

# WHITE RIVER FIRST NATION

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## Media Release

### **WRFN DOES NOT CONDONE ACTIONS OF INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING VACCINATIONS IN BEAVER CREEK**

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January 23, 2021 - For Immediate Release. Beaver Creek, Yukon: White River First Nation (“WRFN”) wishes to respond to the events that occurred in Beaver Creek on January 21<sup>st</sup>, where two individuals from out of the Territory came to our remote community in an unauthorized manner to receive COVID-19 vaccinations. These individuals made false statements to Yukon Government Officials regarding their intentions within the Territory, and willingly violated self-isolation orders. WRFN is particularly concerned with the callous nature of these actions taken by the individuals, as they were a blatant disregard for the rules in which keep our community safe during this unprecedented global pandemic.

WRFN understands that these individuals were charged under the Civil Emergency Measures Act and given a small fine but does not feel that this lenient punishment is appropriate for the gravity of the actions taken, given the potentially lethal effects to our community. WRFN is calling on the Yukon Government as well as the RCMP to pursue a more just punishment. It is important that the penalty seriously discourages any future similar behaviour.

Regarding the situation, Chief Angela Demit stated, “We are deeply concerned by the actions of individuals who put our Elders and vulnerable people at risk to jump the line for selfish purposes. We implore all Canadians to respect the vaccination rollout process and to not take similar actions. While we understand many want to have a vaccination immediately, it is not appropriate to skirt the rules put in place and approach our community in this way. WRFN was selected for vaccines given our remoteness, elderly and high-risk population, as well as limited access to health care.”

WRFN is frustrated with Yukon Government’s inability to communicate properly, as WRFN was forced to find out about this situation through the news media rather than from Yukon Government directly. WRFN will seek a formalized communication protocol with Yukon Government going forward to ensure that this

does not occur again. Once consultation with the WRFN COVID-19 Inter-Agency Team occurs, WRFN will implement its own safety regulations and protocols for the second community vaccination.

WRFN appreciates Dr. Hanley's willingness to address this matter with WRFN directly, as well as his work to resolve the issue moving forward.

WRFN reminds members to stay vigilant, follow the safe-6 steps for preventing transmission, and to monitor for symptoms as at this time, Dr. Hanley has assured us that the risk for transmission is low.

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