



Grand Council Treaty #3

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Grand Council Treaty #3 Declares a Nation-Wide Mental Health and Addictions State of Emergency

Grand Council Treaty #3, under the leadership of the Ogichidaa, Gaakinawataagizod, and Chiefs-in-Assembly, have officially declared a nation-wide Mental Health and Addictions State of Emergency across the Treaty #3 territory. The declaration escalates the nation-wide mental health and substance use crisis, determined by resolution CA-23-23 passed at the 2023 Fall Assembly.

This crucial declaration comes as a response to the escalating mental health crises and the profound impacts of addiction within the Treaty #3 communities. This crisis situation stems in part from the failures of Canada, Ontario and Manitoba, to fulfill their mutual aid responsibilities under Treaty #3 to ensure the health and well-being of the Anishinaabe Nation of Treaty #3.

The Treaty #3 Nation has witnessed a distressing increase in suicides and other mental health challenges over recent years, necessitating urgent and collective action. The declaration mandates a unified and holistic approach across all Treaty #3 communities to enhance resilience and improve mental health services, including crisis intervention and comprehensive community support, and seeking the resources required to support these efforts.

The collective effort also involves coordinating with multiple agencies to ensure a seamless and effective response.

As we move forward, Grand Council Treaty #3 remains dedicated to fostering a supportive environment for all its members, particularly the youth, who are the future of our Nation. The community leaders and health services are now working diligently to implement these resolutions and will continue to provide updates on the progress of these vital initiatives.

Quotes from Treaty #3 Leadership

“The legacy of colonization and continued oppression, intergenerational trauma, health inequity and systemic discrimination experienced by many First Nations people and communities has significantly impacted the social wellbeing of Treaty #3. Sustainable funding is required to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of our own solutions to address the mental health needs of our own communities.”

- Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh, Grand Chief for Grand Council Treaty #3

“The mental health and addiction emergency devastating our Anishinaabeg communities is a direct result of our shared generational trauma, systemic oppression, and collective experience with assimilation. In our area, numbers have shown we have the highest rates of opioid poisoning in the entire North-West catchment area. It brings hope, with this resolution that through collaboration, unity, and shared vision of mino-bimaadiziwin, our people can overcome adversity with strength, resilience, and truth.”

- Chief Wayne Smith, Board Chair of Giishkaandago'Ikwe Health Services

“On behalf of the Chiefs of Ogimaawabiitong (Kenora Chiefs Advisory), we stand in support of Manito Aki (Grand Council Treaty 3) and the Chiefs in assembly as they call this State of Emergency in regards to the Mental Health and Addictions crisis happening across the region,” said Chief Lorraine Cobiness, Board President of Ogimaawabiitong. “The growing Mental Health and Addictions crisis is evolving to a point of being in the worst state we have ever seen, and we have to all work together as a collective to combine resources and address this issue. We have to support and continue to invest in the various forms of treatment and healing pathways that include both Traditional and Western approaches so we can ensure our Youth, our Elders, and all our people are being given the best chance to overcome this.”

- Chief Lorraine Cobiness, Board President of Ogimaawabiitong

"As a primary healthcare organization dedicated to serving Treaty 3 communities, we stand in full support of the declaration of a mental health and addictions state of emergency. This is a crucial step in acknowledging and addressing the significant challenges our communities face in these areas. Through collaborative efforts and swift action, we are committed to providing accessible, culturally sensitive support services to those in need. Together, with our partners and community members, we will work tirelessly to ensure that everyone receives the care and support necessary for healing and recovery."

- Paul Derouard Interim CEO Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'iyewigamig.

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