



CONSTANCE LAKE FIRST NATION

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Media Release - For Immediate Release

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**CHIEF RAMONA SUTHERLAND OF CONSTANCE LAKE FIRST NATION DECLARES A STATE OF EMERGENCY
DUE TO 3 SUDDEN DEATHS AS A RESULT OF SUSPECTED BLASTOMYCOSIS**

Chief and Council of Constance Lake First Nation declared a state of emergency on Monday, November 22nd, 2021 due to 3 sudden deaths of community members as a result of suspected cases of blastomycosis. The community of over 900 residents has had 3 deaths and potentially 44 cases (8 children) under investigation and 16 of which required these members to be hospitalized. This community crisis has taken a heavy toll on this tightly knit community and investigations of the origin is underway but is still unknown.

Blastomycosis is a rare infection caused by a fungus called Blastomyces. The fungus lives in the environment, particularly in moist soil and in decomposing matter such as wood and leaves.

Chief Ramona Sutherland states “As we deal with this tremendous loss and community crisis, we require additional services to assist our people during this time of hardship. It is of the utmost importance that we find the origin of these recent cases of blastomycosis so that we can prevent the loss of additional lives of our community members and treat the affected areas. We require services such as emergency housing inspections, additional site assessments, grief/mental health counselling, support for family members of sick individuals, and resources to help elevate fears of our people, to name a few. Due to our low standard of living, we need these resources IMMEDIATELY. We need to work closely and hold Federal and Provincial Governments accountable during this time of crisis and we ask our neighbouring communities and partners to help support us in our time of need.”

The Chief and Council of Constance Lake called on the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario to work with them and provide much needed resources and assistance to prevent the additional loss of life until the origins or this Blastomycosis is found and treated. Both Governments have put in place all proper responses. They would also like to thank their neighbours, partners and ISC for their ongoing compassion and outreach during this time of crisis, nonetheless additional help is needed.

For additional information please contact:

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