

AFN Alberta COVID-19 Daily Bulletin



Thursday, May 21

AFN Alberta is summarizing updates and information we are receiving on our website. All our previous bulletins can be found on this page as well: <http://www.afnab.ca/News-and-Events/Coronavirus>.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

AB Testing Results	May 20	May 21	Change
Individuals Tested	221,571	225,588	+4,017
Total Positive	6,735	6,768	+33
Active	1,004	926	-78
Fatalities	128	132	+4
Recoveries	5,637	5,710	+73
<u>COVID-19 Regional Data for Alberta</u> Calgary zone - 4,675 Edmonton zone - 524 Central zone - 99 South zone - 1,216 North zone - 230 Unidentified zone - 24		<u>COVID-19 in Alberta First Nations* (as of May 21)</u> Calgary Zone - 19 North Zone - 4 South Zone - 6 Unidentified zone - 9	

New Measures

- On Tuesday, it was announced the border closure would continue to be in place for another 30 days in an agreement between Canada and the United States.
- The province is now allowing **outdoor** gatherings of 50 or more, provided that 2m physical distancing can be followed, and people are not sharing food or drinks.
 - Indoor gatherings are still limited to no more than 15 people.
- **A fire ban continues to be in place for provincial parks and protected areas and on public land.** Alberta says this will allow emergency resources to remain focused on COVID-19, and not putting out human-caused wildfires and supporting community evacuations.
- **Provincial campgrounds remain closed, but day use in provincial parks is permitted.** Alberta will reopen campgrounds with limited capacity on June 1.
- Some national parks will also be reopening June 1, with physical distancing measures in effect.

First Nation-specific Updates

- **Today**, the government announced an additional \$75 million in new funding for organizations that address the critical needs of Indigenous peoples in urban centres and off-reserve.
- A First Nations toolkit for food security during COVID-19 was published by the BC First Nations Health Authority. [Click here](#) to view it.
- First Nation health directors, leaders, and technicians can contact “[InfoPoint](#)” to request information about their COVID-19-related questions at 1-855-446-2719 or InfoPoint@fnhma.ca from Monday to Friday, 6 am to 6 pm MT
- ISC-AB will be hosting the following Chiefs call for the remainder of the month:
 - 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 27 –Treaty 6, 7 and 8 All Chiefs Call
- Minister Miller confirmed Canada **will not** ban Sundances or other spiritual ceremonies during the pandemic.
- ISC is tracking the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 on First Nations on their website. The numbers are updated Monday to Friday. [Click here](#) to view the webpage.
- **Service Canada has a dedicated toll-free phone line for First Nations members needing help with their CERB applications. Call 1-877-631-2657**

National and Regional Updates

- Canada Emergency Student Benefit applications opened **Last Friday. Students who have not filed taxes will have to contact CRA to register their Social Insurance Number.**
- The Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy has been **extended** through the summer to give businesses the confidence to rehire and even grow their businesses during this time.
- Seniors will receive a one-time boost to Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement payments to a maximum of \$500 to deal with the added pressures and costs of COVID-19.
- Canada created a web portal to help businesses find a wide range of COVID-19 support and other programs and services. [Click here](#) for the new tool.

INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS FOR FIRST NATIONS

New Funding Measures

[Prime Minister announces additional support for Indigenous peoples living in urban centres and off reserve](#)

Prime Minister Trudeau announced \$75 million in new funding for Indigenous organizations providing services to Indigenous peoples in urban centres and off reserve. Details on funding allocation and rollout are forthcoming.

Canada's \$350 million Emergency Community Support Fund opens.

The Emergency Community Support Fund supports community organizations helping vulnerable people during the COVID-19 crisis. Community organizations may apply for funds through either the Canadian Red Cross, Community Foundations of Canada or the United Way Centraide network.

- Non-profit organizations may apply to the Canadian Red Cross' national portal [here](#).
- Registered charities and other qualified donees may apply to Community Foundations of Canada's national portal [here](#) or to their local United Way Centraide (check the United Way Centraide Canada's website [here](#) for information on how to apply).

