



BACKGROUNDER: THE DEATH OF MIRANDA MAMAKWA

- Miranda Mamakwa from Fort Severn First Nation passed away on September 8, 2026, at the age of 31, at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, leaving behind three children aged 7, 9 and 11. Miranda and her three children lived in Fort Severn First Nation with her parents, Eva Mamakwa and Mike Bluecoat.
- Miranda had open heart surgery at the Ottawa Hospital Heart Institute in April 2026. After her surgery, Miranda recovered at the Ottawa Hospital for two weeks before being transferred to the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. Miranda spent one week at the hospital in Thunder Bay and one week as an outpatient, staying at a local hotel.
- On May 24, 2026, Miranda was able to travel back to Fort Severn First Nation.
- Miranda, of course, had follow-up medical appointments after her surgery that she was to attend in Thunder Bay. These appointments included echocardiograms and an appointment with a vascular surgeon about blood clots.
- The Non-Insured Health Benefits program (“NIHB”), managed and administered by the Ministry of Indigenous Services Canada, provides access to health benefits for First Nations and Inuit peoples who do not otherwise have insurance coverage for those services. One of the services provided by NIHB is medical transportation – if medical services cannot be accessed in one’s community, then NIHB can arrange for transportation to where one’s medical services are provided.
- Miranda’s first follow-up appointment was on May 28, 2026, in Thunder Bay. The Fort Severn Nursing Station faxed the information about the appointment and the request for medical transportation to the NIHB Sioux Lookout office.
- The NIHB Sioux Lookout office did not answer this request for medical transportation. The Fort Severn Nursing Station faxed the information more than once but received no response. Eva Mamakwa called the NIHB Sioux Lookout office, explaining how important these follow-up appointments are, and NIHB replied that they did not have the travel request but would look into it. NIHB did not arrange travel for Miranda, causing her to miss her appointment.
- The same situation happened for Miranda’s scheduled surgery follow-up appointments on June 11, July 2, and August 6. The Fort Severn Nursing Station faxed the medical transportation request to the NIHB Sioux Lookout office, NIHB never responded, no travel was arranged, and Miranda missed her medical appointments.
- In total, Miranda missed four (4) medical appointments that were booked as follow-up to her open heart surgery, solely due to NIHB’s failure to arrange for her medical transportation.



- Following her heart surgery, Miranda had blood clots and was on blood thinner medication. She attended the Fort Severn Nursing Station every week for blood work to monitor the blood thinner medication.
- As the months went on, Miranda became tired, was sleeping more, and began to lose feeling in her fingers. Miranda raised her symptoms with the Fort Severn Nursing Station at her weekly appointments.
- On August 19, 2026, Miranda posted on Facebook that NIHB had not made travel accommodations for her follow-up appointments, stating, “if I die pls go after em”, calling out for NIHB to be held accountable for her death.
- On September 6, 2026, Miranda was taken to the Fort Severn Nursing Station in medical distress. In the days leading up to this, Miranda had been suffering from stomach aches and vomiting. She thought she had caught a cold and spent most of the day sleeping. On September 6, Miranda’s mother, Eva went to take Miranda to the Fort Severn Nursing Station to get her checked out and found her in medical distress. The medical van came, put Miranda on a stretcher, and took her to the Fort Severn Nursing Station.
- At the Fort Severn Nursing Station, the nurses told Eva Mamakwa that her daughter was very sick. Miranda was unresponsive when Eva tried talking to her.
- Miranda was transported to the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre on September 6, 2026, by Ornge medivac, delivered by SkyCare.
- Miranda’s parents, Eva Mamakwa and Mike Bluecoat, were not able to travel from Fort Severn to Thunder Bay until the next evening, September 7, 2026. They arrived to find Miranda in the ICU, unresponsive.
- On September 8, 2026, Eva was told that Miranda had blood in her brain and no longer had any brain activity. The family made the difficult decision to remove Miranda from life support that evening, and Miranda passed shortly afterward.
- An autopsy was done in Toronto before Miranda was returned to her community of Fort Severn. The Chief Coroner’s office has been in contact with the family.

