



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
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Update on COVID-19 at the Thompson YWCA: Potential Exposure from October 4 to 14, 2020

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is issuing an update about the cases of COVID-19 that have been identified at the Thompson YWCA. A public health investigation has identified that the risk to short-term stay residents is low, however, out of caution public health is recommending self monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms to anyone who stayed at the YWCA between October 4 to 14, 2020.

“We recently learned of cases of COVID-19 at the YWCA in Thompson,” said **Grand Chief Garrison Settee**. “The province has placed the facility at **critical** in the pandemic response system. The Northern Regional Health Authority is completing an investigation into the cases at the YWCA to identify anyone who may have been exposed.”

MKO is advising anyone who stayed at the Thompson YWCA between October 4 to 14, 2020, to notify staff at your nursing station.

If you are identified as someone who stayed at the YWCA during this time, a nurse will contact you to let you know that you need to isolate.

“While we wait for more information, it is more important than ever that we stick to the fundamentals and monitor our own health,” stated **Dr. Michael Routledge**, public health advisor at Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin Inc. “If you are sick, stay home and limit your exposure to other people, reach out to the nursing station to discuss if you should be tested.”

When/if a COVID-19 case is identified in a First Nation, a shared goal is to quickly contain the spread of COVID-19 and limit it to small numbers of cases or clusters.

First Nations aim to prevent widespread community transmission and avoid outbreaks in settings like health care facilities and schools.

Group gatherings, including families and friends outside of your household, can increase the risk of spreading COVID-19. Continue to be vigilant about following effective public health measures to reduce and slow the spread of COVID-19.

The Manitoba First Nations Pandemic Response Team encourages the following actions:

- Be cautious with and if possible, delay travel to/from regions of the province designated as **Orange (Restricted)** or **Red (Critical)** risk levels. This currently includes Winnipeg.
- Continue to attend your health appointments.
- If travel to an Orange zone is necessary:
 - Keep the number of people traveling as low as possible.
 - Be diligent with physical distancing and hand hygiene.
 - Follow all measures such as mandatory non-medical masks that may be in place.
- If you have family who live in other communities/areas from you, consider ways to connect that lower the risk for spreading COVID-19:
 - Connect by phone or other social media platforms
 - Only travel to visit in vehicles with people who live in your household
 - Visit outside as much as possible
 - Avoid sharing food/ serving dishes, utensils, or condiments
 - If you are visiting older relatives, consider limiting your visiting with others or attendance at large gatherings
 - Practice physical distancing measures and stay 2 metres or six feet away from people who are outside of your household
 - Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer
 - Regularly clean commonly touched surfaces such as door handles and countertops
 - Wear non-medical masks when you are in places where physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g. crowded stores or when using public/ community transportation services)
 - Limit your contact with people outside your own household as much as possible
 - Follow gathering size orders
- Consider postponing any large gatherings or reducing the numbers who attend in person.
- Stay home and self-isolate if you have any new symptoms that could be from COVID-19, no matter how mild the symptoms are.
- Present for testing if your symptoms last for more than 24 hours.

If you experience fever, cough, shortness of breath, or have symptoms of a respiratory illness (regardless of travel), even if mild, stay home and contact your nursing station. You can also call Health Links to ask questions at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.

MKO and the Manitoba First Nations Pandemic Response Coordination Team continue to work closely with the leadership in First Nations to stay informed of any challenges they are facing when it comes to responding to the pandemic. MKO will advocate on behalf of the First Nations on an as-needed basis.

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