, and the AMC will continue to advocate for additional funding.

Smoking Ban for VLT Centres

As the Province began re-opening the economy in a phased approach because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it also announced in June that VLT centres would be permitted to open on the condition that a smoking ban would be enforced on each site. The decision to uphold this condition was made unilaterally and without meaningful engagement or involvement of First Nations.

Aside from the economic impact that a forced smoking ban has on First Nations, it is an infringement on the rights of First Nations who currently have smoking by-laws in effect under the *Indian Act* that permit such activities. The Province's decision to use a pandemic to defy First Nations jurisdiction is concerning. Since the

announcement was initially made, the Grand Chiefs Office, the Treaty 1 Chiefs and the Chiefs Gaming Committee have retained legal counsel and are pursuing legal action.

Chief Deborah Smith and the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation are preparing to file a legal challenge against the Province of Manitoba and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation (the "MLLC") in the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench. The Application for Judicial Review will seek, among other things, to clarify and interpret the legality and/or application of provincial health orders and a related MLLC directive as they apply to First Nations in the context of section 91 (24) provisions of the *Canadian Constitution Act, 1867*. The AMC fully supports this position, and on July 8, 2020, the AMC Executive Council of Chiefs resolved to have the AMC Secretariat to cash flow the legal costs of the litigation and directed the AMC Grand Chief's Office to write all First Nations that are affected by the VLT smoking ban requesting them to share in the legal costs for the application. The position put forward in court is that Manitoba and its agent the MLLC are illegally overstepping their jurisdiction, and acting unilaterally by attempting to ban smoking in casinos and VLT areas on First Nations reserve lands in Manitoba indefinitely, under the guise of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

First Peoples Economic Growth Fund (FPEGF)

The FPEGF continues to support First Nation business development in Manitoba. Please see their annual report for further details.

At the October 2019 AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly, resolution OCT. 19.14 JOINT REVIEW OF FIRST PEOPLES ECONOMIC GROWTH FUND was passed. The Chiefs-in-Assembly directed the AMC Secretariat to conduct a joint review with the Province of Manitoba using the most current annual report, and other information requested from the FPEGF. The Chiefs-in-Assembly also directed the AMC Grand Chief to negotiate further financial support for the FPEGF by using the existing model, or by creating a new model. The AMC Grand Chief's Office has followed up with the

COMMUNICATIONS



STAFF

- ▶ Stacia Franz, Social Media and Communications Coordinator
- ▶ Randi-Lisa Quedent, Communications Assistant

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) Communications Department is to establish systems and standards of internal communication formats, e.g., briefing notes, fact sheets, speaking notes, backgrounders, etc. as well as to coordinate correspondence with government on all the priority areas of the Secretariat and Grand Chief's Office. Press releases, op-eds, and media interviews are coordinated through the AMC Communications Department.

Some of the communication tools that have been used throughout the year include the AMC website, a newly developed AMC app, social media, news conferences, press releases, media statements, speaking notes for Grand Chief and assisting our First Nation leadership in

highlighting their successes as well as promoting their events.

This year, a primary focus has been on growing and expanding our social media content and engagement and producing more videos to ensure our messages reach our audience. Each year, we endeavor to grow our communications reach to more and more of the First Nations and individuals we serve.

Some of the highlights of the past year included the development of the AMC Mobile App, media appearances/interviews by the Grand Chief in major outlets such as CNN, national newspapers, national broadcasters and TV networks. There were several appearances of the Grand Chief on local and regional television networks and several interviews on a wide variety of topics throughout the year. The AMC website remains the major vehicle for promoting press releases.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In collaboration with departments throughout AMC, the Communications Department has taken great strides to build a strong presence on our social media platforms and this continues to grow further. Since this is a key area where people take in information, a great deal of work has been placed into utilizing the social media tools at our disposal while producing informative content that is engaging. The primary social media platforms AMC utilizes are Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.

Throughout the year the Communications Department has been engaging with external and internal mandated entities such as Eagle Urban Transition Center and the First Nations Family Advocate Office to ensure we are posting and sharing important activities on our platforms.

THE NEW AMC APP

AMC launched a new app in 2020 that has assisted with information sharing and made attaining relevant AMC information more conveniently accessible in a timely manner. As the COVID-19 pandemic became a major consideration in March 2020, the new app allowed AMC to share important updates related to COVID-19 to First Nations in a streamlined and efficient way. The App provided live updates with health experts from the region and across the country and further involved other communications during the lock-down.

AMC has consistently added COVID-19 information and resources to the app and also plans to provide more Assembly-related information for the next fiscal year. The move to have an app aligns with First Nations who also use apps to connect with their citizens.

THE AMC JINGLE MINGLE

This past year, the Communications Department hosted the Annual Jingle Mingle. The 2019 Jingle Mingle dinner and dance took place on December 13, 2019 at the RBC Convention Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba. We were expecting an attendance of 600 guests consisting of AMC partners, clients and friends. With the help of our amazing staff, we were able to increase the amount of

tables and sell out the event at 870 guests with an additional 300 plus guests for the social part of the evening that took place after 9 p.m.

The funds that were raised from the silent auction and 50/50 draw went directly to the Eagle Urban Transition Centre and the First Nations Family Advocate Office to help First Nation families who needed assistance during the 2019 holiday season.



