

Statement by the Metro Urban Indian Directors (MUID) regarding Natives Against Heroin (NAH)

For Immediate Release
December 6, 2018

Since the rapid growth of the Franklin/Hiawatha Encampment this summer, the Metropolitan Urban Directors (MUID) has been directing resources to support our relatives, the residents in the camp, in finding safer housing as well as connecting camp residents with services and support they require. MUID has worked directly with a wide range of partners including; Native organizations and community members, service providers, philanthropy, public and private sector organizations who have all stepped forward to help address the immediate needs of the camp residents. We have also begun to actively look forward towards long term solutions to homelessness in the Native and broader communities. To do this we must build a sustainable, long-term, coordinated effort that acknowledges the indigenous history that frames this struggle.

Natives Against Heroin (NAH) was one of the organizations that stepped forward in the very beginning of the encampment to provide harm reduction, outreach, and de-escalation efforts at the camp. MUID has always supported their work in disrupting the sale of drugs and in providing street outreach and peer recovery, as well as their long-term plans around creating comprehensive programming and long-term prevention. Unfortunately, due to many personal reports and documented incidents which capture the unacceptable, deplorable, and divisive words and actions of the leaders of Natives Against Heroin (NAH), the organizations that comprise MUID believe we must make a statement about against those behaviors and better define our relationship with NAH and its leadership. MUID has been disappointed to learn that NAH leadership has used threats and intimidation – especially against women – in attempts to disrupt service delivery and organizing efforts. Their actions have disempowered and created fear among many of the camp residents. NAH leadership has interrupted the delivery of food, beverages and donated goods to the camp residents. NAH leadership and members have spread inaccurate information about the resources being made available to camp residents and have discouraged residents from accessing better housing and services.

As we approach the important time of transition to the Navigation Center (NC), NAH leadership have been actively discouraging camp residents from moving to the safer, warmer NC and encouraging them to remain at the current encampment. NAH leadership has intentionally disrupted efforts to provide transition information to the camp residents and has spread inaccuracies and misrepresentations about the conditions which will be at the NC. Those representing NAH have encouraged racial divides among the camp residents, and among those bringing support to the camp. NAH's tactics have employed violence, and threats of violence, to deter people from delivering support to those living at the camp.

MUID member organizations can no longer support the current actions and tactics of NAH. We are in an era where Native people and the organizations that serve them have been striving to work in more collaborative ways. In doing so, MUID seeks to build on the example of Standing Rock to throw off the mantle of colonization and return to more Indigenous ways of being together. These ways reflect that all Native people have roles in the community, and to respect

the roles that each person and organization plays. NAH's behavior and tactics have the effect of dividing our community, creating distrust, suspicion and fear, and are not Indigenous values.

MUID remains committed to supporting our relatives in the camp through the transition to the NC, and beyond as we build sustainable, long-term, coordinated efforts to address the issues that contribute to Native homelessness that acknowledges the Indigenous history that frames this struggle.

We invite all to join us in this work.

This statement is made with the support of the leadership of MUID member organizations.

MUID is a collation of leadership of Minneapolis Native organizations and urban Tribal offices and embassies. Membership represents a wide range of nonprofits including direct health services, education, housing, economic development, and more. Established over 40 years ago, MUID is a partner in the groundbreaking Memo of Understanding with City of Minneapolis, which establishes a framework for the City's engagement with the Native community.

To learn more about the Franklin/Hiawatha Encampment and how you can help visit www.franklinhiawathacamp.org

To learn more about Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors and the work they are doing on this and the other challenges and opportunities facing the Native community visit <https://muidgroup.wixsite.com/muid>

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The Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors Group promotes the well-being, growth and mutual interests of metropolitan American Indian Organizations.