

Preparedness in First Nations communities related to COVID-19

**Briefing to AFN
March 31, 2020**



COVID-19 – Canadian Context

- As of March 30, 2020, 7,437 cases have been confirmed in Canada, with 66 death. This compares to an estimated 3000 - 4000 influenza-related deaths in Canada each year.

Province/Territory	Confirmed Cases	Community-associated First Nations Cases
BC	960	0
AB	690	0
SK	175	2
MB	96	0
ON	1706	3
QC	3403	6
NB	68	0
NS	127	0
NL	148	0
PEI	18	0
YT	5	0
NWT	1	0
NU	0	0

National Communications

Update since March 23 Briefing

- ISC continues to update web content and develop social media as well as share PHAC's social media.
 - Particular focus on trying to develop materials for youth to explain the importance of physical distancing
 - New guidelines to help communities understand PPE use
- Virtual Townhall with FNHMA, Thunderbird Partnership Foundation and First Peoples' Wellness Circle
- New videos are now online:
 - Video with ISC Chief Nursing Officer – what to expect when being tested; etc.
 - Video Q&A – with Valerie Gideon and Eskasoni Chief Leroy.
 - Video with ADM Kapelus, ISC - how to access services and benefits

Funding

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND

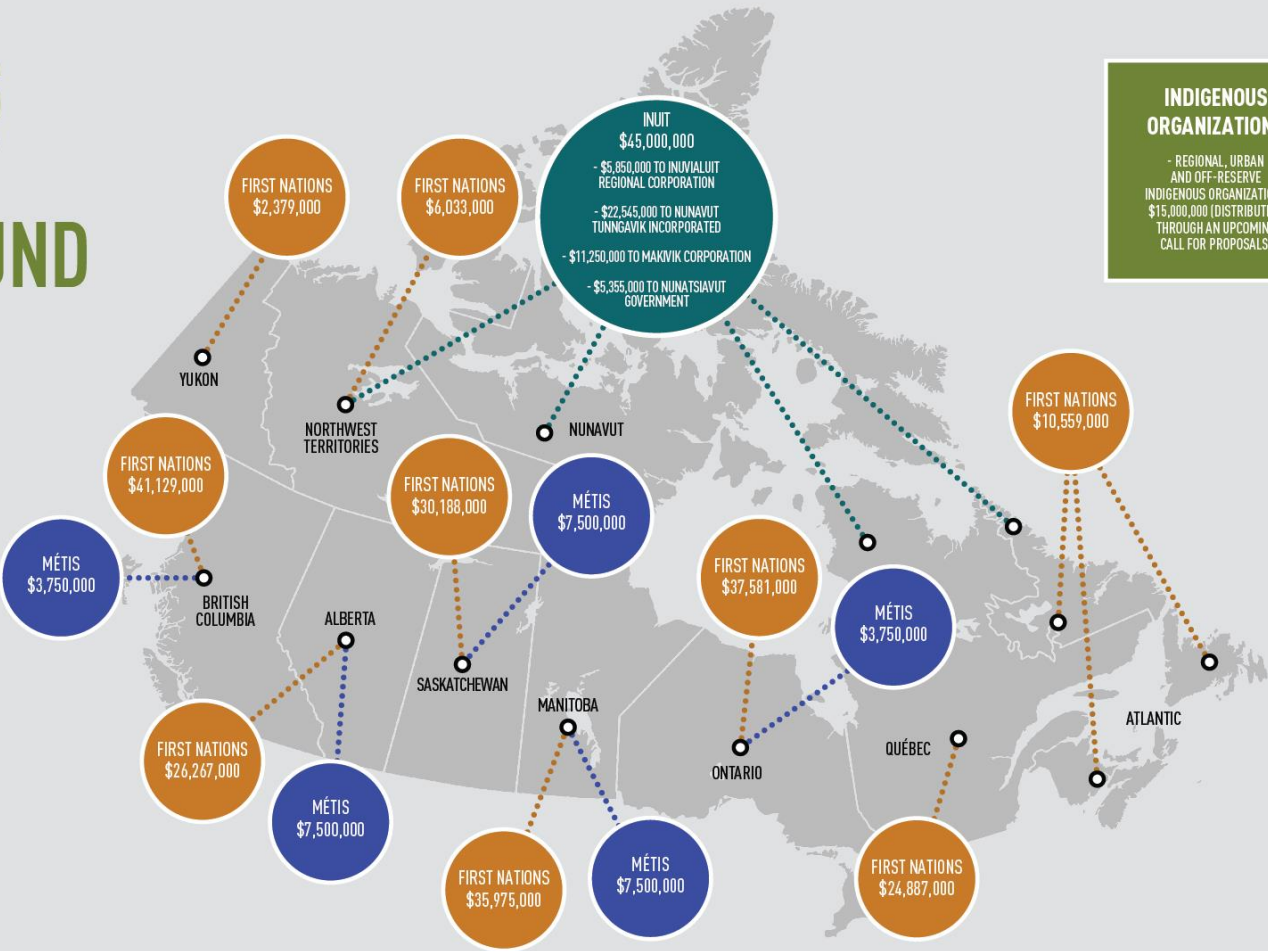
\$305,000,000

BREAKDOWN

- First Nations \$215,000,000
- Inuit \$45,000,000
- Métis \$30,000,000

INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS

- REGIONAL, URBAN AND OFF-RESERVE INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS \$15,000,000 (DISTRIBUTION THROUGH AN UPCOMING CALL FOR PROPOSALS)



[CANADA.CA/CORONAVIRUS-INFO-INDIGENOUS](https://canada.ca/coronavirus-info-indigenous)

Canada

Funding (CTD)

- ISC letters to communities regarding their specific allocation were sent over the weekend.
- Working with CIRNAC to confirm funds for self-governing communities and communities in YK and NWT.
