



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MATAWA HEALTH CO-OPERATIVE MARK 1 YEAR OF PANDEMIC SERVICES INCLUDING WORKING WITH PARTNERS IN THUNDER BAY TO ASSIST WITH COVID-19 OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT

Thunder Bay, ON – The Matawa Health Co-operative (MHC) today announced the marking of one-year of providing pandemic services both, in the Matawa First Nations and, in the city of Thunder Bay. More recent services have included accepting an offer to partner with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) to assist with outbreak management at Wequedong Lodge after an outbreak was declared there on February 15, 2021 after it was determined that the transmission of two positive COVID-19 cases had occurred at the facility.

Members from the Matawa First Nations frequently use the service of Wequedong Lodge when accessing health care services in Thunder Bay. MHC nurses are currently working with the TBDHU at Wequedong Lodge to test 90 staff members and 74 clients/residents. They will also assist with contact tracing and repeated testing until there are no more COVID-19 positive cases.

Over the past year, the MHC have administered over 4,500 COVID-19 tests both in the Matawa First Nations and in the city of Thunder Bay. Other initiatives such as addressing food insecurity amongst Elderly Matawa members; providing mental wellness support, assisting partners with COVID-19 outbreak management including testing in First Nations; providing accurate health information/guidance documents in First Nations on best practices on public health measures including easing restrictions, returning to work and getting vaccinations. A MHC nursing line has been in place since May 2020. MHC Executive Director Frances Wesley said, “The Matawa Health Co-operative is happy to collaborate and assist where needed on health and COVID-19 related initiatives affecting our members both in the city of Thunder Bay and in our communities.”

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Incorporated in 2017, the Matawa Health Co-operative (MHC) is a Matawa First Nation owned and controlled health co-operative that provides health care services to enhance existing health services to achieve long-term health and well-being for all members within the nine (9) Matawa First Nations. It is overseen by a Board of Directors and is a member of the Health Care Co-operatives Federation of Canada. The MHC is community-driven with available services being tailored to individual community’s needs. It is the first of its kind in Canada. The current staff complement includes: a clinical coordinator, 8 nurses (3 are Certified Diabetes Educators, 1 mental health nurse), 1 dietitian, 1.5 physicians (part- time), 1-foot care specialist and, 2 mental health counsellors.

For more information, please contact Carol Audet, Communications Manager – Matawa First Nations at (807) 632-9663 or by email at caudet@matawa.on.ca



- CIRCLE OF BELONGING -

