



For Immediate Release

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### **Ontario Court of Justice recognizes and affirms aboriginal right to use traditional medicines**

The Six Nations of the Grand River and the Mississaugas of New Credit are pleased with the Ontario Court of Justice's decision today, affirming our peoples' inherent Aboriginal right to use traditional medicines.

We have relied on and cared for our families with our medicines since time immemorial. We know that they are effective.

The Court affirmed that our use of traditional medicines was integral to our cultures, historically and today. The Court recognized that our right to use our medicines is not subject to the approval of western medical practitioners.

Our communities have two girls and families directly affected by this decision. Both families are loving, diligent, and conscientious in the care they provide for their daughters, and in the decisions they make concerning their medical care. Both have elected to discontinue chemotherapy, and are relying, instead, on traditional medicines.

Forcing a First Nations child to undergo unwanted, mainstream medical treatment is an affront to the dignity and autonomy of the child, our cultures, and our nations. Had our children been forced into treatment, it would have had a disastrous effect on their emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being. Instead of being proud of their own traditions, they would learn that the laws, governance, teachings and medicines of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabe cultures were wrong and even dangerous. This is simply not true.

We sincerely hope that this decision is part of an emerging era of healing and reconciliation between Canada and our nations. We hope that our children and generations to come will no longer experience the mistrust, misunderstanding, and mistreatment by the Canadian government that have been our daily reality for over 200 years.

In its application, McMaster Children's Hospital sought to undermine our cultures and ways of life. We are pleased that the Court refused to participate in this effort, and dismissed McMaster's application.

Six Nations Elected Council and the Mississaugas of the New Credit believe that the decision made by the Court today is one of the many steps necessary to repair the broken relationship between Canada and First Nations people.

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