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Tsi Nahóten Karihwanákere No'nenk News Release

MCK Responds to Article in Gazette

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 3, Kentenhkó:wa / November 2009) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke has responded to an article entitled “Tuberculosis explodes on northern reserves” which appeared in the Montreal Gazette on Sunday, November 1st. The following is a letter sent to the editor of the Gazette:

Although they should have acted on this long ago, we once again find it necessary to send a message strongly urging the Federal Government of Canada that now is the time to act - before it is too late.

The Northlands First Nation has earned a dubious distinction as a global Tuberculosis Hot Spot. It, along with another Manitoba community health officials will not name, recorded the highest rates of TB in the world for two decades, making them one of the world's worst-affected communities. This is not in Bangladesh, this is in Canada - a country considered caregivers to the third world.

We find it appalling that each and every municipality in Canada has all of the necessary ‘basic’ needs to avoid such a situation, yet this Community continues to face a devastating state of affairs more than three decades after the last sanatorium in Manitoba shut its doors and tuberculosis faded in the minds of most of the public.

With tuberculosis and a number of other diseases already running rampant in this community, one can only speculate the devastation that the current H1N1 influenza pandemic will cause once that virus begins to spread. This entire community could be wiped out and not a thing is being done to prevent it.

With this in mind, we cannot help but wonder why so many of our sister First Nations do not even have toilets and proper water systems, let alone adequate housing. Could it be a case of ‘the squeaky wheel gets the grease’ or simply ‘out of sight, out of mind’?

With the current H1N1 flu knocking on their door, we're hoping the Federal Government answers the door and ensures its responsibilities are taken seriously.

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EDO-COMM-0001