



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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## NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday November 14, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **OVIDE MERCREDI TO LEAD NAN TEAM** **ON HEALTH TRANSFORMATION**

**THUNDER BAY, ON:** Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler is pleased to announce that Ovide Mercredi will lead NAN's work with the governments of Canada and Ontario for the transformation of health systems across NAN territory.

"Transforming health systems across NAN territory is a monumental undertaking, and we are honoured that Ovide Mercredi and other health experts have accepted this challenge. Our First Nations are in a perpetual state of crisis, and health transformation is the pathway to rebuilding our inherent wellness systems, eliminating health disparities and achieving improved outcomes for our people," said NAN Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler. "We are pleased to have commitments from the governments of Canada and Ontario to transform the health system with our First Nations as full partners in this process. We are engaging with key health partners including policy-makers, health care administrators and providers to build a health system that works for our people."

NAN's health transformation team includes experts from NAN territory and Canada:

- Helen Cromarty - NAN Elder and Health Advisor
- Dr. Doris Mitchell - Family Physician, Chapleau area
- Dr. Michael Kirlew - Family Physician, Sioux Lookout area
- Mae Katt - Nurse Practitioner, Thunder Bay
- Dr. Alika Lafontaine - Past President, Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada

"I am honoured to receive this appointment and I appreciate the trust placed in me by Grand Chief Fiddler and the leaders of Nishnawbe Aski Nation," said Ovide Mercredi, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. "I look forward to working together in kindness to implement a holistic and comprehensive health system by, with and for the Nishnawbe Aski people. The health system envisioned by NAN leaders will not just be based on federalism, but also on our self-determination and our inherent duty to take better care of ourselves and each other."

An overview of NAN's approach to health transformation will be presented to Chiefs at a health summit in Timmins November 16-17. Dr. Jane Philpott, federal Minister of Indigenous Services, and Dr. Eric Hoskins, Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, will meet with NAN leaders and medical experts to share knowledge and develop solutions for addressing health transformation and critical issues in NAN territory.

## **About Ovide Mercredi**

Ovide Mercredi is a Cree born in the northern community of Grand Rapids, Manitoba, and has worked tirelessly for the rights of First Nations people throughout Canada. He served his community as Chief of Misipawistik Cree Nation from 2005 to 2011. A graduate of the University of Manitoba, he practiced criminal law and later specialized in constitutional law as an advisor to Manitoba Chiefs.

In 1989, he was elected Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations for Manitoba. He became a key strategist during the Meech Lake Accord constitutional reform discussions. He also had a strong leadership role in helping to resolve the Oka Crisis in 1990.

He was elected National Chief in 1991 and led the negotiations for the First Nations in the Charlottetown Accord. He was re-elected in 1994 and served as National Chief until 1997. He is known as a First Nations leader who speaks eloquently with passion and clarity.

## **About Health Transformation**

Health transformation is a broad-ranging initiative to modernize and improve our health care system. Key themes necessary for health care transformation (as identified by the Canadian Medical Association & the Canadian Nurses Association) are: health promotion, effective management of illnesses, focus on quality outcomes and accountability to patients.

An Alignment Process will be led by NAN First Nations to create a shared vision of the root problems, solutions and implementation strategies at three levels:

1. Within NAN First Nation communities.
2. Between First Nation healthcare partners.
3. Between NAN First Nations and non-First Nation healthcare partners.

NAN's approach calls for Northern First Nation organizations to support community-led transformation of the health system in NAN territory, including:

- The Charter of Relationship Principles and what it means for health system transformation.
- The priorities and role of the Joint Action Table regarding health system transformation.
- The NAN Health Transformation Work Plan and community engagement.

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