Community organizations of both types can apply to the Canadian Red Cross for training and equipment to help their staff and volunteers prevent disease transmission.

You can find more information on the Emergency Community Support Fund's [website](#). If you would like to learn more, you can register to join one of three webinars:

- 12:00 pm MT, May 21, 2020. English. [Register here](#).
- 9:00 am MT, May 22, 2020. French. [Register here](#).
- 9:00 am MT, May 25, 2020. English. [Register here](#).

****NEW* COVID-19 Food Security Toolkit for First Nations***

Relevant link: [Planning for Food Security: A Toolkit for the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

The BC First Nations Health Authority published a toolkit to support First Nations in planning for food security during the pandemic. While this is written from a BC perspective, there are helpful considerations on ideas and areas of action that are relevant for all First Nations. [Click here](#) to view the toolkit.

Updates from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

COVID-19 ISC-AB and Treaty-Area Chiefs Call Schedule for May

ISC-AB will be hosting the following Chiefs call for the remainder of the month:

3:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 27 –Treaty 6, 7 and 8 All-Chiefs Call

Chiefs are encouraged to continue sending requests to Dean Janvier and ISC-AB will structure these calls to make sure they are providing the information that is most important to leadership.

****NEW* May 21 Bulletin:***

ISC Alberta Region is sending updates twice weekly to leadership on the current COVID-19 situation and response. Today's bulletin (May 19) is attached. It includes the following information:

- Updated Indigenous Awareness Resources on ISC Website
- Health Canada Approves Trial for Potential COVID Vaccine
- Scheduled Immunization procedures during COVID-19
- Canada Child Benefit Payment Increase

Also attached is a one page flowchart to help determine individual eligibility for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) that was previously distributed by ISC but is being circulated again after feedback from communities.

Thursday, May 21 | 1:30 to 3:00 pm | Weekly COVID-19 Telehealth Call

A weekly telehealth call on COVID-19 was held for First Nation health centre staff to talk through possible scenarios and ask FNIHB staff questions. Outstanding questions can be submitted to VChelp@FNTN.ca

InfoPoint by the First Nations Health Managers Association (FNHMA)

[InfoPoint](#) is a convenient and accessible help desk for COVID-19 related information for First Nations' health managers. It is available from 6 am – 6 pm MT, Monday to Friday. You can contact InfoPoint at 1-855-446-2719 to talk to a real person, or email your questions to InfoPoint@fnhma.ca

Call for Input: Global Report on Impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous Peoples

Relevant Link: [Call for inputs - Report of the Special Rapporteur Indigenous Rights](#)

The UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous rights is calling for input into a global report about how COVID-19 is impacting Indigenous peoples. [Click here](#) for the full details of the request. The UN is accepting responses to a questionnaire from “member states, Indigenous peoples representatives bodies and organisations, civil society actors, health workers and agencies, national human rights institutions and other stakeholders, to contribute to the preparation of his report. Responses can be submitted to indigenous@ohchr.org by 15 June 2020.

CALL & MEETING SUMMARIES

May 21 | AFN National Executive Meeting

The National Executive met with Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett, Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller, and Fisheries and Oceans Minister Bernadette Jordan. Regional Chief Poitras asked leadership in the region for input on the issues she should raise. As she only had 3 minutes, she did her best to summarize common issues Chiefs raised. AFN Alberta will endeavour to seek a response from the Ministers' Office to the questions Chiefs submitted this week. **Key highlights:**

Meeting with Ministers Bennett and Miller

- [National Chief Bellegarde](#) pressed for updates on priorities identified in the Speech From the Throne including the planned UNDRIP legislation, establishing a National Treaty Commissioner's Office, full implementation of the *Indigenous Languages Act* and the child welfare legislation, the MMIWG national action plan that was supposed to be tabled this summer, day scholars' settlement, and Canada's goal to close the infrastructure gaps by 2030.
- The [Regional Chiefs](#) touched on the following issues.
 - **Policing and law enforcement issues** that the pandemic has highlighted, particularly with the challenges First Nations' face in enforcing their bylaws, BCRs, and border closures. Many called for First Nations policing to be

considered an essential service, immediate funding for security (related to COVID-19 measures), and direct funding to be provided for First Nations policing and law development.

