



General Delivery
Pinaymootang First Nation
Fairford, MB. Canada ROC 0X0
T – (204) 659-4465
F – (204) 659-2147

October 5, 2023

Dr. Cindy Blackstock

Executive Director of First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada

CC:

Karl Zadnik, CEO IRTC, Board of Directors IRTC ;
Chairman Chief McLean IRTC ;
Canadian Human Rights Tribunal
240 Sparks Street, 4th Floor West
Ottawa, ON,
K1A 0X8
Telephone: (613) 995-1707

Subject: Urgent Appeal for Assistance in Addressing Funding Shortfall for Respite Care Services

Dear Members of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Interlake Reserves Tribal Council (IRTC) of Manitoba to express our deep concern regarding the current funding crisis we are facing in delivering essential respite care services to our First Nation community members. Our organization, IRTC, serves as a crucial lifeline for Indigenous individuals and families in need of support in the region of Manitoba and is composed of 7 Manitoba First Nation Communities, but due to a severe shortage of funding from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), we are regrettably unable to meet the increasing demand for our services.

The mandate of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to ensure substantive equality for First Nation children is a principle that we hold in the highest regard. However, it is with a heavy heart that we must inform you that this mandate is not being fulfilled within the IRTC region due to the overwhelming financial challenges we are grappling with. The dire situation we find ourselves in has left us with no choice but to seek your assistance in rectifying this issue, as the well-being and safety of our community members hang in the balance.

Under the Respite Care Act of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the Interlake Reserves Tribal Council (IRTC) is entrusted with a critical mandate. This mandate encompasses the provision of high-quality respite care services to our First Nation community members who are living with disabilities, medical conditions, or other exceptional needs. The Respite Care Act is not merely a piece of legislation but a commitment to ensuring that these individuals have access to the support and care they require to lead dignified lives, free from unnecessary hardship and suffering.

To provide some context, the demand for respite care services within our region has experienced an alarming increase of over 316% in recent years 2022-2023. Concurrently, the costs associated with each case have risen significantly. Despite our best efforts to secure adequate funding, we have received only a meager \$2.5 million from the government. This funding falls drastically short of our budgeted expenses, which exceed \$17 million, as outlined in the most recent funding proposal we submitted to ISC in May 2023 to Glenn C. Howell and Joe Gacheru, Jordan's Principle, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of ISC. Members of the ISC organization including M. Gacheru, also stated many times that all requests are approved, and it has created a great demand for client support but yet ISC has stopped the funding. This has led to stress within IRTC organization as well client stress and for families of first nations children

This funding gap is not only unsustainable but also poses a grave threat to the well-being of those we are committed to serving. As a result of the inadequate financial support, we currently face a backlog of more than 100 cases that remain untreated, including individuals in dire need of assistance. If this funding crisis persists, we will be forced to deny vital support to those who are in danger and require immediate respite care services.

We humbly implore the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to intervene on our behalf and advocate for the necessary funding to ensure that substantive equality is upheld for our First Nation children and their families under the Respite Care Act of Indigenous Services Canada. The urgency of this matter cannot be overstated, as lives are at stake, and the suffering of our community members continues to escalate.


We kindly request that the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal undertake a thorough investigation into the funding shortfall for respite care services within the IRTC region. Your intervention and advocacy for additional financial support from Indigenous Services Canada are essential to our ability to fulfill our mandate under the Respite Care Act and ensure the safety and well-being of our community members.

We are hopeful that, through your assistance and the unwavering commitment to justice and equality that the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal embodies, we can swiftly address this crisis and prevent further harm to our most vulnerable citizens.

We thank you for your time, attention, and consideration of this urgent matter and look forward to your prompt response and support in securing the funding required to continue our vital work.

Sincerely,




Charmaine Delaronde
Health Director
Interlake Reserves Tribal Council
Sub office:
225-300 Alpine Way
Headingley, MB R4H 0E1
Phone: 204-390-8730
Fax: 204-942-8840