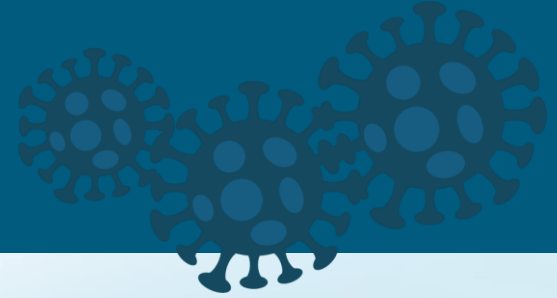


ISC - Alberta Region COVID-19 Daily Update for Chiefs: *April 21, 2020*



Updates

Canada's Economic Response Plan

We would like to remind you of the broader financial benefits and supports available to all Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Government of Canada's Economic Response Plan, there are supports available for individuals, businesses and industries. You and members of your Nations are able to access these financial benefits. These include benefits such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, increased Canada Child Benefit, Special Goods and Services Tax credit payment and extra time to file income tax returns. Information on these benefits and more can be found [here](#)

If accessed, these benefits would be in addition to your regular departmental program funding and any other departmental support provided specifically for Indigenous communities to respond to COVID-19.

Spartan Rapid Test

The Government of Canada as well as the Province of Alberta have signed contracts with Spartan Biosciences for its portable DNA rapid test kits called the Spartan Cube. The Government of Canada is highly prioritizing test kits for Indigenous communities in collaboration with provinces and territories, especially those in rural, remote and isolated areas.

ISC-AB is actively engaged with Alberta Health, AHS and the Provincial Laboratory to operationalize training, testing and reporting of results. Remote and isolated communities are prioritized first, followed by priority based on population, capacity and location.

Question of the Day

Q: How does the current fire ban affect First Nations?

A: To minimize human-caused wildfires and ensure public safety during this COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Alberta has implemented a fire ban effective April 15, 2020. The fire ban is in effect throughout the Fire Protection Area and includes a prohibition on the operation of off-highway vehicles (OHVs). Indigenous people may continue to use OHVs on public lands for traditional purposes, including hunting and food gathering. However, restrictions on recreation in the Fire Protection Area are necessary to reduce risk of wildfire for First Nations communities as wildfire crew staffing has been challenged by the pandemic.

National Information

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Awareness resources – Printable factsheets and posters](#)

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Prevention and risks](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and Indigenous communities](#)

The Hope for Wellness Help Line is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week to support members of your community experiencing emotional distress and may be reached directly by dialling **1-855-242-3310** or via online chat at: hopeforwellness.ca



Alberta Cases:

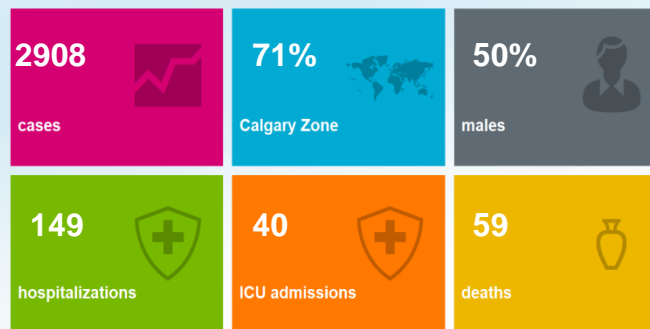
as of April 20 12:30 p.m. MST

AB Total Confirmed (April 20 – 105 new cases)	2908
Confirmed First Nations on-reserve Cases	0
Calgary Zone	2077
Central Zone	77
Edmonton Zone	438
North Zone	143
South Zone	156
Unknown	17
Deaths due to COVID-19	59

Wellness Together Canada

COVID-19 has placed considerable strain on families and individuals. Wellness Together Canada provides free online resources, tools, apps and connections to trained volunteers and qualified mental health professionals when needed. You and your Nation members can access educational resources and immediate support crisis lines without creating an account [here](#).

Regional Snapshot



Useful Links

AHS COVID FAQs

- [novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) FAQs for Public](#)

GCIndigenous Twitter

- <https://twitter.com/GCIndigenous> includes updates, news releases and links for resources

GCIndigenous YouTube

- [COVID-19: Indigenous Services Canada Updates \(on YouTube\)](#)

Regional Contact:

Dean Janvier, Special Leadership Liaison, is available to support information sharing and to assist you in navigating questions or concerns related to COVID-19. He may be reached at Dean.Janvier@gmail.com or 780-545-6655.

Preparedness in First Nations communities related to COVID-19

**Briefing to AFN CCOH
April 21, 2020**



COVID-19 – Canadian Context

- As of April 18, 2020, 32,412 cases have been confirmed in Canada, with 1,346 deaths. This compares to an estimated 3000 - 4000 influenza-related deaths in Canada each year.