- The need for **First Nations to be fully involved with provinces and Canada in discussions about economic relaunch and recovery plans.**
- The substantial loss of revenues First Nation-owned casinos are facing, and **the need for financial relief for First Nation-owned businesses.**
- **The famine and pestilence clauses of some numbered Treaties that guarantees full protection for First Nation during situations like this current pandemic from Canada.** RC Cameron called on the government to take responsibility and fully fund all aspects of Treaty Nations' pandemic planning and response.
- **The need for a strategy and funding on mental wellness post-COVID-19.**
- **The need to address outstanding infrastructure gaps,** especially housing, so that First Nations don't need to worry about not having adequate housing and infrastructure when emergency situations like a pandemic arise.
- Minister Miller said Canada can't replace revenue streams for **any** business, but can provide relief for employees and programs. **Their original corporate support Canada announced was not intended to exclude First Nation owned-businesses. Regulatory changes were required. They have now fixed it to make them eligible.**
- On policing, Minister Miller reminded the Executive that he is mandated to improve First Nations policing and make it an essential service. **He indicated a willingness to work with First Nations, policing authorities, and provincial solicitors/attorneys general to realize a way forward on policing and enforcement of First Nation laws, post-COVID.**
- The economic rebuild requires deeper thought and reflection of where we are going. First Nations should not have to face another pandemic under the current conditions. Miller recognized the need to develop and accelerate critical infrastructure like housing, hospitals, policing.
- **Progress on C-92 has slowed down because they don't yet have a budget to ensure adequate funding.** That said, if a community decides to chart their own, distinct path forward on CFS, outside of the proposed process in C92, they will engage with them on it. The legislation affirms a Nation's right to do this.

Meeting with Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Minister Jordan

- The Regional Chiefs touched on the following broad issues:
 - The **need for fisheries regulations to be applied in a way that truly respects First Nations' rights** to fish and care for their lands and waters.
 - The **need for First Nations to co-manage fisheries,** conservation solutions, and water habitats, and be active participants in policy-making that impacts their rights.
 - **Ensuring First Nation commercial fishers are eligible for the suite of financial aid programs Canada announced last week for fisheries.**

- Minister Jordan stated that they do not want to compromise First Nation rights to fish. They have been granted to you and are legally enshrined. The Minister wants to support the exercise of those rights.
- **First Nation inland commercial fishers are eligible for the fisheries supports announced last week.** DFO will do what they can to get these supports out quickly. They can work directly with communities on applications.
 - If fishers' EI runs out, they can apply to CERB. Recognizing that there will be a decline in income for fisheries this year, fishers will be able to apply for EI based on last season's earnings instead of this year's.
 - A dedicated call centre will answer questions regarding aid for fishers.

RC Poitras' comments to Ministers Bennett and Miller:

- RC Poitras highlighted the **jurisdictional issues around health**, and how the interplay between FNIHB and AHS caused a lot of response delays early on. **Canada has a responsibility to address these issues because First Nations in Alberta have a Treaty right to Health.**
- **Chiefs in Treaty 7 are requesting an urgent meeting with the Ministers** to address their needs as they continue to deal with outbreaks.
- **Nations want to know if there's funding to support them in creating solutions for food security and sovereignty.**
- She also pressed for an **overhaul of the First Nations emergency management regime**, and the need to fund First Nations directly for their own emergency management.
- She **asked Minister Miller if he and Minister Blair connected with him to find additional funds to support the community's security and checkpoint costs.** Minister Blair committed to following-up with Minister Miller on this during the Regional Chief's meeting with Blair.
- The Regional Chief noted that a big reason for Nations feeling unprepared when this pandemic first began is due to the infrastructure issues many communities face. She pressed for support in addressing the need for more housing, health care facilities, and other critical infrastructure.

