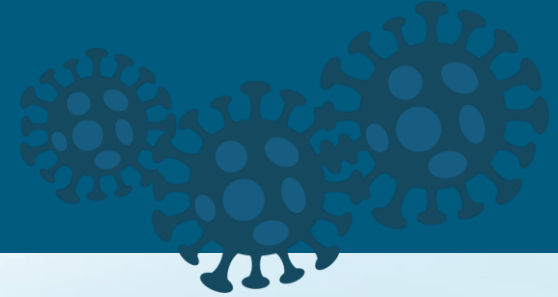


ISC - Alberta Region COVID-19 Daily Update for Chiefs: April 14, 2020



Updates

Community Indigenous Supports Fund Update:

We understand the need to receive funding quickly to begin utilizing your allocation of the Community Indigenous Supports Fund. ISC created the amendments to your 2020-2021 funding agreements late last week.

You and your administrations should have received amendments over the Easter weekend for review and acceptance. Once ISC receives your approval of the amendment via email we will be making efforts to have funds transferred to your account in the coming days and weeks. Some amendments have already been returned and are with our finance department to process.

Public Service Posters:

These posters, [which are free to download digitally](#), feature the work of Cherokee comic artist Roy Boney Jr., Super Indian creator Arigon Starr, as well as Diné (Navajo) artists Dale Deforest and Vanessa Bowen. If these resonate with you, we encourage you to share with your communities and promote these messages on your social media channels.



Question of the Day

Q: What mental health supports are available to those in First Nations communities?

A: The Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program's Mental Health Counselling (MHC) benefit is intended to provide coverage for professional mental health counselling to complement other mental wellness services that may be available. In response to COVID-19, many offices and providers have transitioned to telepsychology. The NIHB regional office is supporting this practice, and has compiled a list of providers willing to offer telepsychology sessions. All registered First Nations are eligible for this service. If you have members that are not currently seeing a mental health counsellor and are interested in this service, please contact our office at 1-800-232-7301 between 8am and 4pm Monday through Friday and we will assist in connecting you with a provider and arranging a first session.

National Information

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Prevention and risks Measures to support Canadians during the COVID-19 crisis YouTube video](#)

[COVID-19 in Canada: Using data and modelling to inform public health action](#)



Alberta Cases:

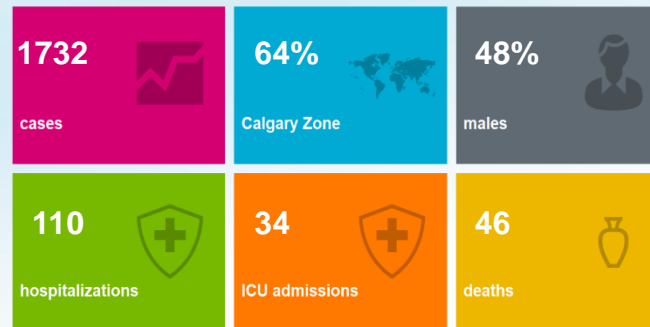
as of April 13 1:30 p.m. MST

AB Total Confirmed (April 13 – 81 new cases)	1732
Confirmed First Nations on-reserve Cases	0
Calgary Zone	1114
Central Zone	74
Edmonton Zone	399
North Zone	105
South Zone	33
Unknown	7
Deaths due to COVID-19	46

Environmental Public Health Teams

ISC-AB's Environmental Public Health Officers continue to provide support to First Nations across Alberta. This support includes help with planning, preparations and assessment of isolation facilities as well as various duties related to drinking water.

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

Weekly Virtual Town Hall Sessions

- FNHMA will be offering a weekly Virtual Town Hall Session every Thursday at 11am. Live stream at www.ihtoday.ca. Questions can be submitted to fnhma@ihtoday.ca

Regional Contact:

A reminder that pandemic plan related information or requests for additional support can be sent to: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca

Preparedness in First Nations communities related to COVID-19

**Briefing to AFN CCOH
April 13, 2020**



COVID-19 – Canadian Context

- As of April 11, 2020, 22,559 cases have been confirmed in Canada, with 600 deaths. This compares to an estimated 3000 - 4000 influenza-related deaths in Canada each year.

