



**Keewatinohk Inniniw
Minoayawin Inc.**



**Manitoba
Keewatinowi
Okimakanak Inc.**

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Transforming Health Care in Northern Manitoba: MKO and KIM to Host Second Engagement Session for Leaf Rapids Citizens

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. and Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin (KIM) Inc. are hosting a virtual engagement session for citizens of Leaf Rapids in Northern Manitoba as part of an ongoing response to the need for reliable, accessible, and ongoing health services.

The engagement session takes place on **Wednesday, March 9, 2022, at 2 pm Central Time**. The session will broadcast on MKO's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/MKONorth. Speakers include **Dr. Barry Lavallee**, Chief Executive Officer of KIM and **Jason Klainchar**, Executive Director of the Churchill Health Centre. Speakers will cover a range of topics, including harm reduction. Residents can send their questions and/or reflections to info@mkonorth.com.

"Our upcoming engagement session for Leaf Rapids residents is a follow-up to the first one we hosted on January 26," shared **Grand Chief Garrison Settee**. "These sessions aim to share information and seek direction and feedback from people living in Leaf Rapids regarding health care services."

The availability of health services in Leaf Rapids is a longstanding issue. The community has a population of 580 people and lacks a Mayor and Council. The town has an administrator who does not live in Leaf Rapids.

"At KIM, we believe in health care for our babies and children. We believe in eliminating violence against First Nations women, girls, Two Spirit, and gender-diverse people in our communities. We believe in engaging in spirituality, the return of our language—all those kinds of things are good medicine. It is a priority for our organization to work closely with residents of Leaf Rapids to transform the health care system for this community," stated **Dr. Barry Lavallee**.

Following the first engagement session with Leaf Rapids, MKO staff members worked to show support for the town's residents by delivering surgical masks and food hampers to all residents of Leaf Rapids. MKO thanks all volunteers who assisted in delivering these supplies to all households in the community.

KIM and MKO are working collaboratively to provide guidance to the Northern Regional Health Authority on transforming the health care system across Northern Manitoba and are working to ensure First Nations-led solutions are incorporated in health care across the region.

“MKO and KIM continue to encourage provincial and federal governments to make collaborative investments to continue to work towards long-term solutions for health services in Northern Manitoba,” shared Dr. Lavallee. “All Manitoba citizens have the right to access equitable and quality health care. Structural racism results in the denial of services, such as access to health care, Internet and cell phone service, mail delivery, transportation, and more. We will continue to stand with the community of Leaf Rapids to advocate for solutions in addressing these systemic failures.”

“When other people wrote off Leaf Rapids, we didn’t! These are our relatives. We will not stand by and watch the deterioration of health care services for this community,” said Grand Chief Settee. “The people of Leaf Rapids have human rights just like everybody else in Manitoba and Canada.”

The first engagement session for Leaf Rapids took place on January 26, 2022. It is available for viewing on [MKO’s Youtube channel](#).

For more information:

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