



## *Manitoba Keewatinowí Okimakanak Inc.*

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February 24, 2021

Dr. Theresa Tam  
Chief Public Health Officer  
Public Health Agency of Canada  
130 Colonnade Road  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9

**Re: Urgent need for health expert representing Northern Manitoba First Nations to take part in the National Advisory Committee on Immunization**

Dear Dr. Tam,

Thank you for your letter dated February 22, 2021, in which you provided recommendations and information in regards to my request to have our health experts to be a part of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). Your letter provided information on applying through an open nomination process or to make a request to be a non-voting liaison and ex-officio representative.

As an elected representative for the Northern First Nations in Manitoba, it is my main goal to ensure that the Treaty and inherent rights of First Nations are at the forefront and protected. I would like to partner with you as a rights holder to build relationships. I will continue to advocate for the NACI to include our First Nations health experts.

The current structure does not appear to guarantee a specific and permanent First Nations health expert appointment that could provide the intimate knowledge of the challenges, strengths, disparities, and barriers faced by Northern First Nations in Manitoba. We also have First Nations specific data and evidence available to inform the work done by NACI to influence decision-making on the vaccine guidelines of COVID-19 or other future work as it related to authorized vaccines in Canada.

A specific member allocation of a First Nation position representing Northern Manitoba would provide great value to the important work of NACI to strengthen fairness and substantive equity in setting guidelines. Nationally, there is a small pool of First Nations health experts who have shown great impact in leading health systems.

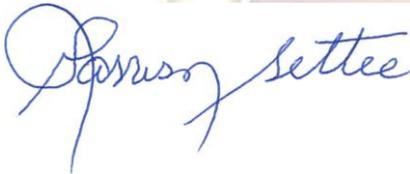
Allocating a First Nations membership position to the NACI would also help to advance and align the federal government's strategies to foster reconciliation, help address gaps and needed resources in developing federal Indigenous health legislation, and work towards strategies to address anti-Indigenous racism in health care.

We want to be true partners, which is why I am adamant in recommending health expert **Dr. Barry Lavallee**, Chief Executive Officer of Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin, to be invited to represent Northern Manitoba First Nations as part of the NACI. This pandemic has highlighted that First Nations as rights holders need to be represented and integral in all aspects of the overall health system.

I will reiterate that my priority is to protect the citizens I am representing so there are no further deaths and crisis in our communities.

Please contact my Executive Assistant, Dorothy Smith, by phone at 204-918-8101 or by email at [dorothy.smith@mkonorth.com](mailto:dorothy.smith@mkonorth.com) to confirm my request for representation on the committee and to receive the contact information for Dr. Lavallee.

Respectfully,



Grand Chief Garrison Settee  
Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

cc: *MKO First Nations*  
*Regional Chief Kevin Hart, Assembly of First Nations Manitoba Region*  
*Dr. Barry Lavallee, CEO, Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin Inc.*  
*The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada*  
*The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, Canada*  
*The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada*  
*The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Canada*  
*Dr. Valerie Gideon, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch*  
*Dr. Tom Wong, Executive Director and Chief Medical Officer of Health, Indigenous Services Canada*