Province/Territory	Tested Positive	FN Community-Associated
BC	1410	2
AB	1500	0
SK	285	5
MB	230	0
ON	6648	12
QC	11677	27
NB	112	0
NS	407	0
NL	239	0
PEI	25	0
YT	8	No specific FN breakdown
NWT	5	No specific FN breakdown
NU	0	No specific FN breakdown

Point of Care Testing

Xpert

- American lab-based machine, approved by Health Canada for use in Canada on March 21.
- Working to bring machines to rural hospitals which serve First Nations clients.
- Machine is a rapid, real-time test intended for swabs taken from individuals suspected of COVID-19 by their healthcare provider.

Spartan

- Canadian point of care machine, approved by Health Canada for use in Canada on April 11.
- AB and ON, NWT and the National Microbiology Lab (NML) have placed orders for the Spartan cubes. NML is working with provincial labs to work out ways to support the provision and the training for the use of the handheld Cubes.
- NML is committed to prioritizing their purchase for Indigenous communities so that ISC does not have to purchase them separately. More updates from NML in the coming days.
- Machine could be used in nursing stations or health centres.

National Communications

Update since April 6th Briefing

- Dr. Wong and Dr. Gideon on APTN – weekly interview.
- Town Hall hosted by the First Nations Health Managers Association where Val & Dr Wong participated along with Carol Hopkins and Dr Restoule.
- Minister and Dr. Wong completed a press conference and media briefing on April 11.
- Self screening tool sent out to regions for community use.
- New animation video being prepared on physical distancing.
- Communication re. public health guidelines for funerals, wakes or memorial services to be shared through regional offices.
- Promoted other resources, such as the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs' video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYIzMCJ8ESE>

Funding

- The call for proposals for urban/away-from-community and regional Indigenous organizations and communities closed on April 13, 2020.
- There is information on the ISC website about Ministerial Loan Guarantee payment deferrals; Supports for Indigenous Businesses; individual and family benefits.
- Questions raised on security costs associated with check points:
 - These expenses can be submitted through the Emergency Management Assistance Program, which allows for the temporary hiring of non-healthcare workers.

Infrastructure Update

- ISC is preparing for potential outbreaks in communities by assessing health infrastructure needs and working directly with community on tailored solutions.
- Process is to identify whether communities are able to re-tool existing community space (e.g. schools or band offices) or require new infrastructure to respond to the outbreak.
 - The infrastructure needs are categorized into: (1) medical units for pre-screening/triage; (2) isolation units; and (3) accommodation units.
 - The immediate focus is on the 79 remote and isolated First Nations communities and assessing additional communities as part of ongoing readiness plans.
- As of April 9, 2020, ISC has:
 - Identified 24 communities to re-tool existing community space. These spaces are being equipped with the appropriate provisions based on community need;
 - Partnered with Norway House Cree Nation to purchase 24 BluMed structures for use in Manitoba and Ontario;
 - Partnered with Pasqua First Nation to both ship and install (using local Indigenous work force) an additional 17 mobile medical units for pre-screening/triage; and,
 - Procured 18 accommodation and isolation units (e.g. mobile trailers).

Repurposing Space

- The World Health Organization has a comprehensive document on how to repurposing space for health purposes.
- It is available at: <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/severe-acute-respiratory-infections-treatment-centre>.
- The document offers guidance on how to set up and manage treatment and screening centres in non-hospital based settings. It provides guidance on topics such as:
 - infection prevention and control (IPC);
 - room/building layout and patient flow;
 - ventilation,
 - water and electrical standards;
 - designing areas for treatment/isolation of mild and moderate cases, and;
 - appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Home Made Face Coverings

- PHAC has released guidance on home made face coverings
- Wearing a face covering (for example a homemade cloth mask or a dust mask) in the community **has not been proven to protect the person wearing it**. Wearing a home made face covering is an additional measure you can take **to protect others around you**, even if you have no symptoms. A home made face covering can reduce the chance that others are coming into contact with your respiratory droplets.
- Strict hygiene and public health measures, including frequent hand washing and physical (social) distancing, are still necessary, and will reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus.
- **Home made face coverings should not be placed on:**
 - children under age 2
 - anyone who has trouble breathing
 - anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance
- **If you choose to use a home made face covering:**
 - you must wash your hands immediately before putting it on and immediately after taking it off (in addition to practising good hand hygiene while wearing it)
 - it should fit well (non-gaping)
 - you should not share it with others

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 – Our FNIHB emergency stockpile is for the provision of health care on reserve (including for home and community care workers and family care givers).

