



June 9, 2026

Manitoba Inuit Association (MIA) Public Statement on Manitoba's HIV Public Health Emergency

The Manitoba Inuit Association (MIA) acknowledges Manitoba's declaration of a public health emergency in response to the significant increase in HIV diagnoses across the province.

This declaration reflects what Indigenous communities, healthcare providers, frontline workers, and community organizations have been witnessing for years. HIV does not exist in isolation. It is closely connected to housing insecurity, homelessness, poverty, mental health challenges, substance use, barriers to healthcare, and the ongoing impacts of colonial systems that continue to affect Indigenous peoples across Manitoba.

For Inuit and other Indigenous peoples, addressing HIV requires more than a healthcare response. It requires coordinated action that addresses the social determinants of health and ensures equitable access to culturally safe services, stable housing, and community-based supports.

MIA welcomes the Province's recognition of the urgency of this crisis and calls for sustained investments and Indigenous-led solutions that support both immediate needs and long-term outcomes.

As Manitoba responds to this emergency, MIA supports:

- Immediate investments in Indigenous-led HIV testing, prevention, treatment, outreach, and ongoing care;
- Expanded access to PrEP, harm reduction services, addictions treatment, mental wellness supports, and culturally safe healthcare;
- Increased availability of mobile, community-based, and outreach services that reach Inuit and other Indigenous peoples in urban, rural, northern, and remote communities;

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- Investments in housing stability, homelessness prevention, transportation, and wraparound supports that address the root causes contributing to increased vulnerability;
- Meaningful Indigenous leadership in planning, decision-making, and accountability measures related to Manitoba's HIV response;
- Increased support for frontline workers, outreach teams, peer support workers, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, healthcare providers, and community organizations responding to this crisis;
- Investments in workforce capacity, staff wellness, and sustainable funding for Indigenous organizations whose employees are supporting individuals and families experiencing housing instability, substance use, mental health challenges, and complex health needs.

MIA recognizes and thanks the frontline workers, healthcare professionals, outreach teams, peer workers, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community organizations who continue to respond to growing needs with limited resources. We also recognize the dedication of our own staff, who work every day to support Inuit families and individuals facing increasingly complex challenges. Supporting the wellbeing and capacity of those providing these essential services must be part of any meaningful response.

Declaring an emergency is only meaningful if it results in improved outcomes for those most affected. The response must be adequately funded, culturally safe, community-informed, and developed in partnership with Indigenous organizations and communities. MIA remains committed to advocating for Inuit in Manitoba and working alongside Indigenous partners, governments, healthcare providers, and community organizations to advance equitable access to healthcare, housing, wellness supports, and culturally responsive services.

This emergency requires more than a short-term response. It requires long-term commitment, collaboration, accountability, and investment to improve outcomes for Inuit, Indigenous peoples, and all Manitobans affected by HIV.

Gayle Gruben, CEO
Manitoba Inuit Association
Inuit Association of Manitoba