



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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MKO Statement on COVID-19 Vaccines for Children Ages 5 to 11

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is issuing this statement to share information that children between the ages of 5 to 11 are now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

“Last week, Health Canada approved the Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5 to 11,” shared **Grand Chief Garrison Settee**. “We know from the data gathered by the Manitoba First Nations Pandemic Response Coordination Team that First Nations people have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 virus. Given this information, MKO strongly encourages caregivers to take their children to receive a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible.”

MKO citizens between the ages of 5 to 11 living in Manitoba can receive a Pfizer vaccine for protection against the COVID-19 virus. An appointment can be made by calling **1-844-626-8222** or they can be booked online at: <https://protectmb.ca/youth-immunizations/covid-vaccines-for-kids/>

Appointments are available through provincial and regional vaccine clinics, physicians’ offices, pharmacists, pop-up vaccine clinics, and at urban Indigenous vaccine clinics. The pediatric COVID-19 vaccine arrived in Manitoba this past weekend and is expected to arrive in Manitoba First Nations in the near future.

In some cases, adults/caregivers have been waiting until their children were eligible to receive their COVID-19 vaccines before getting their own vaccines. Adult caregivers are encouraged to get vaccinated at the same time as their children.

“We encourage First Nations families to plan on getting their COVID-19 vaccines,” said **Dr. Barry Lavallee**, Chief Executive Officer of Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin Inc. “I am concerned about the well-being of Indigenous people of all ages as the fourth wave continues. Having access to COVID-19 vaccines for children ages 5 to 11 is another step towards moving on from the pandemic.

Thank you to the health care professionals who continue to work diligently to help distribute the COVID-19 vaccines to the people who need them, including our children. Let’s continue to do what we can to protect our people.”

“Many adults and teenagers have already received their COVID-19 vaccines. Having a vaccine approved for children provides much hope and relief,” stated Grand Chief Settee. “Children are the heart of our First Nations. I am grateful that MKO citizens ages 5 to 11 can now get vaccinated. Talk to your health care provider if you have questions. Let’s work together to protect our communities as we move into the holiday season.”

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