



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
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MKO Statement on COVID-19 Vaccines for Northern Manitoba

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is issuing this statement to provide an update on COVID-19 vaccines for First Nations people in Northern Manitoba.

The Moderna vaccine and the Pfizer vaccine have been approved for use across Canada to date. Both types of vaccine have arrived in Manitoba. First Nations people have been identified by both the provincial and federal governments as a group that should receive the COVID-19 vaccine on a priority basis.

The Moderna vaccine arrived in Manitoba at the end of December 2020. This vaccine is considered as more viable for use in Northern and remote communities in comparison with the Pfizer vaccine.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee shared the following:

“MKO is aware that all First Nations in Manitoba have access to a total of 5300 doses of the Moderna vaccine immediately. My understanding is that the vaccine may begin to ship to First Nations in Manitoba tomorrow, January 7, 2021.

On December 18, 2020, I received the official notice that our health expert Dr. Barry Lavallee would be a part of planning for the distribution of vaccines on the intergovernmental COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation Task Force. I thank Dr. Lavallee for his commitment to being part of this ground-breaking work.

I am aware that the Province of Manitoba and the First Nations experts will provide more detailed information about the vaccine distribution plans later this week.

As we know from the data we have gathered on the impact of COVID-19 on First Nations people, our citizens continue to be disproportionately impacted by this virus. I thank the leaders and First Nations health experts who are now working together in unity on a plan to get the vaccines into the arms of First Nations people in Northern Manitoba. My office will continue to work to ensure that MKO citizens can acquire one of the vaccines as soon as possible and we will provide more detailed updates as they become available. In the meantime, I encourage everyone to remain vigilant and continue practicing public health measures to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.”

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Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that has represented 26 First Nation communities in Manitoba's North since 1981. The MKO represents more than 72,000 First Nations people.