TRANSFORMATION

STAFF

- ▶ Marcel Balfour, Senior Policy Analyst
- ▶ Trent Gervais, Policy Analyst
- ▶ Sheri Cochrane, Administrative Assistant

In October 2018, the AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly passed resolution OCT-18.06 *Support for Regional Transformation Activities*, which resolved among other things to support the AMC Secretariat to conduct regional transformation activities with Canada and the regional office of DISC to identify and ensure the DISC regional office will effectively deliver services to Manitoba First Nations, and how those services will be transferred to First Nations.

On June 4 and 5, 2019, the AMC with the Manitoba Regional office of Indigenous Services Canada jointly hosted a regional gathering on transformation. This involved presentations from ISC and FNIHB representatives, and province of Manitoba representatives and representatives from CMHC. It was an initial regional discussion on changing the way Canada provides programs and services to improve the way they are provided, and how First Nations can control the delivery of those services. From this Gathering, it was noted that future discussions will need to take place to involve First Nations. As an important starting point and to put the ISC programs and services into perspective, the total budgets of the ISC Regional Office were presented.

There are a number of current transformation projects that the AMC Secretariat is working on:

Jordan's Principle

Mandated by AMC Feb-2019 ECC Resolution #8 –*Support for a Manitoba First Nation Jordan's Principle Capacity Enhancement Centre and that Jordan's Principle be an initial Priority Transformational Activity*, the goals are for First Nations in Manitoba to design and deliver an alternative regional management and service delivery approach of the federal government's Jordan's Principle Child First

Initiative. This includes a transformative change that will see First Nations in Manitoba plan, design, manage and fund the implementation of Jordan's Principle. Key components include working with the Manitoba First Nations Jordan's Principle Equity Roundtable, and the development of a Jordan's Principle Capacity Enhancement Centre (for more information, see reported activities elsewhere in this Annual Report).

Health

Mandated by AMC resolution JUN-18.01 *Universal Health Accord*, the goals are for First Nations in Manitoba to design and deliver a "Universal Health Accord" or "Wahbung 2.0" that seeks to have First Nations in Manitoba not only administer health programs and services, but to design and negotiate the policy and legislative authorities for a health system designed to meet the current and future needs of First Nations in Manitoba (for more information, see reported activities elsewhere in this Annual Report).

Education

Mandated by AMC MAR-18.05A *Renewed Approach to Reassert First Nations Jurisdiction in Education*, the goals are for First Nations in Manitoba to design a First Nations regional funding formula and agreement, and a Post-Secondary Strategy and Post-Secondary Institution (for more information, see reported activities elsewhere in this Annual Report).

Children and Families

Mandated by AMC NOV-17.02 *Memorandum of Understanding between the AMC and Canada on Child Welfare*, the goal is for First Nations in Manitoba to design their own approach under First Nations jurisdiction outside of the provincial system.

Other areas the AMC Secretariat is working toward:

Social Development

Mandated by AMC resolution JAN.2020-01 *A First Nations Regional Approach to Social Development*, the goals are for First Nations in Manitoba to design and deliver an alternative regional management and service delivery approach of the federal government's Social Development programs and services. From Canada's current suite of programs and services to follow a First Nations designed and controlled social development approach that is holistic and meets the cultural, linguistic, and social needs of First Nations in Manitoba. The AMC Chiefs Committee on Self Determination and Treaties are mandated to provide oversight, guidance and direction. The AMC Secretariat and the Social Development Technical Advisors Group (SDTAG) have met to discuss going forward on this resolution, and the SDTAG has suggested for the AMC Secretariat to have directorate on Social Development.

Emergency Management

The AMC Secretariat was mandated to receive and allocate emergency management funding - without taking an administration fee - in order for each First Nation to develop their own emergency management plans

Beginning from March 2019, the AMC Secretariat provided each First Nation with \$9,900.00 each to host meetings with their citizens regarding Emergency Management Services (EMS) and to determine the best way forward. Each First Nation will collect and document their experiences, and provide recommendations in dealing with emergency management services by hosting a minimum of two community meetings. A final report is currently being drafted on how to move forward in the delivery of these services to First Nations in Manitoba.

First Nations Housing and Infrastructure

On March 13, 2020, the AMC Executive Council of Chief passed a resolution directing the AMC Grand Chief and Secretariat to immediately begin the process of

negotiating the transfer of jurisdiction and control over Manitoba First Nations housing from CMHC to First Nations in Manitoba as a principle of the "government to government" relationship now in place. It also resolved, that the transfer of jurisdiction and control over housing from CMHC to the First Nations in Manitoba shall be by direct agreement with the Government of Canada and not by sub-agreement with CMHC. This jurisdictional transfer shall include: all policy, financing and housing standards development and any and all subsequent administrative matters to ensure the long term sustainability and success of this initiative in dealing with the housing crisis now faced by Manitoba First Nations. Work on this was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



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AMC Head Office

Long Plain Madison Indian Reserve No.1
137-476 Madison Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3J 1J1

AMC Sub-Office

200-275 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2B3
204-956-0610 (main line)
1-888-324-5483 (toll free)
204-956-2109 (fax)
info@manitobachiefs.com