

OTTAWA, Nov. 28, 2013 /CNW/ - The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) is pleased to announce that Sagkeeng First Nation of Manitoba is supporting the Principles to Guide Health Care Transformation in Canada, now endorsed by 133 organizations across the country.

The principles were developed in 2011 by the CMA and the Canadian Nurses Association to guide the transformation of the health care system in Canada. The goal is for Canada's public health care system to provide quality care and to be sustainable, equitable, accountable and patient-centred, with a greater emphasis on prevention. (Click [here](#) to see the principles.)

Sagkeeng is the second First Nation to endorse the principles this year. The Dene Nation of the Northwest Territories signed on August 15.

"Quality of health care for First Nations should be paramount for all stakeholders with the ability to make positive change," said Sagkeeng Chief Donovan Fontaine. "We believe First Nations can achieve this through collaboration and partnerships with health care professionals and government."

CMA president Dr. Louis Hugo Francescutti added: "All physicians know that social determinants like poor housing and poor nutrition affect people's health. We also know that First Nations and far too many others do not receive the health care services they are entitled to under the current framework."

"This is why these principles are so important. The CMA and now 133 other organizations believe countrywide support for the Principles to Guide Health Care Transformation in Canada will establish the critical mass needed to create the patient-centred health care system Canadians all deserve."

In a report released in July, the CMA found that a comprehensive strategy and supporting investments by the federal government are needed urgently to improve the health of native Canadians in partnership with non-government organizations and indigenous communities.

"The struggle to achieve quality health care is vitally important not just for First Nations but the entire country," said Chief Fontaine. "And I urge other First Nation leaders to get on board and together we can have a greater impact for positive results."

Dr. Francescutti said the CMA and the other supporting organizations are eager to welcome the support of more First Nations. "Their support is critical to the transformation of the health care system."

*The Sagkeeng First Nation is an Anishinaabe First Nation which holds territory east of Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada. Sagkeeng, which was once called Fort Alexander, has an on-reserve population of approximately 3,000 people. Ojibwe is the name of the tribe that lives in Sagkeeng.*

*The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) is the national voice of Canadian physicians. Founded in 1867, the CMA is a voluntary professional organization representing more than 80,000 of Canada's physicians and comprising 12 provincial and territorial medical associations and 51 national medical organizations. CMA's mission is to serve and unite the physicians of Canada and be the national advocate, in partnership with the people of Canada, for the highest standards of health and health care.*

SOURCE Canadian Medical Association