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NATIONS**

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## **Dene Nation calls on the Federal and Territorial Governments to support the people of the Sahtu region during the COVID-19 Crisis**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[Yellowknife, Northwest Territories – August 25, 2021] – Dene Nation Chief Norman Yakeleya has been in continued discussions with Minister of Indigenous Services Canada Marc Miller, and more recently with Premier Caroline Cochrane and her Cabinet colleagues, to explore opportunities to support the Dene as this health crisis in the Sahtu region unfolds. Considerations for funding efforts to support food security, strategic communication updates and forums, health language interpretation for Elders, internet data overages, and crucial support for On-the-Land activities are central to the Dene Nation requests.

Dene Nation has developed a COVID Rapid Response Team to respond to the health crisis with the focus being the safety and the health of the people of the Sahtu. Recent initiatives include the donation of \$7,500 of groceries and freight for the Fort Good Hope Meals on Wheels Elders program, food donations to both the communities of Deline and Colville Lake, development of an online donation initiative for isolation activities such as puzzles for Elders, and coloring books/crayons for youth.

“During this time of crisis, we must display unity as the Dene Nation,” said Dene National Chief Norman Yakeleya. “No one government can do this alone and we must provide every support we can to ensure the health and safety of our people during this time. We are many heartbeats, one Dene drum.”

“We continue to work collaboratively with our partners and all levels of government to collectively defend our people against COVID-19. We are working to get Dene citizens to return to the land as a form of isolation and social distancing as we do our part to prevent any further spread,” continued National Chief Yakeleya. “As long as citizens are feeling well and have a negative test result to the COVID-19 virus, we are encouraging the Dene to return to the land”

- 30 -

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