Dignitas International Supports First Nations Leaders’ Call for Immediate Action to Address Health & Public Health Emergency in Northern Ontario

March 2, 2016 – Last week, Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler and representatives of the Sioux Lookout Area Chiefs Committee on Health (CCOH) declared a health and public health emergency for First Nations in the Sioux Lookout region and across NAN territory. We encourage you to read the full press release.

As a Canadian health organization working with First Nation communities in Northern Ontario, Dignitas International expresses its solidarity with First Nations leaders in calling on the Federal and Provincial governments to take meaningful action in addressing the urgent and long-standing health issues caused by the inequality of health and health care services. The Auditor General of Canada’s Spring 2015 Report found that First Nation people living in remote communities in Northern Ontario and Manitoba did not have comparable access to health care services as other provincial residents living in similar geographic locations. Dignitas is committed to working with our partner, the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA), to support the development of First Nations-led solutions to close this unacceptable gap.

Dignitas echoes NAN’s and SLFNHA’s urgent appeal for the governments of Ontario and Canada to support immediate, intermediate and long-term action to address this health crisis. The declaration highlights a critical opportunity for our governments to work together with First Nations on a nation-to-nation basis to build an equitable health system that genuinely serves the needs and priorities of First Nation communities.

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