Office of the Grand Chief
Nishnawbe Aski Nation
ᐊᓂᔑᓇᐯ ᐊᐢᑭ ᐅᑭᒪᐧᐃᐣ

100 Back Street, Unit 200 Thunder Bay, ON P7J 1L2
Tel: (807) 623-8228 Fax: (807) 623-7730

MEMORANDUM

TO:	NAN Chiefs and Tribal Councils
DATE:	July 29, 2020
RE:	Mental Health and Addictions Pandemic Response Program
FROM:	Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler
CC:	NAN Executive Council
ATTACHMENTS:	N/A

As you are aware, as soon as the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, NAN worked diligently to establish a COVID-19 Task Team to address the many considerations that the virus brought with it.

Alongside that work, the Mental Health and Substance Use Working sub-Group identified that timely mental health supports were critical to promote the health and well-being of community members in NAN territory who were struggling to cope with the added stress and anxiety that the pandemic has created.

In response to this identified need, and in close collaboration and partnership with Regional Health Authorities, Tribal Councils, and community organizations across NAN territory, the "Mental Health and Addictions Pandemic Response Program" was designed to integrate with existing mental health supports in the region. This in turn bridges existing gaps to ensure that every individual seeking support has access to culturally safe and community-based mental health services when needed.

NAN was pleased to support the advocacy efforts for this program, and we are happy to announce that it will be launched on August 10, 2020. The Mental Health and Addictions Pandemic Response Program includes 24/7 toll-free rapid access to confidential crisis and mental health services at **1-844-NAN-HOPE (626-4673)**, and provides connection to ongoing mental health and addictions support services. **The goal of this program is to be available to all NAN citizens (both on and off reserve), and no one will be denied access to this service when they reach out.**

Communication will be regularly scheduled and ongoing throughout this project by KO eHealth, and Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, and Dalton Associates. If you have any initial questions or concerns please reach out and contact Orpah McKenzie at Orpahmckenzie@kochiefs.ca; Trish Hancharuk at Trish.Hancharuk@slfnha.com; or Carl Dalton at Carl@daltonassociates.ca.

We thank everyone involved in this very important work. Your contributions will work to ensure that timely support is accessible to all NAN members when they need it.