RC Poitras' Comments to Minister Jordan (the Minister committed to having an official follow-up on these questions directly. AFN Alberta will forward the region responses once they are received).

- A recent Transport Canada report for the Athabasca River forecasted major changes for the Athabasca River from climate change and industrial activities. ***Will you task an official to start working with Transport Canada and Indigenous communities to get ahead of these impacts and identify co-management and monitoring options?***
- The oil sands region has unique challenges for fish and fish habitat. The updates to the *Fisheries Act* create or improve tools for co-management of fish and fish habitat with Indigenous groups and confirm the importance of Treaty-based approaches. ***Will DFO support a region-specific approach to co-management under the updated Act?***

- The Indigenous communities in Fort Chipewyan are developing a new research and monitoring institution that will have created a lot of opportunities for coordination with DFO research projects and other activities under the Act. **Can you task an official to work with the communities to develop a partnership approach?**
- The Alberta Energy Regulator unilaterally suspended monitoring requirements indefinitely in response to industry concerns about Covid-19 and contactor safety. This includes monitoring for toxic materials that can have chronic health effects on fish and fish habitat. **Have you been briefed on these changes, and what steps will you take to fill the gaps in monitoring and protection of fish and fish habitat that Alberta has now created?**
- There is work ongoing in Environment and Climate Change Canada to develop effluent regulations under the Fisheries Act. This has the potential to adversely impact Treaty rights, which would trigger the Duty to Consult. However, there is no clear process for co-development or consultation for developing these regulations. **How will you ensure that Canada meets its fiduciary duty to consult, in a way that reflects the new co-management provisions of the Fisheries Act? How will you ensure that impacts to Treaty rights are fully considered, mitigated and accommodated?**

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL UPDATES

Summaries and information of the following can be found in the update below.

- **Canada's COVID-19 Update - May 21**
- **Alberta's COVID-19 Update - May 21**

Canada's COVID-19 Update - May 21

Relevant Links: [Federal Ministers and Health Officials COVID-19 Update](#)
[PM Announces \\$75M in New Aid for Indigenous People Living Off-Reserve](#)
 News Release: [Official announcement for Off-Reserve Indigenous](#)

PM Trudeau gave his daily address to Canadians today from outside his home in Ottawa. Following this, Dr. Tam, Minister Miller and Colleagues gave the Federal Ministers and Health Officials COVID-19 update. **Key Highlights:**

- There are now 80,555 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Canada including 6,062 deaths. 41,108 (51%) of cases have now recovered, and labs have tested over 1,377,000 individuals with about 5% returning positive, for an average of 28,000 tests daily.
- **Today**, the government announced an additional \$75 million in new funding for organizations that address the critical needs of Indigenous peoples in urban centres and off-reserve.
 - This will be distributed through previous applicants to the Indigenous Community Support Fund which was well oversubscribed - allocating funds to those that did not receive through previous rounds, or additional funding to those who received

partial funding from the original \$15 million.

Additional Information

- Those businesses that find themselves ineligible for CEWS or CEBA are encouraged to reach out to their regional development agency to receive help (Western Economic Diversification for Alberta).

Alberta's COVID-19 Update - May 21

Relevant Link: [Alberta Update on COVID-19](#)

Dr. Deena Hinshaw gave the Thursday update on COVID-19 statistics in the province of Alberta. **Key Highlights:**

- 5,710 cases of COVID-19 have now recovered. There are 926 active cases in the province. 59 individuals are hospitalized with 6 of these in the ICU. On testing 4,017 individuals, Alberta Identified 33 new cases in the last 24 hours. 4 additional deaths were reported today, all were residents of Calgary Continuing Care Facilities.
 - The average age of those deceased from COVID-19 is 82.
 - Cargill now has only 5 active cases, and JBS has only 10.
- Progress on Alberta's relaunch plan will still rely on Alberta's ability to keep infection rates low as public health measures are relaxed.