



Manitoba
Keewatinowi
Okimakanak Inc.



Keewatinohk Inniniw
Minoayawin Inc.

Yat'he Hot'sj Dene 7 Edena'kane[nj] | Northern Peoples' Wellness

MKO and KIM Demand Action Regarding the Treatment of First Nations Patients in Winnipeg Hotels

MEDIA STATEMENT

For Immediate Release

March 12, 2026

Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) and Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin (KIM) are calling for immediate action as more First Nations patients report racism and mistreatment while accessing hotel accommodations for medical travel in Winnipeg. The experiences shared by Nicholas Robinson and his family have prompted others to come forward, revealing a pattern of discrimination and abuse.

First Nations families have reported hotel staff and security yelling at patients and children, refusing Elders access to lobbies while waiting for transportation, forcing patients to leave rooms during recovery, and placing families in inadequate accommodations, including a single bed for a family of four.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee stated:

“The province must review and strengthen its legislation governing hotels, accommodations, and the security sector. Racism against First Nations people must be clearly addressed and enforced. First Nations must be at the table to shape these laws so they reflect the realities our people face.”

MKO and KIM stress that these incidents highlight major gaps in accountability within the systems that support medical travel. To address these failures Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), hotel partners, and provincial leadership must take immediate action.

Michelle Monkman, Interim CEO of Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin, said true health-care transformation means changing the systems around health care, not just the care itself.

“First Nations patients travel hundreds of kilometres from home for treatment, they must be able to recover safely and be treated with respect. Mandated anti-racism training in the hospitality sector, alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action 92, and legislation developed with First Nations governance at the table are essential steps.”

Immediate Actions Required

1. Quarterly Accountability Meetings

ISC must convene quarterly meetings with all medical-accommodation providers, including Canad Inns, to review service standards, ensure accountability, and address ongoing issues.

2. Regular Engagement with First Nations Navigators

Hotel management and ISC must meet regularly with MKO medical navigators and community-based patient advocates. Navigators are closest to the experiences of patients. They can identify concerns before they escalate.

3. A Clear, Accessible, and Culturally Safe Complaints System

ISC and hotel partners must implement a standardized complaints process that is:

- written and verbal,
- culturally safe,
- trauma-informed,
- accessible to Elders and persons with disabilities, and
- supported by timely follow-up and transparent reporting.

Chief David Monias of Pimicikamak Cree Nation underscored the need for systemic change:

“Every September 30th, we hear the words ‘Every Child Matters,’ but when does that apply to businesses? When does it apply to hotels? When does it apply to government systems? If we truly believe Every Child Matters, then change the system. These incidents keep happening again and again. It has to stop”

Chief Monias is calling for an investigation by the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada, and Manitoba Health, and urges the Premier, the Minister Responsible for Indigenous Reconciliation, to take leadership in ensuring First Nations people are treated with dignity and respect.

