

Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin Inc.

Wellness for Northern First Nations People



Manitoba
Keewatinowi
Okimakanak Inc.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 5, 2020

Launch of Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin’s “Breathe” Video PSA Encourages Uptake of Flu Vaccines for Northern First Nations

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – The new First Nations health entity, **Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin Inc. (KIM)**, is pleased to announce the premiere of “Breathe”, a beautiful video public service announcement which will run for 30 days nationwide on APTN beginning today. The PSA is the first part of KIM’s multi-phased Immunity Wellness campaign designed to promote awareness of *minoayawin* (Cree for “wellness”) in preparation for the influenza season.

“We aimed to deliver strength-based messaging with this video to encourage First Nations citizens on how they can best prepare for the flu season, and to protect their loved ones through getting the flu vaccine,” said **Dr. Barry Lavallee**, KIM’s Chief Executive Officer.

KIM has continued to provide informative, accurate, and consistent messaging for Northern First Nations in collaboration with **Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO)** during this year’s COVID-19 pandemic. MKO and KIM are encouraging all First Nations citizens to get vaccinated for the flu this year.

“Northern First Nations have worked diligently to prepare their communities for COVID-19, and now it’s time to work together to prevent the spread of the flu,” said **Grand Chief Garrison Settee**. “I am proud that KIM has developed a video that promotes the uptake of the flu vaccine in a way that resonates with northern First Nations and speaks to First Nations’ connection to culture, language, families, and to the land.”

Quick facts about the “Breathe” video PSA:

- **CoPilot Collective** is the media house who produced the Immunity Wellness video with Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin. Austin MacKay and his team travelled to the northern communities of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, Tataskweyak Cree Nation, Troy Lake, and Thompson; while capturing stunning footage at Pisew Falls and at the closing dance of a Sundance ceremony.
- **Cynthia Boehm**, a Cree artist with Scottish ancestry, showcases her “Optimism” and “Resilience” in the video. Her masks reflect an attitude and belief that there is a strong, positive and hopeful outcome from the pandemic, and in First Nations’ ability to thrive. Both masks have garnered international acclaim through the Indigenous “Breathe Collective” on Facebook that was created by Métis artists **Nathalie Bertin** and **Lisa Shepherd**.

- **Darryl Buck**, a musician from the Mosakahiken and Opaskwayak Cree Nations, contributed his song “Hope” which is the perfect composition and complement for the Immunity Wellness video project.
- **Radio public service announcements** have been created in English, Cree, and Dene, to speak to the primary languages spoken in northern Manitoba, and are airing province-wide on NCI FM, CHTM Arctic Radio, and various First Nations community radio stations.
- “Breathe” video is now available on the new Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin Youtube channel: <https://youtu.be/byWa7neqogY>

MKO continues to provide information on COVID-19 on our social media accounts and on our COVID-19 webpage at www.mkonorth.com/updatesoncovid19.

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***Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin Inc. (KIM)** is a newly formed First Nations led health entity that supports health transformation for First Nations in northern Manitoba. As a self-governing First Nations health organization, KIM sets out to achieve health related services that are reflective of the needs and priorities of First Nations people. Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin, which in Cree means "Northern Peoples' Wellness", was established in January 2020 as a non-share corporation by the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Chiefs Task Force on Health.*

***Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO)** is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that has represented 26 First Nation communities in Manitoba’s North since 1981. The MKO represents more than 72,000 First Nations people.*