

Ministre des
Affaires du Nord



Minister of
Northern Affairs

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H4

January 15, 2021

The Honourable Brian Pallister
Premier of Manitoba
Room 204 Legislative Building
450 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Premier Pallister,

In the last year, all Canadians have faced great challenges throughout this unprecedented time. All Manitobans, and indeed all Canadians, have come together to fight the COVID-19 pandemic over the last year. This has been a truly Team Canada approach that has served all Canadians well in keeping families and businesses supported. While we are not out of the woods yet, I have no doubt that all Manitobans, including all orders of government and Indigenous partners, will work collaboratively together to keep people safe.

I am writing today to respectfully recommend that the province of Manitoba involve the full, and meaningful, participation of the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) in Manitoba's COVID-19 vaccination task force and in vaccine distribution. Only through full and active participation will the pressing health needs of Manitoba's Metis be adequately met. While there have been no large outbreaks in any Metis villages in Manitoba to date, I am sure you know, and can appreciate that, Manitoba Metis are at higher risk of serious complications with COVID-19 and that an outbreak amongst vulnerable Metis citizens or elders would be devastating.

I understand through my discussion on January 15, 2021 with Minister Heather Stefanson, Minister of Health and Seniors Care, she is currently scheduled to meet with MMF's Minister of Health & Wellness Frances Chartrand on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. I consider this to be a very positive step, one that I hope will result in the MMF having full and active participation in the early planning, rollout and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine in their communities. I am hopeful your government invites them to the planning and decision-making table at that meeting.

The federal government understands the importance of including all Indigenous voices in the priority-setting for early vaccination. As you know, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) is working closely with all provinces and territories to encourage full inclusion of Indigenous perspectives to ensure an integrated and coordinated approach to support the administration and planning process of the COVID-19 vaccine for Indigenous peoples. The logistics of a COVID-19 vaccine rollout requires coordination amongst partners and provinces and territories; an efficient and effective rollout requires co-development, co-planning and is dependent on full collaboration amongst the parties.

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I will remain actively engaged on a regular basis with ISC, the MMF, and your Ministers, to ensure Metis representation in the primary vaccine planning and distribution process in Manitoba. And I remain ready to assist in this process in any way I can.

I will also continue to engage with all Indigenous partners and their representatives to ensure all priority populations receive vaccinations as recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization. Great progress has been made to date and I welcome the initial allocation of 5,300 doses of the Moderna vaccine to remote and isolated First Nations communities in Manitoba.

There is much more work to do, but I am confident that, by working together, we can ensure an efficient, effective, and smooth rollout of the vaccine planning and distribution process for all Manitobans and all Canadians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Vandal". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Honourable Daniel Vandal, P.C. M.P.
Minister of Northern Affairs
Member of Parliament for St. Boniface – St. Vital

CC:

President David Chartrand, Manitoba Metis Federation
Hon. Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada
Hon. Jim Carr, Special Representative for the Prairies
Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
Hon. Heather Stefanson, Minister of Health and Seniors Care - Manitoba
Hon. Eileen Clarke, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations – Manitoba