

President's Message

September 22, 2014

Self-reliance has always been an important part of our Metis identity and culture. We have been known as the "Gens Libres" and "Otipemisiwak." We are the "Free People" and the "People who own themselves." We are the "Independent Ones." Our Ancestors stood tall and proud and fought to protect their self-determination and self-government. We will continue to protect these today and tomorrow.

As a community, we prepare for the challenges of future generations as well as help our Elders, our sick, and others today. This often calls for funding and programs and services that are not readily available even though there is a great need. How do we find the needed funds? As one successful approach, the MMF has established our community-owned for-benefit MEDOCare Pharmacy to help raise the money.

MEDOCare is your pharmacy. It is your company. The business plan is to use the profits from MEDOCare to pay for programs and services and other initiatives not funded by federal or provincial governments. We can do what we want with our own money. This is independence. This is self-reliance. The MMF will also continue to identify other funding sources and develop options to ensure investments are made in our own programs and services.

The key to this funding strategy is our purchasing power. At our regional and annual general assemblies, I ask everyone to recognize the purchasing power in the room. As single individuals it may not seem like much. But add up the yearly spending by all our citizens in a room, or in our community of over a 140 thousand people, and then our purchasing power is, without a doubt, very powerful.

Each dollar we spend has power. It has the power to close the gap between our living conditions, programs and services, and those expected by all Canadians. It has the power to change our future. To wisely use the power of our dollar is the reason for the MEDOCare Pharmacy. When we spend our money at another pharmacy, we get what we buy and nothing more. On the other hand, when we get our prescription medication from MEDOCare Pharmacy then we get much more.

The benefits of your purchases at the MEDOCare Pharmacy will go back to your community. But on the other hand, if our money is spent outside at another pharmacy, then the benefits go to foreign or non-aboriginal-owned shareholders. It is clear then, as simple as 1-2-3, that to help our community we must spend in our own businesses.

The dollars each of us spends has power. Whether it is twenty dollars or a thousand dollars, the power it has depends on our choice to spend it wisely. Buying your drug prescription at your Metis-owned MEDOCare pharmacy is a wise choice. The profits from the pharmacy are used per our community priorities for programs, services, and other initiatives. No longer will the benefits leave our community and go to owners or shareholders in eastern Canada or the United States.

We all know that vision care for our Elders is a priority. Pensioners on fixed incomes often have a difficult time in making ends meet. After the essentials are paid, like rent, heat, food, and medicine, there is little left over for other priorities. Much is sacrificed, including buying themselves eyeglasses. Our first program using revenue from the *MEDOCare* Pharmacy is the new Elder Vision Care Initiative.

The MMF designed the Elder Vision Care Initiative for our Metis Elders. This initiative is for those who require assistance in managing their eye care, including purchasing their prescription eyeglasses. Existing Provincial and Federal Programs only cover a very basic amount for eyeglasses and do not cover the cost of eye exams. This has prevented many Elders to go without the proper eyeglasses they need so badly. The Elder Vision Care Initiative covers the full prescription.

We can no longer rely on the provincial or federal governments. This is an example of what can be done through the power of our Metis-owned business. Buying from our own Pharmacy will lead us to success. This is just the beginning of the good works that will come from the wise choice of purchasing prescriptions from the pharmacy that you own. Think about it, our next initiatives could include other health care as well as cultural and sport programs for our children.

To make this happen, we need your help by purchasing your medications at the *MEDOCare* Pharmacy. *MEDOCare* will make it easy for you to transfer your prescriptions from another pharmacy and to receive new prescriptions. We can ship your medications to your home anywhere in Manitoba by tracked two-day priority mail. Please phone the *MEDOCare* Pharmacy at 204-942-7220, or 1-877-635-5931 toll-free, for more information about getting your prescription filled.

Self-reliance is a long-standing tradition of the Metis People. The *MEDOCare* Pharmacy is an important step in continuing our independence. Remember, it is through you support that we can deliver the Elder Vision Care and new initiatives to help our families and community. With your purchase you can build the future.

Upon closing, I offer my prayers those who have passed on and my condolences to those who have lost a loved one. My thoughts and hopes are with those who are sick or shut in. I also offer my best wishes to all.

Meeqwetch.