

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE ONTARIO REGIONAL CHIEF (MAY 1, 2020)

Please find a summary of highlights from this week. Numerous conference calls were held with all levels of government including Indigenous Services Canada, Ontario Ministry Emergency Operations Centre, Ontario Minister of Energy, Mines and Northern Development and Indigenous Affairs Greg Rickford, COO Leadership Council, FNIHB, Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, Mississaugas of Credit First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, Kiashke Zaagiing and Clear Direction Consultants. There were often recurring topics throughout all of the calls. These will be highlighted throughout this summary.

Date/Time	Call-Meeting	Information
Monday		
9:00 am	Emergency Management Office/FNIHB	Emergency Operations Command Centre
10:30 am	FWFN/BZAFN	Policing and Enforcement
11:00 pm	ORC Team Meeting	Updates
1:00 pm	Feed Ontario	Information
3:30 pm	RNAO Meeting	Pandemic Action Plan
5:00 pm	Curve Lake FN	Community Support
Tuesday		
9:00 am	Emergency Management Office/FNIHB	Emergency Operations Command Centre
11:00 am	CCOH Meeting AFN	AFN response
1:00 pm	AFN Executive Meeting	AFN response
2:00 pm	CCEM-CCOHI	AFN response
5:00 pm	Curve Lake FN	Community Support
Wednesday		
9:00 am	Emergency Management Office/FNIHB	Garry Best Regional Executive Director FNIHB
11:00 am	LC Meeting	Updates
4:30 pm	COO Health Sector Staff	Prep Call for LC Meeting
Thursday		
9:00 am	Emergency Management Office/FNIHB	Emergency Operations Command Centre
10:00 am	Mississaugas of Credit FN	Community Support
10:30 am	Leadership Council/Chiefs	Updates
1:00 pm	COO Health and ORC	Follow Up Call after LC Meeting
1:00 pm	Kiashke Zaagiing	Community Support
2:00 pm	ORC Team Meeting	Updates
3:00 pm	AFN Management Meeting	AFN response
Friday		
9:00 am	Emergency Management Office/FNIHB	Emergency Operations Command Centre
9:30 am	Clear Direction Consultants	House mapping
10:30 am	M'Chigeeng FN	Community Support
11:00 am	White Fish River	Community Support
11:00 am	ORC Team Meeting	Final Edits for Summary and Memo

1:30 pm	Kiashke Zaagiing	Community Support
2:00 pm	CCOHI and CCEM	AFN Response
4:00pm	ISC/FNIHB/Chiefs	Updates

COVID-19 CASES AND PREVENTION

- Health service providers are reporting that new infections are starting to slow as the public health measures put in place are being adhered to by the public. However, First Nations cases continue to rise at an incremental level.

As of Friday May 1, 2020: there are 35 confirmed cases in Ontario First Nations

Please see table below.

CONFIRMED CASES BY COMMUNITY*				
Community	Confirmed Cases	Resolved	Deaths	Additional Notes
Six Nations	11	8	1	
Akwesasne	1	1		No further spread
Kettle & Stoney Point	3	1		
Eabametoong	1	1		No further spread
Whitesand	5			Lac Des Iles mine
Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan	1			Lac Des Iles mine
Kiashke Zaagiing	7			Close contacts
Mississaugas of Credit	1			
Curve Lake First Nation	TBC			Close contacts
Walpole Island	5			
TOTALS	35	11	1	

*These case numbers are provided by Chiefs who are being informed by Public Health Units through the Ontario Health system, that their community members have tested positive.

Total Confirmed Covid-19 First Nation Cases In Ontario (On & Off Reserve)**	61
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**Ontario Health weekly summary report, which currently cannot provide details by community therefore the "confirmed cases by community" table above will continue as the daily/weekly roll-up report for First Nation communities in Ontario.

TESTING INFORMATION

Total Tests Jan 15 to Apr 27	2,172	Recent Tests Apr 17 to 27	969
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Each First Nation with active cases are reporting the cases publicly. In order to assist and advocate for our communities, I ask that we continue this practice moving forward because:

- We need to know where the virus is moving; and
- With information, communities can ramp up efforts to slow/stop the spread.

PROVINCIAL MEASURES TO CONTAIN SPREAD OF COVID-19

- Ontario **Parks are to remain closed** until May 31, 2020.
- **Pandemic pay of \$4 extra per hour** on top of existing hourly wages was introduced.
 - In addition, employees working over 100 hours per month would receive lump sum payments of \$250 per month for each of the next four months.
 - This means that eligible employees working an average of 40 hours per week would receive \$3,560 in additional compensation.
 - Those eligible to receive the payment will be staff working in long-term care homes, retirement homes, emergency shelters, supportive housing, social services congregate care settings, corrections institutions and youth justice facilities, as well as those providing home and community care and some eligible staff in hospitals.
- Publicly funded **schools will remain closed** until at least May 31, 2020.
- **Released A Framework for Reopening our Province**, which outlines the criteria Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and health experts will use to advise the government on the loosening of emergency measures, as well as guiding principles for the safe and gradual reopening of businesses, services and public spaces.
 - Public health officials will carefully monitor **each stage for two to four weeks**, as they assess the evolution of the COVID-19 outbreak to determine if it is necessary to change course to maintain public health.
 - **Stage 1:** For businesses that were ordered to close or restrict operations, opening select workplaces that can immediately modify operations to meet public health guidance. Some outdoor spaces like parks will be opened and a greater number of individuals to attend some events. Hospitals would also begin to offer some non-urgent and scheduled surgeries, and other health care services.
 - **Stage 2:** Opening more workplaces, based on risk assessments, which may include some service industries and additional office and retail workplaces. Some larger public gatherings would be allowed, and more outdoor spaces would open.
 - **Stage 3:** Responsibly opening of all workplaces and further relaxing of restrictions on public gatherings.
 - Throughout each stage, **continued protections for vulnerable populations** must be in place, along with the continued practice of physical distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene, and significant mitigation plans to limit health risks.
- Launched the COVID-19: Tackling the Barriers website to help businesses overcome the unique challenges created by the global pandemic.
 - The province is prepared to allow temporary changes to provincial rules and regulations in order to remove any barriers that are hindering business and negatively impacting Ontario's supply chain.

