

AFN Alberta COVID-19 Bulletin



Wednesday, October 7

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>.

AFN Alberta will be issuing its COVID-19 updates once weekly going forward, refer to the highlight below
The next bulletin will be sent Wednesday, October 14.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

AB Testing Results	September 29	October 7	Change
Tests Completed	1,350,800	1,456,219	+105,419
Total Positive	18,062	19,354	+1,292
Active	1,582	1,910	+328
Fatalities	267	281	+14
Recoveries	16,213	17,163	+650
<u>COVID-19 Regional Data for Alberta</u> Calgary zone - 9,253 Edmonton zone - 5,974 Central zone - 694 South zone - 1,900 North zone - 1,490 Unidentified zone - 43		<u>COVID-19 in Alberta First Nations (As of October 6)</u> Total - 301 Recovered - 271 Deaths - 4 <u>FN Active Cases by Zone</u> North - 10, Central - 7, Calgary - 5, Edmonton - 2	

New Measures

- ***NEW*** 276 new COVID-19 cases were reported on Tuesday, the highest single day count since the peak of the pandemic in April, bringing the active cases up to ~1,900. With the majority of these cases in Edmonton, Dr. Hinshaw warned additional measures may be necessary in the capital city. Her next update is scheduled for Thursday.
- ***NEW*** Canadians can now apply through the Canada Revenue Agency for a new sick leave benefit and a new caregiver benefit for those forced to take time off work to care for a dependent because of the pandemic. Details on this and other Employment Insurance changes are available through the [Government of Canada](https://www.canada.ca/government)
- ***NEW*** Alberta has ordered a record number of doses of the flu vaccine - 1.96 million - because of the anticipated increase in demand due to COVID-19. The influenza vaccine will be available to the general public on October 19 through their physician or at a pharmacy.

First Nation-specific Updates

- FNIHB is encouraging people to have their vaccinations up to date, including the upcoming flu vaccine, because of increased negative health outcomes from contracting other diseases along with COVID-19.

National and Regional Updates

- ***Updated*** (From most southerly to northerly:) Lethbridge County (Excludes City of Lethbridge), City of Edmonton, and Regional Municipality Of Wood Buffalo are all currently under a provincial COVID-19 watch. [click here](#) to view the interactive map updated by Alberta Health.
- ***NEW*** Quebec has joined the COVID Alert app, leaving B.C. and Alberta as the only remaining provinces with no immediate plans to activate the tool

INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS FOR FIRST NATIONS

Updates from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Alberta

NEW October 7 Bulletin:

ISC Alberta Region is sending updates weekly to leadership on the current COVID-19 situation and response. Today's bulletin (October 7) is attached. It includes the following information:

- Reminder on Precautions and Travel
- Transition from CERB to EI and other program
- Increasing Immunization Capacity
- Funding Support for Culture and Language Recordings

Also attached provided by ISC is a meeting summary of the September 18 All Chiefs Call with Alberta Chief Medical Officer Dr. Deena Hinshaw and a two page document outlining available COVID-19 funding available through the Government of Canada.

CALL & MEETING SUMMARIES

RECAP **AFN Executive Meeting | Thursday, September 24 and Friday, September 25**

Regional Chief Poitras participated in the AFN Executive Committee call on September 24th and 25th, 2020. Minister's Bennett (CIRNAC) and Miller (ISC) were in attendance on September 24th. Regional Chief's were provided a short period of time to pose questions to the Ministers. The remainder of the two days focused on AFN governance, portfolio updates, committee appointments, operations, finances and budget matters. Additional agenda items included an update on the Federal Indian Day Schools. The meetings ended with a discussion on options for the Special Chiefs Assembly 2020. **Key highlights:**

- Minister Carolyn Bennett, Crown-Indigenous Relations
Regional Chief Poitras questioned Minister Bennett on the numerous resolutions that had been brought forward regarding Treaty, and Treaty based funding. She requested

the minister provide an update on the progress as well as state the government's position.

