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### STATEMENT FROM NAN, WAPEKEKA FIRST NATION

**THUNDER BAY, ON (Jan 23):** Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler and Wapekeka First Nation Chief Brennan Sainnawap have released the following statement regarding comments in the media suggesting legal action on the suicide crisis in this remote community:

“On behalf of Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Wapekeka First Nation we would like to clarify that legal action has not and is not being considered. Any statements or suggestions to the contrary are false and have been made without our consent. We are focused on stabilizing the community and providing the appropriate health and mental health supports for those at-risk, especially our youth, many of whom have been removed from the community to receive care. Chief and Council have requested that the federal and provincial governments provide immediate supports while working towards a long-term, comprehensive, sustainable plan that is designed and led by the community. We appreciate the outpouring of support we have received and request that all efforts be focused on providing the appropriate assistance to care for our people.”

Wapekeka declared a state of emergency following the tragic loss of two young girls to suicide this month. Their loss came after Health Canada failed to fund a proposal submitted by the community in July 2016 for mental health supports for at-risk youth. Submitted just months before this tragedy, it notes Chief and Council's concern over several suicide attempts by youth in the past year. The proposal did not receive funding as, according to Health Canada, it came at an 'awkward time' in the federal funding cycle.

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