FEDERAL MEASURES RESPONDING TO COVID-19

In a move to begin easing restrictions around COVID-19 and to restart the economy, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments came together on April 28 and agreed to a set of common principles for restarting the Canadian economy:

- First Ministers acknowledged the importance of restarting the economy through a gradual and phased approach. As governments develop plans to gradually lift restrictions, they will focus on:
 - protecting the health of Canadians;
 - easing restrictions gradually;

- protecting high-risk groups (e.g., those vulnerable due to age, underlying health conditions, remote location, close living spaces, and temporary or unstable living spaces);
- ensuring our public health capacity remains strong to prepare for, and respond to, any future waves of the pandemic, including through enhanced testing and contact tracing; and,
- supporting a broad range of economic sectors.

While there will be regional differences during this process. Governments will make decisions suited to their jurisdictions, geography, and disease activity. A shared key objective is to minimize the risk of another wave of COVID-19 that forces governments to re-impose severe restrictions, further damaging the social and economic fabric of communities.

Link to the full statement here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8xbfrfb>

During the weekly call with the Chiefs in Ontario on Thursday April 30, a number of Chiefs indicated that their First Nations, health systems and health infrastructure are not equipped to deal with an outbreak of COVID-19. Therefore, Chiefs want to maintain their restrictions as much as possible. A number of the concerns they cited include; lack of capacity in human and other resources to respond in an outbreak situation; difficulty in accessing testing and medical facilities; and hospitals located proximally to them are already stretched thin.

ORC OFFICE PANDEMIC GOALS

ORC has developed a set of Pandemic Goals and a Chart which are attached. These high level goals will keep ORC's office focused on urgent and important tasks to keep our communities safe. Two researchers/writers who were brought on to develop information and resource tools on the following implementation goals:

- 24-hour Coordinated Response STAT Teams
- COVID-19 Community Coordinators

Two one-pager briefing materials are attached explaining the roles and functions of the STAT Teams and COVID-19 Community Coordinators for your review. We will continue to build more fulsome concept papers in these two items.

PARTNERSHIP WITH REGISTERED NURSES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

We expect to have our Pandemic Action Plan which we developed in partnership with the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO), finalized by next week. This document will help guide communities needing assistance with pandemic planning as well as give them direct access to registered and nurse care practitioners.

RISE IN SOCIAL ISSUES

The instances of domestic abuse, child welfare issues, self-harming, depression and anxiety as well as alcohol and substance abuse being reported at the First Nation level during COVID-19 continues to rise. There are a number of organizations working to provide virtual assistance for mental health and other social supports:

- Thunder Bird Partnership Foundation focusses mainly on addictions and have supports here: <https://thunderbirdpf.org/covid-19/>
- First Peoples Wellness Circle focusses mainly on healing and mental health and wellness and have supports here: <https://www.fpowc.ca>

THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Number of COVID-19 in hospitals: 1,017

Number of COVID-19 cases in ICU: 225

Number of COVID-19 cases on a ventilator: 175

We still have 75 per cent ventilator capacity (remaining across the whole of the hospital system).

EMERGING ISSUES

- **PRIVATE SECTOR ASSISTANCE:** Some mining companies that operate in multiple countries across the globe have indicated they could potentially share their PPE with First Nations. However, this is dependent on approvals from Health Canada's regulatory body. Advocacy to address this issue is underway.
- **MORATORIUM ON MINING CLAIMS:** Mining claims are being staked while First Nations' attention is focused on pandemic planning, and this is impeding critical responses from affected communities. Several communities have indicated they currently have land claims that are being affected by mining exploration. Minister Greg Rickford has committed to following up as a moratorium has been initiated.
- **RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES:** As the season warms, sports fishers and cottagers are beginning to make their way into the traditional territories of First Nations to engage in leisure and recreational activities. These activities are putting adjacent First Nations at risk of exposure.
- **FOOD SECURITY:** Food Security is being affected as major food operations plants have had to temporarily shutdown. This has begun to affect Canada's national food supply.
- **EDUCATION:** As school closure dates get lengthened, concern for First Nation students being able to keep up is increasing. Indigenous learners are disproportionately struggling with access to Learn at Home Supports during COVID-19 school closures. These impediments include a lack of access to equipment like laptops and iPads as well as being affected by poor telecommunications infrastructure.

WEEKLY LEADERSHIP COUNCIL TELECONFERENCES

We continue to host meetings every Thursday at 10:30am with the Leadership Council and Chiefs to address issues of the Ontario Region. What is new: we switched to using the Zoom platform for our meetings and will continue with it going forward.

Reminder:

- Please email your questions in advance of the weekly meeting to: COVID19@coo.org
- Questions must be submitted by Tuesday at 5:00pm

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.