- Minister stated she would be happy to discuss treaty-based funding on the road to treaty governance.
 - She also referenced Treaty Commissioner and advised there was an issue with the terms of reference for the TC as well other issues that needed to be sorted, such as where the TC would be housed.
- Regional Chief requested information on the 70 self-government and sectoral tables comprising 350 First Nations, in particular, what was their process and a disclosure of the potential impacts of these agreements on Treaties?
 - The Minister stated she would be happy to share progress on the tables. She stated that in the next month (October) nation-building funding applications will open for First Nations to access. They are seeing more interest in treaty and treaty governance.
- Regional Chief referenced the four policies that the federal government had committed to repeal and replace: Specific claims, comprehensive claims, additions to reserves and inherent rights policy. She asked where the government's commitment was to repeal and replace?
 - The Minister stated she would be happy to have a conversation about the technical work from the four policies tables.
- Guaranteed Basic Income

Information is presented that a NDP MP from Manitoba had introduced a motion to convert CERB to guaranteed basic income, M-46

 - The Liberal Party discussed GBI at their Cabinet retreat in depth.
 - Regional Chief Poitras supported the idea of GBI, but wanted to get some feedback from Chiefs in the region on it in terms of how it would impact First Nations funding on reserve.
 - The matter was tabled.
- Federal Indian Day Schools

Regional Chief Norman Yakaleya had raised concerns regarding administrative delays with processing of level 2 – 5 claims.

 - Stuart Wuttke clarified that AFN is not a party to the class action, however, AFN is receiving inquiries as well as calls for information as they are not able to get updates on the status of their applications.
 - It was agreed that Canada and Gowlings needed to do a better job of communicating with applicants. A motion was made to call on Canada to resolve administrative delays and communicate to applicants and assist them where necessary to complete applications.
- Financial Update & 2020 – 2021 Budget Review

The quarterly financial statements for AFN were reviewed and accepted by motion. The 2020-2021 AFN budget was presented and accepted by motion.
- Portfolio Changes

- Newly appointed Regional Chief PJ Prosper, (NS/NFLD) has recently been named the portfolio for Lands, Territories and Resources, formerly under RC Poitras.
 - Regional Chief Prosper has also been appointed to the Management Committee
 - Regional Chief Archibald has added the portfolio of sports and recreation
 - Regional Chief Poitras has accepted the appointment as portfolio lead for Health. Her work under Charter Renewal and Treaties remain.
- Minister Mark Miller, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)
The Minister reported during his comments that Val Gideon had been promoted to Associate Deputy Minister of Indigenous Services Canada
 - Regional Chief Poitras reminded the Minister of their previous conversation regarding the sharp rise in covid-19 numbers on First Nations in Alberta. She spoke of concerns expressed to her by the Chief of a First Nation regarding the death of two elders from his community due to covid.
 - Minister Miller encouraged people to continue to be vigilant. He understood the amount of work done by nations to prepare for the first wave. The results thus far have been exceptional but still too many people have passed.
- One of the biggest issues she stated was lack of housing and quarantining in the north. The chief of the First Nation she referred to earlier, reported that in one case there were 31 people living in a three bedroom house.
 - Minister Miller understood the infrastructure gap still needed to be closed. But they needed numbers to get a portrait of the need and also shovel ready projects across the country, particularly in housing, hospital, and basic infrastructure, then they could have a conversation about what they are able to do on an ongoing basis to fix this.
- She also stated that she had made a specific request to regional FNIHB/ISC offices for an analysis of why covid numbers were rising on First Nations in Alberta and all the office has received has been covid number updates.
- Regional Chief spoke to the growing concern with CERB, and her office was receiving a large volume of calls from individuals who had been cut off of social assistance on reserve because they had accessed CERB. Many of the individuals were young, single mothers with no money to buy food, milk or pampers or to pay their rent.
- She also reiterated the concerns from Chiefs that had been previously raised, of the funding allocation formula for covid supports. These allocations relied heavily on 2016 census data, and many First Nations do not participate in Canada's census.
 - Minister stated that having accurate data is key but it can't be an impediment to getting help out. He said that the current formula included remoteness and Community Well Being index, which he acknowledged were imperfect data points.
- Finally, Regional Chief mentioned that she was made aware that there was an individual hired regionally by ISC to explore Treaty-based funding with First Nations. She asked what the expected outcome was, and, wanted assurances that there would be funding to support First Nations to meaningfully participate in these discussions.
 - Minister Miller did not have time to get to all the questions posed but he did have people on taking notes and would address what he did not get to.

