



Manitoba Keewatinowik Okimakanak Inc.

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MKO Statement on First COVID-19 Variant in Northern Manitoba: *Grand Chief Encourages Citizens to Remain Vigilant*

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowik Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is issuing this statement to advise citizens of Northern Manitoba to remain vigilant.

“It has been reported that the first case of a COVID-19 variant has been detected in Northern Manitoba. We want to issue a reminder to all residents to remain calm but vigilant,” shared **Grand Chief Garrison Settee**. “Continue to practice public health measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is important to note that variants are known to spread easily and have more serious impacts on the people who contract them.”

“It is essential to continue to follow the public health measures of physical distancing, practicing good hand hygiene, wearing a mask when in public spaces or when you are with people from outside your household, and staying home if you are showing any symptoms of COVID-19,” shared **Dr. Michael Routledge**, medical advisor at Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoyawin Inc. “As access to the COVID-19 vaccines increases, we encourage everyone who is 18 and older to learn more about and consider receiving the vaccine. Getting vaccinated will offer good protection against the impacts of COVID-19.”

MKO’s representatives continue to take part in Manitoba’s COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation Task Force. They continue to work diligently on the COVID-19 vaccine roll out and they advocate on a range of issues connected to the vaccine distribution and prioritization.

Several MKO First Nations have been hosting mass vaccination clinics for community members who are 18 and older. Anyone living off reserve or who cannot return to their First Nation to receive a vaccine can book an appointment at one of the Manitoba supersites or a pop-up clinic. Any Cross Lake resident, ages 18 and older, who lives in or around Thompson can attend a pop-up clinic running from today until April 17 at 90 Thompson Drive to receive their first dose of the Moderna vaccine. There are more details on this clinic here:

<https://mkonation.com/crosslakehostingvaccineclinicinthompson/>

As of today, First Nations people across Manitoba who are 39 years old can call to book their COVID-19 vaccine appointments. Family members or other support people can assist Elders with booking these appointments. The number to call to book the appointment is 1-844-626-8222 and they can also be booked online at <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/vaccine/eligibility-criteria.html>. As vaccine supply increases and age cohorts near completion, further age groups will become eligible to book their vaccines.

MKO will continue to provide updates on the COVID-19 vaccine for Northern First Nations as more information becomes available.

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