



CHIEFS COUNCIL

RESOLUTION of the Matawa Chiefs passed at the 37th Annual General Meeting in Aroland First Nation to be effective from and after 1:00 pm Eastern Standard Time on July 29, 2025

RESOLUTION #12-31-07-2025

IMMEDIATE CALL FOR ACTION FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR NESKANTAGA FIRST NATION COMMUNITY

WHEREAS, on April 14, 2025, a state of emergency and community evacuation was declared in Neskantaga First Nation due to a strong diesel odour within the local nursing station. The facility experienced water damage and flooding, and the source of the odour was suspected to be a diesel spill, and;

WHEREAS, Neskantaga community leaders made the decision to evacuate vulnerable community members, primarily elders, youth, and those with health concerns, so that proper environmental and air quality testing could be completed, and;

WHEREAS, more than 170 Neskantaga evacuees were displaced in Thunder Bay, Ontario for approximately eight (8) weeks. During that time, displaced community members were under high distress leading to increased mental health concerns and substance use, which is common in urban centres, and;

WHEREAS, community leaders and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) began to plan and implement a temporary nursing station in Neskantaga First Nation as a temporary solution in an effort to repatriate community members back home to Neskantaga, and;

WHEREAS, approximately sixteen (16) weeks have passed, and throughout this time it has become increasingly evident that there has been no further action on ISC's behalf to plan or implement a permanent and long-term solution for a fully operational health care facility in Neskantaga First Nation. This inaction has occurred despite several letters, correspondence, and communication from Neskantaga Chief and Council to ISC Ministers requesting to meet and discuss next steps and outstanding action items. ISC has not been responsive to these requests, and;

WHEREAS, community members display hesitancy with returning back to their community due to chronic conditions and uncertainty of access to equitable healthcare. Additionally, allied health and wellness services are unable to deliver care in the existing and temporary nursing station due to space limitations and lack of essential equipment; and,

WHEREAS, it should be noted that the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada lists the following calls to action: #19 discusses identifying and closing gaps in health outcomes, #20 urges the federal government to address the distinct health needs of Indigenous Peoples through sustainable funding for community-based programs, #21 calls for increased funding for Indigenous healing centers to address health disparities,





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and #23 emphasizes the need for increased Indigenous representation in health care and cultural competency training for health professionals; and,

WHEREAS, it should be noted that an unwillingness to provide equitable health care services is an infringement on Neskantaga community members human rights to health and non-discrimination as well as a failure to uphold treaty promises for access to medical care and protection from illness; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, the Matawa Chiefs-in-Assembly and delegates support Neskantaga First Nation in advocating for the necessity of Indigenous Services Canada to meet with Neskantaga Chief and Council to discuss an action plan to implement a permanent and long-term solution for a fully operational health care facility; and,

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that, the Matawa Chiefs-in-Assembly and delegates support Neskantaga First Nation in advocating for the necessity of a fully functional Indigenous healthcare facility; and,

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that, the Matawa Chiefs-in-Assembly and delegates support Neskantaga First Nation in advocating for their human rights to health and non-discrimination as well as their treaty rights for access to medical care and protection from illness; and,

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that, the Matawa Chiefs-in-Assembly and delegates support Neskantaga First Nation in holding government officials, health ministers, as well as Indigenous Services Canada fully accountable to begin implementing necessary action items to ensure equitable and quality health care services are available within their First Nation, in a timely manner.

MOVED BY: Chief Gary Quisess, Neskantaga First Nation

SECONDED BY: Chief Sheri Taylor, Ginoogaming First Nation

OPPOSITION(S): 0

ABSTENTION(S): 0

CARRIED.

Chief Executive Officer

