MMF Invests $1 Million in Emergency Funds For Metis Citizens During COVID-19 Pandemic

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Winnipeg, MB – Today, taking necessary steps to further protect the health and well-being of the Manitoba Metis during this crisis, the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) is investing $1 million in financial supports for Metis Elders, entrepreneurs, and employees who are being adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

MMF President David Chartrand, along with MMF Health Minister Frances Chartrand, announced funding to support the MMF Health Action Plan, which includes significant direct supports, partnerships, and ongoing and extensive outreach to our Manitoba Metis citizens.

“As the Minister responsible, I will do everything within my power to face this crisis,” said MMF Minister of Health & Wellness, Frances Chartrand. “Thanks to President David Chartrand and the support of my fellow Cabinet members, we are pleased that we are able to make this unprecedented emergency response to help our people get through this difficult time.”

The MMF again commends Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and his Ministers and staff, for taking immediate action and committing to a partnership with the Metis Nation, said President Chartrand. “We will need to work together to address the health, economic, and social impacts on the Métis in this rapidly evolving COVID-19 health crisis.”

Studies have shown the Manitoba Metis have among the highest levels of chronic disease and diabetes, putting them in a high-risk category and making them susceptible to the virus. MMF Leadership and staff have been conducting extensive checks and follow-ups on many of our most vulnerable Citizens to ensure they have rides for their doctor appointments, medication, food, and essential supplies. This investment is on top of the free prescription and free eyeglasses program already being offered by the MMF to its Elders.

“Health authorities across the country and the globe have made it clear that Elders and other vulnerable people need to be in self-isolation,” said Minister Chartrand. “We will do what we can to ensure our Metis Elders do not leave the safety of their homes unless they have to.”

To date, over 1,000 Elders have been contacted to determine their needs and offer assistance.

In addition, the funding will also be used to support Metis entrepreneurs and workers whose income is adversely affected by the pandemic. The MMF is prepared to offer aid to Metis Citizens facing financial hardships as a direct result of COVID-19 and who are not receiving support from their employers. The same initiative applies to Metis business owners affected by the crisis.
“This pandemic is causing financial strain to business owners and their employees, which is obviously no fault of their own,” said President Chartrand. “We are asking Metis entrepreneurs or employees who are being impacted financially to register with the MMF today, so we may work with them to assist within all sectors and offer our support for their families alongside the ongoing announcements from Canada.”

In addition to the $1 million announced today, the MMF has also purchased three mobile health isolation units that can be moved anywhere in the Province. Métis N4 Construction has also made available two secure, 48-bed, fully accessible health facilities. These can be used as community supports for self-isolation requirements during this crisis. As a benefit to all Manitobans these facilities may be available on an as-needed basis outside the Metis Government use.

“These initiatives are part of the ongoing partnerships between the Federal Government and the Metis Nation,” concluded President Chartrand. “It is our responsibility to work together for the betterment of our Citizens and, indeed, all Canadians. United, we will emerge strong after this critical situation.”

MMF Citizens needing access to a service are asked to contact the MMF as follows:

Metis Employees and Elders, please contact 1-800-665-8474.
Metis Businesses and Entrepreneurs, please contact 1-800-387-6004.
Additional contact information will be released shortly on our website.
www.mmf.mb.ca.