



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE!**

## Statement on Opioid Overdoses

PESHAWBESTOWN, Mich., 01 December, 2017 – As families gathered to celebrate Thanksgiving, some of our families mourned a heartbreaking loss. The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians is saddened to hear that opioids have claimed the life of a tribal member, and our hearts go out to those coping with a devastating loss. We would be remiss not to acknowledge the first responders whose interventions saved lives. Like those first responders, GTB will do everything in its power to protect families from falling prey to the devastating disease and community-destroying plague of opioid abuse.

Substance abuse is a complex problem impacting law, health, and community welfare. To address this complex problem GTB has taken a multifaceted approach. We have worked to institute preventative and remedial measures, including working with law enforcement to apprehend and prosecute sellers and users of controlled substances, applying best medical practices to identify the signs of opioid abuse and to foster individual wellness, providing behavioral health support and substance abuse treatment, and training our emergency responders to administer naloxone to reverse overdoses.

While we condemn the use of all illegal drugs, we also recognize that drug users and overdose victims need the support of their family and community. To that end, last month we requested technical assistance from the federal government to expand GTB's strategic plan to combat and treat opioid abuse and addiction. The recent overdoses in our community serve to remind us of the urgency of these efforts.

GTB remains committed to enforcing laws prohibiting the distribution and use of illegal drugs. To that end, we urge the full cooperation of community members in assisting law enforcement efforts to combat illegal drug use. Where the welfare of the community demands it, GTB will evict individuals from tribal housing and banish those persons responsible for bringing illegal drugs to the reservation. The Grand Traverse Band Tribal Council resolves to protect the entire GTB community and to combat substance abuse, within Indian country and beyond.