- Collaboration with GNWT to fund on-the-land supports utilizing existing ISC funding.
- Working with ISC Social to develop a quick process for access to \$15M in urban, away-from-community service organizations and funding for on-reserve family violence shelters.

Other Activities Underway

- Once Health Canada has approved Point of Care testing in Canada, ISC will work with the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) to try and bring testing technology closer to remote/isolated communities in the North. Initial outreach to NML has begun.
- Swab tests arriving shortly from NML that will be distributed directly to ISC Regional Offices for FN communities.
- Protocols/guidelines for communities able to administer testing to be released this week.
- Community procurement of accommodations for health providers or vulnerable community members, and first aid trailers.
- Procurement of mobile medical assessment and testing structures to be prepositioned in different regions.
- Procurement of supplies for Home and Community Care program.
- Administrative measures taken to simplify funding commitments, including delays in reporting requirements.

Health HR Surge Capacity

- Establishing surge capacity, with a focus on securing nurses (including practical nurses) and other health care workers (e.g. paramedics) who can go into community to deliver services.
- Include surge capacity for security services in nursing stations.
- ISC has reached out to external partners to identify surge capacity options, including:
 - The Registered Nurses Association of Ontario
 - The Society for Rural Physicians of Canada
 - Red Cross
 - Priority Patient Services (e.g, paramedic services)
 - Team Rubicon Canada
- A national centre is in place to triage and respond to any nurse expressing an interest to work for ISC within 24 hours.
- Private transportation is being mapped out to account for reductions or termination of commercial transportation.

