

Summary Report of the Ontario Regional Chief (as of April 17, 2020)

Please find a summary of highlights from this week. Numerous conference calls were held with all levels of government including: Minister Indigenous Services Canada Marc Miller, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Christine Elliott, Solicitor General Sylvia Jones, Minister of Energy, Mines, Northern Development and Indigenous Affairs Greg Rickford, Minister of Education Stephen Lecce; OPP Commissioner Thomas Carrique, COO Leadership Council, Ontario Ministry of Emergency Operations Centre, Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, and FNIHB. Although these were separate conference calls there are recurring topics throughout all of the calls. These will be highlighted throughout this summary.

DAILY/WEEKLY COVID-19 UPDATES April 13, 2020 to April 17 2020

Date/Time	Call-Meeting	Information
Monday	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY
Tuesday		
9:00 am	Emergency Management Office/FNIHB	Emergency Operations Command Centre
10:30 am	CCOH Meeting AFN	AFN response
12:30 pm	RNAO & COO	Joint working group meeting
1:00 pm	ORC Research	Staff planning meeting
4:00 pm	ORC Research Meeting	Internal COO response
Wednesday		
9:00 am	Emergency Management Office/FNIHB	Emergency Operations Command Centre
11:00 am	Leadership Council	ORC Office – Update LC
1:00 pm	RNAO & COO	Joint working group meeting
4:30 pm	COO Health Sector Staff	Prep Call for LC Meeting
Thursday		
9:00 am	Emergency Management Office/FNIHB	Emergency Operations Command Centre
10:30 am	Leadership Council and Chiefs	ORC Office – Update LC
1:30 pm	COO Health and ORC	Follow Up Call after LC Meeting
3:00 pm	ORC Staff	Check In's and Updates
4:00 pm	ISC	Ontario Region update
Friday		
9:00 am	Emergency Management Office/FNIHB	Emergency Operations Command Centre
10:00 am	ORC Staff	Working group meeting
1:00 pm	ORC Staff	Special Project Briefing
2:00 pm	Emergency Management/Services	AFN response
4:00 pm	COVID-19 update	ISC/FNIHB response

COVID-19 CASES AND PREVENTION

COVID-19 continues to spread globally, throughout Canada:

- Numbers of confirmed cases in municipalities that serve as regional hubs and referral centres to our First Nations are growing.
- Lac des Iles mine North of Thunder Bay will be shutting down operations, after eleven of their employees tested positive for COVID-19, two of whom are Whitesand First Nation members.
- There are four new confirmed cases on-reserve (all within the Thunder Bay District Health Unit) and two confirmed cases off-reserve:
 - Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek (AZA), 1 case
 - Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek (Gull Bay), 1 case
 - Whitesand First Nation, 2 cases
- Other communities previously reporting include Kettle and Stony Point FN (3), Six Nations (9), Akwesasne (1) and Eabametoong (1)
- **On-reserve:**
 - 18 confirmed cases
 - 1 death
 - 9 recovering/resolved
- **Off-reserve:**
 - 4 confirmed cases
 - 1 death

PROVINCIAL MEASURES TO CONTAIN SPREAD OF COVID-19

- The Ontario government extended its state of emergency to May 12, 2020.
- Creating a new health data platform called the Pandemic Threat Response (PANTHR), which will hold secure health data to allow researchers to better support health system planning and responsiveness, including the immediate need to analyze the current COVID-19 outbreak.

FEDERAL MEASURES RESPONDING TO COVID-19

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau noted that the measures to flatten the curve may be in place for as long as December 2020 such as:

- Maintaining border closures with the exception of essential goods and services.

On Thursday April 16, 2020, Indigenous Affairs Minister Marc Miller, introduced a temporary regulatory option to allow First Nations to delay their elections during the COVID-19 pandemic: The *First Nations Election Cancellation and Postponement Regulations*, which:

- Allows First Nations leaders to continue exercising their roles and duties within their communities for up to six months, with a potential extension for an additional six months; and
- Final decision to proceed rests with the First Nations.

PANDEMIC PLANNING

First Nations continue to build their plans, while 90 pandemic plans have been completed to date.

Political Territorial Organizations and Independent First Nations also have regional strategy, in particular:

- Anishinabek Nation is developing pandemic plan for their communities with built in flexibility
- Nishnawbe Aski Nation established a trilateral table made up of First Nations, Provincial and Federal partners. They have also developed a regional pandemic plan which will be released shortly

THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Number of COVID-19 in hospitals: 829

Number of COVID-19 cases in ICU: 245

Number of COVID-19 on a ventilator: 200

We still have 79% ventilator capacity in the system

The province has significantly expanded hospital capacity in preparation for any COVID-19 outbreak scenario by adding:

- 1,035 acute care beds;
- 1,492 critical care beds;
- Increased staff available to care for a sudden surge in patients;
- Adopted new emergency measures providing flexibility focusing on protecting seniors, people with disabilities and the homeless;
- Is in the process of significantly expanding and enhancing its testing capacity to proactively testing the priority groups including:
 - Hospital inpatients; residents of long-term care and retirement homes; remote, isolated, rural and Indigenous communities; homeless shelters, prisons and group homes; pregnant women and newborns.
- Expects to double the number of tests processed each day to 8,000 by April 15, 2020 and 14,000 by April 29, 2020, at which point overall lab capacity will have been further expanded; and
- Implemented a new emergency response system at Long Term Care and Retirement Homes, which have been hardest hit by COVID-19 including:
 - Having a response plan implemented within hours of a declared outbreak: and
 - Restricting health care staff from working at more than one LTC or retirement home.

OFF-RESERVE COMMUNITY MEMBERS – CONCERNS

Ontario government has created a list of services for off-reserve community members, which can be accessed by contacting Ontario Ministry of Indigenous Affairs. Minister Greg Rickford has indicated he is willing to set up a call with First Nations to address this issue specifically.

EMERGING ISSUES

As warmer months begin, cottagers, tourists and recreational hunters/fishers are still ignoring pleas of First Nations to stay home, which is a call for signage and enforcement.

Calls for ethnic-based reporting on how the COVID-19 virus is affecting Indigenous and other people of colour in the province's reporting and how they acquire data will help identify inequities in services as well as with advocacy efforts. This may become an important component of the province's PANTHR initiative.

WEEKLY LEADERSHIP COUNCIL TELECONFERENCES - A REMINDER

As you know, every Thursday at 10:30 we host a teleconference call with the Leadership Council and Chiefs to address issues of the Ontario region. We are instituting a solutions-based approach:

- 1) Please email your questions in advance of the weekly meeting to:
COVID19@coo.org
- 2) Questions must be submitted by **Tuesday at 5:00pm**
- 3) We will summarize questions and send to the relevant ministry
- 4) Where possible, questions will be addressed by the Minister or bureaucracy immediately
- 5) If questions can't be immediately answered, then follow-up will occur

We are implementing this process to create more space for the Chiefs as we acknowledge that not all Chiefs can join and some are experiencing connectivity issues. As before I will still open the floor for questions on the call as well.