TITLE:	Non-Insured Health Benefits - Medical Transportation
SUBJECT:	Health
MOVED BY:	Councillor Brent Wilson, Proxy, Rolling River First Nation, MB
SECONDED BY:	Chief Dennis Cameron, Tootinaowaziibeeng Treaty Reserve No.292, MB
DECISION:	Carried by Consensus

WHEREAS:

A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) states:

Article 21

1. "Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, *inter alia*, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security."
2. "States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities."

Article 24

2. "Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right."

B. Increases in gas prices have a direct impact on the Medical Transportation budget in West Region Tribal Council communities and other First Nation communities in Manitoba. In recent months the cost of gas has increased by an average of 19% in Manitoba overall, and significantly more on or near First Nation communities and in some cases is as much as 21% average increase.

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C. The current funding for Medical Transportation is inadequate to begin with, and the rise in gas prices only exacerbates this problem.

D. The Non-Insured Health Benefit (NIHB) program provides assistance so First Nations can access eligible, medically necessary health services that cannot be obtained in the community of residence which may include assistance with meals and accommodation expenses.

E. Such health services include provincial/territorial insured medical services (e.g. doctors' appointments, hospital care, health programs provided to all provincial residents; and alcohol, solvent, drug abuse and detox treatment pre-approved by the NIHB program).

F. First Nations have to access such health services outside and away from their communities. It is common for First Nation patients to travel 12-14 hours in crowded medical vans to attend medical appointments away from the community.

G. Inadequate funding for Medical Transportation leaves First Nations in financial deficit, and the current increase in gas prices will further this hardship and is an on-going issue that requires immediate attention from the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and First Nation leaders.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:

1. Call for immediate attention of the National Chief and First Nation leaders to the inadequate funding of Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Medical Transportation.
2. Mandate the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to work with Health Canada's NIHB program specifically on Medical Transportation to conduct a cost-analysis on recent gas prices and the cost of air travel against the medical transportation budgets for First Nation communities and to take remedial and proactive action based on the results.
3. Direct the AFN to urge the Federal government to increase the medical transportation budgets for First Nations to accommodate for the increase in gas prices.
4. Direct the AFN to urge the Federal government to resolve the financial deficits in Medical Transportation budgets resulting from the increase in gas prices.

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