Personal Protective Equipment Orders

- Since PPE request process launched February 14, 2020 – summary of requests below
- Current assessment of requests – 24 hours / request to storage facility to retrieve and package / shipment to community 2 – 7 days
- Note – work underway to ensure pick up point person in communities for PPE when it arrives

Overview of PPE request status as of March 30, 2020 (TA 301)

Region	Requests Received	Being Processed at MTE	Shipped	Shipping Issue	Courier Status: Delivered	Delivery Confirmed w/ community
Atlantic	62	9	24	3	17	9
Quebec	23	19	3	0	1	0
Ontario	73	24	16	5	24	4
Manitoba	36	3	25	0	7	1
Saskatchewan	19	3	0	2	0	14
NITHA	4	0	0	0	1	3
Alberta	63	15	10	3	33	2
BCFNHA	3	0	0	1	0	2
Total	283	73	78	14	83	35

Shipping PPE

- Approved PPE requests are shipped from the storage facility in Edmonton directly to the requesting community.
- Shipping to remote and isolated communities is prioritized, due to the extended shipping times for these communities.
- Orders are dispatched from the storage facility within 2-5 days and are shipped through the fastest shipping option using Purolator and Canada Post.
- ISC is working with Canada Post and Transport Canada to prevent delays in PPE shipping – ***it is important for communities to plan in advance.***

Priority Issues

- Supporting communities on access to testing.
- Concluding emergency contracts in health HR, infrastructure and security and continued work with partners.
- Supporting communities to ensure they have updated/tested pandemic plans.
- Police or security capacity in-community to support physical isolation measures.
- PPE supplies for HCC, police/security and potential other providers.
- Continue work with other departments on alternative transportation mechanisms, including to ensure food supply.
- Ensure specific mitigation measures for communities at risk of flooding.
- Tripartite work to ensure acute care access, including Intensive Care Unit within provincial/territorial hospitals.

For more information contact:

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Appendix A: Communications

- At the request of the Directors of Nursing, preparing a “pamphlet” for nurses and patients that will contain general information but will be predominantly links to PHAC, WHO, etc.
- Tweets prepared and have begun posting on social media on various topics related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Videos provided for community members on what are nasopharyngeal swab. Video to be used to help in refresher training for nurses on how to conduct the swab test.



**COVID-19: Indigenous Services
Canada Update**

9.3K views · 6 days ago
YouTube › GCIndigenous



**COVID-19: Indigenous Services
Canada Responsibilities**

116 views · 4 days ago
YouTube › GCIndigenous

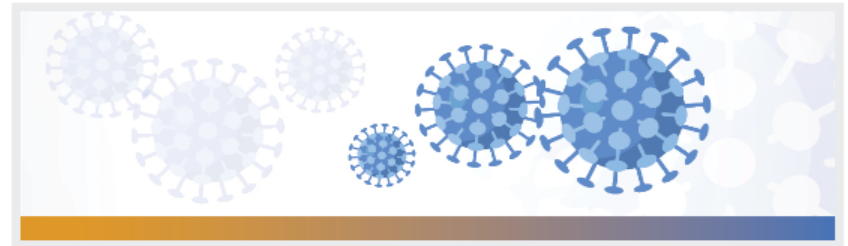


Appendix B: Information for First Nations and Inuit Communities

[Home](#) > [Indigenous Services Canada](#) > [Indigenous health](#) > [Diseases that may affect First Nations and Inuit communities](#)

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Indigenous communities

The Government of Canada supports First Nations and Inuit communities in preparing for, monitoring and responding to communicable disease emergencies, including pandemic influenza and other emerging infectious diseases, such as the new coronavirus called COVID-19.



⚠ Visit the Government of Canada's [Outbreak update](#) for more detailed information about symptoms, treatment, prevention and risks.

On this page

- [How to avoid infection](#)
- [Handwashing and drinking water advisories](#)
- [How to prepare](#)
- [What to do if you are sick](#)
- [How we have prepared](#)
- [How Indigenous Services Canada \(ISC\) protects against public health threats](#)
- [How the Government of Canada is supporting Indigenous communities](#)
- [Who to contact for more information and help](#)

Appendix C: Information pamphlets for the communities

For more information: Canada.ca/coronavirus | Information for Indigenous people and communities: Canada.ca/coronavirus-info-indigenous



INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA'S PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO COVID-19



General Approach

- Provinces and territories provide direct health care services to all Canadians, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis.
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) is engaging with provinces and territories to ensure that First Nations, Inuit and Métis are well covered by public health measures.
- Making funding available to support First Nations, Inuit and Métis concrete initiatives improving and adapting the public health response to the needs of their population.
- In First Nations communities, where it supports the delivery of health services and emergency management preparedness and response, ISC is doubling its efforts to ensure resources are available to meet the demands.



