



WEENEEBAYKO AREA HEALTH AUTHORITY

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At the request of **Chief Friday**, the **Kashechewan Band Council**, and **Health Canada**, a Medical Team from **Weeneebayko Area Health Authority**, consisting of **Dr. Zahra Jaffer**, **Dr. Cameron MacLean**, and **Dr. Gordon Green** arrived in **Kashechewan** on **Tuesday, March 22nd, 2016**.

Prior to the team's arrival, images of 2 children from the First Nation's community of Kashechewan were posted on Facebook by their family members. These images showed concerning skin lesions and resulted in their separate transfers to hospitals in Moose Factory and in Timmins for further evaluation and treatment.

At that time, concerns were raised about up to 17 other children who were reported to have significant skin conditions that may have required evacuation. The Medical Team wanted to **evaluate all these children and any other individuals with skin rashes**, with the goal of **determining whether a Dermatologic Medical Emergency was occurring** in Kashechewan, and to **develop appropriate treatment plans** for these individuals.

With the assistance of Chief Friday, the Band Council, the **Kashechewan Band Health Director**, and **staff of the Kashechewan Health Services**, **34 individuals** were identified with skin conditions. All these individuals were **seen in their homes** by the Medical Team.

Following a public announcement over Facebook, a further 18 people self-identified themselves and were seen in the Kashechewan Health Center.

We are pleased to report that after a thorough evaluation, **none of those seen required medical evacuation or an emergency dermatology consultation**. **Three** of these **52** will have a prompt out-patient assessment arranged with a skin specialist. **Eczema** was the most common diagnosis, found in 35 of those seen. Other diagnoses included **acne**, **psoriasis**, 1 mild case of **impetigo**, **scabies**, **contact dermatitis**, **molluscum contagiosum**, **bacterial folliculitis**, and **venous stasis dermatitis**.

Treatment plans for all 52 individuals were reviewed with the patient and family. Modification of the treatment plans and/or renewal of medications was completed as indicated. Reassessments were arranged as indicated and as desired by the patient and family.

While these 2 unfortunate children required and received intensive medical care, based on this assessment, at this time, there is no dermatologic crisis in Kashechewan. Follow up of all uncontrolled skin problems is important. If new cases develop or known cases worsen, those individuals need to present to the Health Canada Nursing Station for prompt evaluation and physician review as indicated.

There is an **ongoing Medical Crisis** in Kashechewan and in all the James and Hudson's Bay communities. This ongoing Medical Crisis is related to **access to medical services**. Canadians would not, and should not accept the access to health care that those in these remote communities live with on a daily basis. **Access to nurses** and the **support services** to keep the frail and elderly in their homes and in their communities is inadequate. Physician availability in these communities is limited. **Increased Nursing and Physician** resources are needed. Any care beyond primary care is provided away from the home community. The **management of the ongoing chronic health issues** within these communities, in particular **Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus and its complications**, and **Mental Health**, is inadequate and requires enhanced resources.

Improved resources for **children** are essential. These resources include **housing, access to health care, parental supports, education**, access to a **library**, and **Child Protective Services**. Unhealthy children will struggle to grow and become healthy adults.

Issues related to **community confidence in the water quality, adequate housing, overcrowding, indoor air quality, income and food insecurity**, and **support for those pursuing careers that will contribute to the growth of Kashechewan** need to be promptly addressed.

We wish to thank those who have assisted in this community review, including the **Community of Kashechewan, Chief Friday, the Kashechewan Band Council, the Band Health Director, Health Canada**, and the **Kashechewan Health Services**.

Dr. Z. Jaffer

Dr. C. MacLean

Dr. G. Green