- Special Chiefs Assembly 2020
 - It was recommended that a two-day virtual Special Chiefs Assembly (SCA) be held.
 - The SCA two-day assembly will include key updates and a limited number of resolutions.
 - AFN will be using Encore for secure voting.
 - It was noted that late resolutions will not be accepted for this assembly.
 - The meeting dates are December 8-9, 2020 and a save the date will go out shortly.
 - The call for resolutions will begin October 1st and end October 31st.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL UPDATES

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

- ***Government of Canada COVID Updates***
- ***Government of Alberta COVID Updates***

Government of Canada COVID Updates

To keep information relevant, links will be provided to all briefings between last publication, but outside of major highlights will focus on only the most recent brief.

[Rapid Testing Agreement - October 6, 2020](#)

[Federal Government Eases Some Travel Restrictions - October 2, 2020](#)

[Federal Briefing on the Response to COVID-19 - October 6, 2020](#)

Prior COVID Updates: [October 5](#), [October 2](#)

On Tuesday In Ottawa, Dr. Tam and Dr. Njoo joined ministers Patty Hajdu, Anita Anand, and Dominic Leblanc for an update on the federal response to COVID-19 **Key Highlights:**

- As of Wednesday morning, Canada had 171,323 cases of COVID-19. 143,994 are listed as recovered or resolved. The total number of deaths from COVID-19 currently sits at 9,530 Country wide.
- As Canadians continue to transition from CERB to enhanced EI measures, they can now apply through the Canada Revenue Agency for a new sick leave benefit and caregiver benefit for those forced to take time off work to care for a dependent.
 - Canadians have made more than 830,000 repayments of COVID-19 emergency aid benefits to which they were not entitled.
- Canada has signed an agreement with Abbott Rapid Diagnostics to purchase up to 20.5 million Panbio Antigen rapid COVID-19 tests. This agreement is in addition to the already existing arrangement for up to 7.9 million ID NOW rapid point-of-care tests from the U.S.-based company.
 - Both versions of these diagnostic tests have been authorized for use by Health Canada.

Government of Alberta COVID Updates

To keep information relevant, links will be provided to all briefings between last publication, but outside of major highlights will focus on only the most recent brief.

[Alberta Update on COVID-19 - October 5, 2020](#)

Prior Update: [October 1](#)

In Edmonton on Monday, Dr.Hinshaw provided an update on the province's response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. **Key Highlights:**

- On Tuesday, 276 new COVID-19 cases were reported, the highest single day count since the peak of the pandemic in April.
- Current active cases are over 1,900, with Edmonton zone showing the highest number of Active cases.
 - Dr.Hinshaw warned that additional measures may be necessary to bring the transmission rate down in Edmonton, her next conference will be Thursday, October 8.
- The largest active outbreak at the Foothills Medical Centre in Calgary has seen 8 people who have died and 80 testing positive for COVID-19.
 - As of Tuesday, a total of 311 health-care workers have had to isolate at some point during the outbreak.
- In Schools, there are 319 cases at 149 of the over 2,400 schools in the province.
 - 66 schools are classified as outbreaks (2+ confirmed cases), and four added to the watch list for a total of 14 schools on the watch list (watch is declared when 5 or more cases have been acquired or transmitted within the school).
- The emphasis for public inoculation against influenza was re-emphasised, the seasonal flu vaccine will be available to the public in Alberta as of October 19.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

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

- ****NEW* Newsletter from saw a Alberta Indigenous Relations Minister Wilson***
- ****NEW* Federal Government Announces Ban on Certain Single-Use Plastics***
- ****NEW* PM Trudeau Announces \$10B Infrastructure Plan***
- ****NEW* Indigenous Services Minister Discusses Joyce Echaquan, COVID-19***
- ****NEW* Alberta Premier Announces Natural Gas Strategy***

Newsletter from AB IR Minister Wilson

Attached to this week's bulletin is a public newsletter from Indigenous Relations Alberta Minister Rick Wilson, It Includes:

- Orange Shirt Day - Honouring residential school survivors

- Kids and COVID-19
- Congratulations to Natural Law Energy

Federal Government Announces Ban on Certain Single-Use Plastics

[CPAC video link](#)

At a news conference in Gatineau, Quebec, Jonathan Wilkinson, the minister of environment and climate change, announces the list of single-use plastics that will be banned as part of the federal government's plan to reach zero plastic waste by 2030.