Preparedness

- Working to help First Nations communities to prepare and respond to public health emergency
- Funding First Nation communities in pandemic planning and activation
- Funding capacity for Inuit and Métis to effectively participate in national, provincial, territorial planning and response
- Knowledge mobilization and training support by funding First Nation organizations or through Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) regional offices
- Training of health providers working in First Nations communities in use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Inventory of medical equipment and supplies across First Nations communities
- PPE stockpile to supplement what exists in provinces for First Nations communities
- Shared Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) guidelines on measures communities can take, social distancing, school and daycare closures and mass gatherings, including for remote and isolated settings



Health human resources

- Supporting First Nations communities through use of health human resources
- Nursing and medical surge capacity supports
- Paramedic support
- Community health representative and public health assistant skill building and support
- Training of public health nurses to administer COVID-19 testing



Infrastructure

- Working to respond to First Nations community infrastructure needs to support response
- Responding to community requests on PPE and other health supply requirements
- Responding to community requests for additional surge capacity in water, food or other supply chain components
- Availability of portable and temporary shelter solutions for health services (assessment and training)
- Availability of portable and temporary shelter solutions for accommodations of additional service providers and self-isolation



Infection prevention and control

- Sharing information, training and increasing capacity to support response, including public service announcements in Indigenous languages
- Promoting public health measures for individuals and health providers, including:
 - reminding the public of the importance of self-isolation of 14 days after travel outside of Canada
 - reminding the public of the importance of not working while symptomatic, especially in the case of health workers
- Providing training of community workers and health providers on infection prevention and control
- Requiring daily self-screening of health service providers, and testing prior to returning to communities where recommended
- Funding communities and service providers to increase their capacity for infection prevention and control, including First Nations-run schools, boarding homes, family violence shelters and friendship centres



Medical transportation

- Supporting medical transportation of First Nations and Inuit clients while minimizing transmission
- Operational guidelines through NIHB to adapt medical transportation policies especially for individuals with higher risk factors to use private modes of transportation
- Infection prevention and control support for service providers such as boarding homes



Governance

- Working for a coordinated and consistent Canadian approach to COVID-19 to ensure the needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities are met
- ISC Minister is on special Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 response
- ISC chief public health officer on FPT Special Advisory Committee (SAC) reporting to the FPT Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health
- ISC and PHAC co-chairing with Indigenous, federal, provincial and territorial partners a COVID-19 Remote and Isolated Settings Task Group within SAC
- Supporting Indigenous communities through ISC network of Regional Medical Officers, National Health Emergency Network and Communicable Disease Emergency Working Group with First Nations partners
- Regular briefings with the Assembly of First Nations Executive and Chiefs Committee on Health
- ISC is a member of the Inuit Public Health Task Group
- Working through the Métis Health Committee involving ISC, PHAC, HC, CIRNAC



Communications and Surveillance

- Developing and disseminating communication messaging through ISC COVID-19 Single Window to networks of networks
- ISC COVID-19 Communications Working Group with First Nations, Inuit and Métis representatives
- ISC website content aligned with PHAC public health guidelines
- Public Service Announcements in multiple Indigenous languages
- Video on overall ISC COVID-19 response
- Regional office and regional medical officers regular meetings, teleconferences, bulletins and sharing of provincial communiques with chiefs, health directors, health workers and other partners
- Multilateral calls with partners at the national and regional levels
- Adapted flu surveillance tool to track COVID-19 across First Nations communities
- Tracking tool to develop dashboards on key indicators of COVID-19 response in First Nations communities