Province/Territory	Tested Positive	FN Community-Associated
BC	1618	6
AB	2397	0
SK	307	6
MB	250	0
ON	10 010	14
QC	16 798	27
NB	117	0
NS	606	0
NL	256	0
PEI	26	0
YT	9	No specific FN breakdown
NWT	5	No specific FN breakdown
NU	0	No specific FN breakdown

National Communications

Update since April 13th Briefing

- Dr. Wong and Dr. Gideon on APTN – weekly interview. April 16th version online <https://aptnnews.ca/2020/04/16/prison-watchdog-investigating-complaint-of-guards-not-wearing-masks-at-sask-pen/> (starts at 10:09)
- April 18 - Minister and Dr. Wong participated in PHAC press conference
- COVID-19 Emails
 - Long-term Care homes and Nursing Homes information
 - Update on PPE equipment
- Website:
 - Number of positive cases in First Nations Communities being posted to ISC's web Monday – Friday.
 - PPE information posted Monday – Friday
- Social Media: Ongoing social media promotion of COVID-19 related information
- Videos: Planning underway on short videos featuring Dr. Wong

New Funds since Last Update

- \$306.8 million in funding to help small and medium-sized Indigenous businesses, and to support Aboriginal Financial Institutions that offer financing to these businesses.
 - The funding will allow for short-term, interest-free loans and non-repayable contributions through Aboriginal Financial Institutions, which offer financing and business support services to approximately 6,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis businesses.
- Specific Northern measures funding including:
 - \$72.6M to Territories to support their COVID-19 health and social services preparations and response.
 - \$17.3M to Territories to support northern air carriers for continued supply of food, medical supplies, and other essential services.
 - \$15M in non-repayable support for businesses in the territories to help address the impacts of COVID-19.
 - \$25M to Nutrition North Canada to increase subsidies so families can afford much-needed nutritious food and personal hygiene products.
 - advance the Harvesters Support Grant.

Point of Care Testing

- The Government of Canada acknowledges the need to increase COVID-19 testing quickly across Canada. Many options are being explored that are in use by other countries; however Canada must first determine the quality of those tests before they enter Canada.
- Two tests that have been recently approved by Health Canada for use are the GeneXpert and the Spartan Cube with plans to implement both in Canada as soon as possible.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada has procured enough test kits from a variety of companies, including Spartan Bioscience and Cepheid (Xpert), to perform over 3.5M tests. This procurement is done in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and includes prioritizing the needs of Indigenous communities, especially those in rural, remote and isolated areas.
 - The intent is to distribute out to hospitals and health centres/nursing stations serving remote and isolated areas, to support increased access to testing for Indigenous communities.

Mental Health and Covid-19

- The Hope for Wellness Line has begun tracking calls related to COVID-19, in mid-March.
- As of April 12, a total of 356 COVID-19 related contacts had been received. 280 were calls and 76 were chats.

Communities are concerned about the pandemic itself, but also:

- Isolation and lack of connection to social support.
 - Being unable to support family and community.
 - Uncertainty about the future.
 - Basic needs like food and shelter.
 - Finding reliable and accurate sources of information.
 - Being overwhelmed by information, especially through social media.
 - Recovery in the post-pandemic world.
- Next week's presentation will share information about how mental wellness supports are innovating to support needs.

Reaching Home Initiative

- Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy is a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness across Canada. This program provides funding to urban, Indigenous, rural and remote communities to help them address their local homelessness needs.
- On April 4, 2020, in response to COVID-19, Canada announced \$157.5 million to address the needs of Canadians experiencing homelessness through the Reaching Home program. Funding can be used for a variety of needs such as purchasing beds and physical barriers for social distancing and securing accommodation to reduce overcrowding in shelters.
- Reaching Home dedicates increased funding to address Indigenous homelessness. Through the community-based approach, these funds provide communities with greater flexibility and support in determining their own initiatives, local priorities and collaboration with Indigenous partners.
 - Reaching Home's Indigenous Homelessness stream provides funding to organizations that provide supports to meet the unique needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
 - The intent is that the funding be provided to Indigenous organizations located in urban centres.
 - The program promotes social inclusion and cultural connections within communities, and aims to ensure that culturally-appropriate supports are available for Indigenous Peoples who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness in urban centres.

Personal Protective Equipment Orders

- Since the PPE request process launched February 14, 2020 – summary of requests received to access the ISC-FNIHB stockpiles are below.
- BC FNHA has shipped a total of 66 PPE requests to communities.
- Current assessment of requests – 24 hours / request to storage facility to retrieve and package / shipment to community 2 – 7 days.
- Note – The FNIHB emergency stockpile is for the provision of health care on reserve (including for home and community care workers and family care givers).

Overview of PPE request status as of April 20, 2020 (TA 609)				
Region	Requests Received	Being Processed at MTE	Shipped	Delivered
Atlantic	92	4	12	76
Quebec	43	1	8	34
Ontario	157	4	51	102
Manitoba	112	0	19	93
SK	57	6	2	49
NITHA	40	0	1	39
Alberta	85	0	5	80
BCFNHA	5	0	1	4
Total	591	15	99	477

For Discussion: Support Systems

How could FNIHB structure a support system for communities?

- FNIHB support for pandemic plan updates: examples of models to date, leveraging FNIHB and Red Cross support include –
 - Manitoba: Engaged the Red Cross to support a 3-day virtual workshop, updating all 63 community pandemic plans at once
 - Ontario: FNIHB Region sending community plans to FNIHB HQ, for review and guidance in their update
- What role should be played by the AFN Task Force on Covid-19 response?
- What is the most effective way to support communities who have pandemic plans, but may not have plans that work for this specific situation?

For more information contact:

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Tom.wong@canada.ca; 613-797-8710