- The use of plastic bags, straws, stir sticks, six-pack rings, cutlery, and food containers made from hard to recycle plastics will be banned by the end of 2021.
- The minister is joined at the announcement by Steven Guilbeault, the minister of Canadian heritage, and by Greg Fergus, the Liberal MP for Hull–Aylmer, Quebec. The federal government first announced in June 2019 that it would move to ban some single-use plastics. Full video conference available at the link above.

Federal Government Announces Ban on Certain Single-Use Plastics

[CPAC video link](#)

At a news conference on Parliament Hill, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announces that his government is launching a \$10-billion infrastructure plan that is expected to create 60,000 jobs.

- Through the Canada Infrastructure Bank, the 3-year plan will invest in five initiatives including clean power, zero emission buses, broadband for underserved communities, and irrigation infrastructure for farmers.
- The prime minister is joined by Catherine McKenna, the minister of infrastructure and communities, and Michael Sabia, the chair of the board of the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

ISC Minister Marc Miller Discusses Joyce Echaquan's Death, COVID-19

[CPAC video link](#)

Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller speaks with reporters on Parliament Hill about Joyce Echaquan, the Atikamekw woman and mother of seven who died September 28 in a hospital in Joliette, Quebec.

- She recorded a video from her hospital bed before her death that showed hospital staff making racist and insulting comments about her. Miller comments on the apology made earlier that day in Quebec's National Assembly by Premier François Legault to her family.

- The minister is also asked about the impact of COVID-19 in Indigenous communities and about the surge of cases in Quebec. (October 6, 2020) Full video above

Alberta Premier Announces Natural Gas Strategy

[CPAC video link](#)

In Edmonton, Alberta Premier Jason Kenney outlines his government's plan to grow and expand the natural gas sector.

- The plan emphasizes hydrogen, petrochemical manufacturing, liquefied natural gas (LNG), and plastics recycling as key areas for development.
- The premier is joined by Sonya Savage, Alberta's minister of energy, and Dale Nally, the associate minister of natural gas and electricity, as well as industry representatives Nancy Southern (ATCO) and Sarah Marshall (NOVA Chemicals).

IMPORTANT/USEFUL LINKS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The Alberta First Nation Governance Information Centre is publishing a weekly COVID-19 update with First Nations case count and epidemiological data. [Click here](#) to access the latest and previous reports (on the left sidebar of the webpage).
- Alberta Health is available on request to support First Nations in developing guidelines around ceremonies. Contact ahs.ecc.operations.ih@ahs.ca for support.
- ISC is tracking the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 on First Nations on their website. Data is updated Monday to Friday. [Click here](#) to view the webpage.
 - [Click here](#) to view national demographic data and epidemic curves.
- Canada created a new web tool to help connect people with COVID-19 aid by asking questions and outlining programs people may be eligible for. [Click here](#) to access it.
- Canada created a web portal to help businesses find a wide range of COVID-19 support and other programs and services. [Click here](#) to access it.
- Canada created a web hub for buying and supplying PPE. [Click here](#) to access it.
- Canada launched the P-O-S-T Promise campaign in response to COVID-19. The details of the initiative can be found at postpromise.com
- A COVID-19 Indigenous Business Task Force released their findings from a survey meant to analyze the impact of the pandemic on Indigenous businesses. [Click here](#) to read the report. Their work was funded by Indigenous Services Canada.
- Info on public health guidance for schools, clarifications on masks/physical distancing, suggestions for preparing children for in-school learning, and more were provided by Alberta's CMO Dr. Hinshaw. Found on Alberta's school [re-entry tool kit](#) website.