

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

Bulletin to First Nations in Ontario: March 14, 2020

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch ON Region

The situation is rapidly evolving and Public Health Ontario, along with the Ministry of Health, is closely monitoring the outbreak, conducting surveillance and appropriate laboratory testing, and providing public health and infection control guidance.

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE – DR MAURICA MAHER

COVID19 is a new coronavirus, which causes acute respiratory illness and is currently causing a pandemic. A pandemic means that the virus has spread to multiple countries. The majority of people who fall ill with the virus experience mild symptoms, however a small portion of people experience more severe disease. The people who are at risk of more severe disease include the elderly and people with other medical conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and lung diseases such as COPD or asthma.

FNIHB Ontario is following the guidance for public health advice and testing issued by the Ministry of Health of Ontario. This is to be aligned with the rest of the health care system in Ontario. FNIHB is providing weekly updates on the COVID-19 situation. The communicable disease team is prepared to follow-up on cases, manage contacts and consult on any questions that healthcare providers in community may have. We are coordinating the response to the COVID-19 situation with local public health units and other community partners. ISC continues to work with the government of Canada on the supply issue with PPE. All efforts to acquire more PPE supplies are being pursued.

Testing is available for anyone meeting the Ministry of Health's criteria. It is important to note that the criteria at this time means a person with symptoms of fever (over 38 degrees Celsius) and/or onset of cough or worsening of a chronic cough. Testing people without symptoms is NOT indicated. We should all support the appropriate use of healthcare resources so that we have enough for the duration of the COVID-19 situation in Canada.

Other measures First Nations can take to reduce the spread of COVID-19 are limit large gatherings, social distancing, and avoiding contact with people who are at risk.

The governments of Canada and Ontario are advising the people of Ontario to avoid all non-essential travel outside of Canada until further notice.

Additional information about the situation in Ontario can be found on the [Ministry of Health website](#). The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is closely monitoring the



spread of COVID-19 in other countries. Please consult the destination page on travel.gc.ca for the [latest travel advice](#).

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE – SHARI GLENN, NP (PHC)

FNIHB is working with nurses and paramedics in community to ensure appropriate response and is looking at staffing resources as well as plans in the event that healthcare providers become ill.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

As part of COVID-19 pandemic preparedness and response, the FNIHB Ontario Regional Office is asking communities to complete a quick environmental scan to assess the readiness of community pandemic and/or communicable disease emergency plans as well as other related items. The Environmental Scan of Pandemic Readiness is attached in this email.

The feedback we receive will help to identify gaps in communicable disease emergency preparedness planning. Communicable Disease Emergency Plan development may be available to First Nation communities that require assistance. This support could be provided through a variety of methods including teleconferences, Webex and in person were indicated. Please complete the information in the attached document and return it to sac.covid-19fnihbontario.isc@canada.ca or by fax at (613) 948-9253 **by March 20th or as soon as possible**.

Updates and additional Information

Public Health Agency of Canada – 2019 novel coronavirus: Outbreak update
Outbreak <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

PHAC - Risk-informed decision-making for mass gatherings during COVID-19 global outbreak
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/mass-gatherings-risk-assesment.html>

Ministry of Health Ontario - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>

World Health Organization – Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

Indigenous Services Canada COVID-19 Updates available in several languages –
<https://www.gotinfo.ca/ISCInfo>

Indigenous Services Canada – Ontario Region has set up a generic intake email if First Nations Chiefs and Health Director across Ontario have specific COVID-19 questions about any emerging situation in your community. This email address is: sac.covid-19fnihbontario.isc@canada.ca. This is a secure email that will be monitored on regular basis.

Public Health Guidance for schools (K-12) and childcare programs –

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professional/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html>

Previous information bulletins and additional information and resources for health staff can be found at [Onehealth.ca](https://onehealth.ca)