



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
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Statement About the Ongoing Closure of the Leaf Rapids Health Centre: MKO Extremely Concerned about Safety of Citizens who Need Health Services

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is issuing the following statement regarding the indefinite closure of the Leaf Rapids Health Centre in Northern Manitoba.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee states:

“It is reprehensible that the Northern Health Region would close a health centre in Northern Manitoba amidst the spread of COVID-19. I am extremely concerned to hear of the impact of the closure on Leaf Rapids citizens. I am worried about the well-being and safety of MKO citizens who depend on accessing health services in Leaf Rapids.

MKO has not heard from the Northern Health Region or the Province of Manitoba about the indefinite closure of Leaf Rapids Health Centre. This is also disappointing as MKO represents many of the First Nations citizens who live in Leaf Rapids.

I am very concerned MKO citizens may be required to travel to Lynn Lake, Gillam, or Thompson to receive health care as we encounter rising rates of COVID-19. Travel during winter months can be difficult for many as road conditions are often challenging. It is concerning there is no way for citizens to access any kind of COVID test or COVID vaccines within Leaf Rapids at this time.

The availability of health services in Leaf Rapids and Gillam is a longstanding issue. It would be reassuring to see some movement to address these issues.

I urge the provincial and federal governments to make collaborative investments to stabilize and create long-term solutions for providing accessible health services in both Leaf Rapids and Gillam.

All Manitoba citizens have the right to access equitable and quality health care. Clearly, this is not the case for citizens living in Leaf Rapids and Gillam.

MKO is not aware of any timeline for the re-opening of the health facility in Leaf Rapids. We remain extremely concerned for citizens who rely on Leaf Rapids health facilities and are forced to access health services that are hours away. It is imperative we find solutions on an urgent basis to avoid unnecessary complications and potentially the premature passing of Manitoba citizens due to a lack of health services.”

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