2020-04-13 - PPE Shipped and Delivered			
Region	Shipped	Delivered	Total Shipped and Delivered
Atlantic	10	68	78
Quebec	6	29	35
Ontario	31	77	108
Manitoba	52	60	112
Saskatchewan	2	43	45
NITHA	19	21	40
Alberta	4	69	73
BCFNHA	1	3	4
Total	125	370	495

Surge Capacity Supports

- **ISC:** Emergency contracts are in place for nursing (incl. LPNs/RNs) and open to transferred communities. RFP for paramedic services and interdepartmental work with Red Cross are underway.
- **Provinces with ISC support** as required: Ensuring sufficient acute care capacity, such as increasing bed availability or field hospital capacities.
- **Military assistance with Government Operations Committee support:** ISC, First Nations as well as provinces/territories can make a Request for Assistance based on protocol. This can include a request for support of Canadian Rangers, which include:
 - Community wellness checks and assistance verifying and supporting at-risk individuals;
 - Assistance with monitoring of critical infrastructure, incl. transport & distribution of local supplies;
 - Support to local community and territorial COVID-19 awareness programs;
 - Gathering data on community posture/disposition relative to the COVID-19 crisis;
 - Assistance loading, transportation and unloading of humanitarian assistance goods;
 - Assistance to local health authorities (must be provided appropriate PPE) such as:
 - Direction to isolation centers; Assistance with the setup/function of remote clinics; and acting as “runners” to distribute information.

For more information contact:

Valerie Gideon, PhD, Senior ADM

valerie.gideon@canada.ca; 613-219-4104

Tom Wong, MD, Chief Public Officer of Health

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

Appendix A: Updates on Issues Raised at April 7CCOH Meeting

Region	Issue	Response
NS/NL	Suggestion to have a weekly call from the perspective of the AFN	Calls are now weekly
PEI	Has there been any coordinated efforts to reach out through their health partnership mechanisms? what about evacuation with fires and flooding?	Valerie Gideon: Will connect you with your respective FNIHB lead. Program Response 04/12/20: ISC-FNIHB working closely with colleagues at ISC EM program in planning for upcoming flood and fire season. Building on past experience evacuating during a TB outbreak.
ON	Many communities do not have pandemic plans. They need some kind of planning, and need to develop these while people are planning. They need resources to make these plans while they are already beginning to enact measures.	Valerie Gideon: Agrees and states most communities do have a health emergency plan. They just need to be revised or tailored to this specific situation. Manitoba is currently undergoing a virtual training with the Red Cross.
SK	Can we have testing kits available for First Nations?	Dr. Kahn: they work closely with province. In terms of testing sites and access, there are 3 provincial sites established. Also exploring with rural and remote regions, and they are in touch. They have 11 nursing stations, and they certainly are able to test in the north. For remaining south central areas, working with communities. Fort Qu'appelle hospital already testing. Working with neighboring communities to equip with testing capabilities. Working with some independent bands that can help. Nursing team working closely with primary care sites that have the testing capacity.
AB	Food sovereignty issue--supply chain management of food availability	Program Response 04/12/20: ISC had a discussion with Parks Canada on this issue to ensure existing arrangements would be maintained with partnering communities. ISC sent out a 4 pager on how to access the supports for families, workers and businesses and will continue to work with communities to raise awareness about types of supports available to supplement lost income. Some Jordan's Principle requests received specific to household food security. GoC is also closely monitoring supply chains, to make sure communities have intact mechanisms to get supplies.

