



## *Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.*

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*Office of Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson*

## **MKO Calls for Equality of Child Services and Effective use of Jordan's Principle**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

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**For Immediate Release**  
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**TREATY ONE TERRITORY, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA** – Today, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), the Norway House Cree Nation, First Nation organizations and grassroots advocates will hold a memorial walk to commemorate the life of Jordan River Anderson and to call for the proper and effective implementation of Jordan's Principle, and the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision regarding underfunded social services for children on-reserve. The march will commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the unanimous passing of the Jordan's Principle motion in the House of Commons.

Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle named in memory of Jordan River Anderson, a First Nation child from the Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba. Born with complex medical needs, Jordan spent most of his life unnecessarily in hospital while the provincial and federal governments argued over who should pay for his care.

MKO Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson asserted that First Nations are the fastest growing population in Canada and without equality within social services Indigenous families will not have equal outcomes as compared to Canada's general population.

“Supports for those families with children, especially those children with special needs, are a crucial element of ensuring our future generations are healthy of body and mind and contributing to their First Nation,” MKO Grand Chief North Wilson said. “You can't expect First Nations to do the same with less. We need equality of funding and resourcing to have the infrastructure, policies and services that ensure healthy communities. For example, while there have been small steps to make Jordan's Principle a reality, a long-term, permanent commitment from the federal government is needed. It is time for our children to receive the quality of care that off-reserve children can take for granted. The families of First Nation children need to know that they will have effective and properly-resourced services that will improve the quality of life for their loved ones with special needs.”

Though the Federal Government has committed funding for Jordan's Principle across Canada, this funding has only been designated for a 3-year pilot project to address the needs of Jordan's Principle cases. There has been no guarantee by the federal government that funding will continue past the 2018/19 fiscal year. A long-term, permanent commitment from the federal government is imperative. A medical condition or disability does not disappear once a child turns eighteen. Supports and services should be made available for the duration of an individual's life.

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*~Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that has represented 30 First Nation communities in Manitoba's North since 1981~*