Appendix A: continued

Updates on Issues Raised at April 7 CCOH Meeting

AB	There is a lack of testing kits available to us	Program Response 04/12/20: ISC-FNIHB working closely with Health Canada and PHAC as new Point of Care testing is approved for use in Canada. Swab test kits provided by PTs, and ISC-FNIHB working with NML to secure a small amount to have on hand in case of urgent need
YK	Yukon is in a unique position as there is not a specific FNIHB CMO for the Yukon, we have a shared resource. How do we better connect into the resources and network required?	Valerie Gideon: in a pandemic situation, communities should send in their request to the federal office and the territorial government. It won't be up to the communities to navigate these things: just send in the requests. We will work with territorial governments to meet needs, ultimately that's what matters. The whole country is working collaboratively.
NWT	Funding for the bands in his region? Many of the communities don't have any pandemic planning, but they do have emergency plans, so how do they incorporate COVID-19 pandemic into these plans?	There is a remote and isolated working group, which will provide advice to the special advisory committee focused on addressing unique challenges to these more remote communities. Looking at purchasing, storage and shipment of supplies beyond what local stores are able to do on their own. They started with northern stores, but think they can do something more systemic with the territorial governments.
BC	BC is facing a shortage of masks which is very discouraging for communities.	Valerie Gideon: ISC/FNIHB is working on replenishing their stock pile of protective equipment's and masks. FNIHB encourages that requests come to them.
BC	BC is working to see what they can do to promote wide scale testing in communities.	N/A
BC	There are a lot of questions about occupational health and safety. FNHA is struggling with occupational health functions and how to address these concerns.	There might be value in having a group of experts that could support advice on occupational health concerns.
NWT	Worried about long-term funding and provision supplies. They have not been advised on what might be available for funding in the NWT so it waiting to hear about that.	Lack of inclusivity for emergency management assistance program. However, if Yukon or NWT need particular assistance then jurisdictional troubles should not get in the way –Yukon and NWT should bring these concerns forward for discussion. Regional and community based allocations are currently be broken down. There is flexibility granted for communities to use leftover monies from existing programs for COVID-19 related activities. Further, they can always send in additional requests for new funding. The 215M is inclusive of all communities, especially those in the north.

Appendix A: Updates on Issues Raised at April 7CCOH Meeting

ON	Ontario they want to track cases in First Nations and they need FNIHB's help.	Dr. Wong – RC Archibald mentioned need for assistance/support for data tracking and analyst – will reach out to see what epidemiologist support is required here
ON	Who can we contact to get a stockpile of food and supplies in communities?	On supply chain of goods coming into community. This is not information that the Federal gov has. It's fundamental for communities to look at this from a pandemic planning perspective – what are the supply chains, what is necessary, etc. Will ask NIHB to look at supply chains for medications across the country and look at alternative supply options.
QC	Materials are only available in English	Program Response 04/12/20: Noted - will work to ensure all materials translated
QC	Quebec has been told to send PPE requests to regional offices but they want to know when they will get confirmation, and when PPE's will be sent. It's very serious because professionals are refusing to work without PPE's	rapid turnaround time on requests received and shipped out. Rely on Canada Post to distribute and a point person in the community to receive the delivery. Use generic email address for ISC PPE requests.
NFLD/NS	Hand sanitizers and equipment is needed and are not available	Program Response 04/12/20: ISC-FNIHB maintains a PPE stockpile, if access to PPE and hand sanitizer not possible via province, through working with FNIHB-ATL Region to submit a request
NFLD/NS	Mental health is a big concern for people that are living alone during this time – resources for this would be very helpful.	Program Resposne 04/12/20: The Hope for Wellness Help Line offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention to all Indigenous peoples across Canada. First Peoples Wellness Circle coordinating virtual e-consultations access for First Nations Mental Wellness Teams. In BC FNHA, IRS/MMIWG health and cultural support workers are finding new ways to support individuals, families and communities using telehealth, telephone and other social media.
PEI/NB	Request for call information to be shared more broadly re: daily updates	N/A
NB	PPE's are a big issue and 6 communities in NB	[04/07/2020] Part of federal gov initiative to bulk purchase PPE – portion specifically set aside for First Nations and managed by ISC. Requests are continually accepted from communities for PPE Valerie Gideon: Part of federal gov initiative to bulk purchase PPE – portion specifically set aside for First Nations.

Appendix A: Updates on Issues Raised at April 7CCOH Meeting

NB	EMO team –questions about makeshift or ‘pop-up’ hospitals, what this would look like, who funds it, where do supplies come from	[04/07/2020] HQ is looking at Infrastructure options, will be based on community need and some are being bulk purchased at HQ
QC	Materials and information translated into French from public health officials is always a problem.	[04/07/2020] Regional office has committed to supporting more translation of documentation.
QC	7 out of 14 nurses are in isolation in one community – so the health staff is not readily available. Human resources is a problem.	[04/07/2020] Emergency contracts for nurses includes transfers for FN. Also working on paramedic contracts in ON and MB. In place in Alberta. Valerie Gideon: emergency contracts for nurses includes transfers for FN
ON	How is FNIHB tracking numbers?	[04/07/2020] Canada will not disclose community info, as there is a risk to personal identity . P/T are not tracking things the same in every region, but P/T gov would notify medical officer and medical officer notifies the health director. Valerie Gideon: Gov will not disclose community info, as there is a risk to personal identity Dr. Wong P/T are not tracking things the same but P/T gov would notify medical officer and medical officer notifies
ON	We need to figure out ways that the information we are sharing is backed up by known sources.	[04/07/2020] ISC works to include sources in all reference documents.
MB	Late reporting on funding is a concern, PTOs, tribal councils have redirected their focus to pandemic planning.	[04/07/2020] Notice was sent out to clarify that there will be an extension granted for reporting requirements.
MB	Submitted a letter to seek flexibility on deliverables and having a written response is important because there seems to be some discrepancies.	[04/07/2020] Notice was sent out about funding to clarify, extension to reporting requirements granted and will be sending out communication on the extended date. Valerie Gideon: notice was sent out about funding to clarify, extension to reporting requirements granted and will be sending out communication on the extended date
MB	Confusion with respect to guidelines, particularly with isolation tents. Some communities are wondering if tents are for sick people, or those who ‘may’ be sick, etc. We need best practices for guidelines here.	[04/07/2020] Masks: will follow up on best practices around use. Physical isolation spaces: Infrastructure modification request, plus requests for hotels to isolate are being approved Valerie Gideon: Masks: will follow up on best practices around use. Physical isolation spaces: Infrastructure modification request, plus requests for hotels to isolate are being approved
MB	What is the plan for outbreaks in remote and isolated communities, small communities and larger communities?	[04/07/2020] Isolation tent guidelines – multiple infrastructure options depending on needs and will share a 1 pager for CCOH Valerie Gideon: Isolation tent guidelines – multiple infrastructure options depending on needs and will share a 1 pager for CCOH

Appendix A: Updates on Issues Raised at April 7CCOH Meeting

MB	Request for a Letter stating that Canada is fully equipped to help FN in a pandemic or outbreak in communities. Also want to see pandemic plan	<p>[04/07/2020] Canada works with individual FN to develop plans, but does keep a resource repository of current public health guidelines, manages the PPE stockpile, and produces national communications to support communities to implement plans. 2009 On-Reserve First Nations Annex to Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan is the basis for ISC's role in pandemic planning and response. A specific COVID-19 Response Plan was developed by the Government Operations Centre with ISC as a key partner. This portion of the report is being updated and will be shared with CCOH, and the AFN Executive including specific scenarios requested based on population size.</p> <p>Valerie Gideon: can pull something together and present to CCOH</p>
MB	Request to see a guarantee from Canada that food security is not going to be an issue	<p>[04/07/2020] Canada is closely monitoring supply chains to ensure that food supplies remain in tact. Working across Departments to ensure integrity of transportation</p>
AB	Food security concerns – Chronic Wasting Disease warning and moose have bugs right now, making it difficult to hunt.	<p>[04/07/2020] Will issue public health guidance.</p>
AB	Child welfare – what's happening to our children at the moment? What are the procedures around contact right now?	<p>[04/07/2020] NAC update on COVID-19. Literature review on CFS and pandemics posted on fnwitness.ca. Other guidance can be provided.</p>
BC	tents – are they for isolation, testing? Can they be converted to housing?	<p>[04/07/2020] Structures can be converted to housing, depending on type of structure. Infrastructure is looking at multiple options.</p>