

# AFN Alberta COVID-19 Daily Bulletin



## Monday, April 20

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>.

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

### Over the Weekend COVID-19 Test Results

ALBERTA	April 17	April 20	Change
<b>Negative (#s of Tests)</b>	92,805	105,317	(+12,512)
<b>Positive</b>	2,397	2,908	(+511)
<b>Fatalities</b>	50	59	(+9)
<b>Recoveries</b>	1,124	1,230	(+106)

*COVID-19 Regional Data for Alberta (April 17 to 20 changes)\**

Calgary zone - 2,077(+404) Edmonton zone - 438 (+9)  
Central zone - 77 (+0) South zone - 156 (+88) North zone - 143 (+8)  
Unidentified zone - 17

\*Please note our numbers for Monday reflect the cumulative new testing and cases for the weekend, as such it may appear there is a discrepancy with the provincial update, this is not the case as the province captures updates in a 24 hour cycle.

### New Restrictions and Measures

- The border closure between Canada and the United States will remain in effect for another 30 days.
- Alberta [expanded](#) COVID-19 testing yesterday to all residents and staff of any long term care facility where an active COVID-19 outbreak is occurring regardless of symptoms.
  - The province expanded COVID-19 testing to **anyone with a fever, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, or a sore throat.**
  - Anyone who is sick **must** stay home and take the [COVID-19 self-assessment form](#) to arrange testing. (Calling 811 no longer required to schedule testing).

### First Nation-specific Updates

- The government of Alberta, through the Aboriginal Consultation Office, is allowing participating communities to add days to the consultation process, if needed, during the pandemic response - up to 10 days for Levels 1 and 2 consultations, and up to 15 for Level 3. *(news release in the provincial update section).*

- **On Saturday**, Canada announced \$306M in funding support for Indigenous businesses
- ISC continues to recommend that First Nations with upcoming elections do not hold those elections during this time. Policy changes were made last week giving leaders the option to continue in their positions for the next 6-12 months.
- **Service Canada has a dedicated toll-free phone line for First Nations members needing help with their CERB applications. Call 1-877-631-2657**
- Canada asked for written submission on the potential use of the *Emergencies Act* to be submitted last week. Regional Chief Poitras shared regional concerns and considerations in a letter to Ministers Miller and Bennett.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Communities can request PPE from ISC/FNIHB through the communicable disease inbox: [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca)
  - Alberta Health Services (AHS) is also helping fill supply gaps. Communities can put in weekly requests for PPE through AHS. Contact: [ahs.ecc.operations.ih@ahs.ca](mailto:ahs.ecc.operations.ih@ahs.ca).
- AHS Indigenous-specific questions/concerns/requests can be emailed to [ahs.ecc.operations.ih@ahs.ca](mailto:ahs.ecc.operations.ih@ahs.ca).

#### **National and Regional Updates**

- A number of new funding measures were announced by Canada last Friday, including \$1.7 billion for orphan well reclamation, \$750 million for methane emission reduction, and over \$1 billion in support for rural small businesses, entrepreneurs and those in the Arts, Culture and Sports sectors.
- The federal government is both increasing and decreasing the eligibility threshold for Canadian Emergency Business Assistance (up to \$40,000 government backed loan). Businesses between \$20k-\$1.5m in total payroll for 2019 are now eligible.

## **INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS FOR FIRST NATIONS**

### ***AFN Health Sector COVID-19 Bulletins***

Following the lead of AFN Alberta, the national AFN Health Sector is now publishing regular bulletins summarizing updates it received from Indigenous Services Canada and other organizations like the Canada Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, as well as Canada's daily briefings. **Last week's bulletin was released today and can be found attached to this update.**

### ***Updates from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)***

#### ***April 20 Daily Bulletin:***

ISC Alberta Region is sending daily updates during the week to leadership on the current COVID-19 situation and response. today's bulletin (April 20) is attached. It includes the following information.

- Support for Indigenous Businesses
- Guidance on Funerals
- Income Assistance clients for security or other purposes
- Security Costs under COVID-19 EMAP

#### Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program Updates

On March 30, ISC published a variety of changes to NIHB in the wake of COVID-19. A summary of these changes can be found in the April 9 AFN bulletin we are sharing. We are also sharing the longer document ISC published outlining:

- Changes to Prior Approval for Certain Medications
- Pharmacist Recommendation for Fever and Pain Medications
- General Information on Temporary Changes to Medical Supplies and Equipment Coverage
- Temporary Changes for Replacement of Select (MS&E) Benefits
- Updates on Service Standards and Processing Times Updates
- Updates on Renewal of Indian Status Card and NIHB Client Eligibility

## **CALL & MEETING SUMMARIES**

### ***Monday, April 20 | AFN Alberta Call with City of Edmonton and Mayor Don Iveson***

Today, Regional Chief Poitras and Chief Maknaw, AFN Alberta's Vice-President, met with Mayor Iveson to discuss Indigenous homelessness, and how the City is supporting homeless populations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Key Highlights:**

- The City's housing manager provided an overview of what is being done to support homeless populations during the pandemic:
  - Mustard Seed has 180 spaces set up at the Kinsman Centre to ensure physical distancing requirements are being met.
  - Hope Mission has two overflow sites on the South and one in the North side of Edmonton.
  - The Expo Centre is hosting two distinct services and is being supported by AHS:
  - *Daily drop-in centre* -- a space has been set aside that can accommodate around 400 people at any given time (with physical distancing) allowing people a space to be in the day in light of libraries, shopping centres, and other centres being closed. People can do laundry, access recreation and leisure activities, information, etc.
  - *Isolation centre* -- people exhibiting signs of COVID-19 can go there for assessment, testing, and isolation.
  - On any given night, there are about 500 people that sleep outside in Edmonton. Their outreach and response to these people has increased. Extra peace officers

are patrolling the River Valley but they are not moving camps unless they are not safe.

- Before the pandemic, there was a need for 900 supported housing units for people requiring mental health resources available 24/7. Edmonton has been advocating to federal and provincial governments for resources to build such units for over a year.
- Edmonton is taking a housing first approach to address issues of chronic homelessness and mental health. The City has been advocating to federal and provincial governments for resources to build supportive housing units. The biggest challenge with unlocking funding from these governments is aligning every one's different priorities and approaches to housing and mental health investments.
- The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is interested in partnering with First Nations to unlock off-reserve housing dollars Canada is making available through its 10-year housing strategy.
- Mayor Iveson is supportive of working collaboratively with the AFN to do joint advocacy on housing and homelessness issues, through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Big Cities Mayors Group. He spoke positively about the dialogue he had with the National Chief at this table a couple years back, and wants to continue these conversations with the AFN.
- The Mayor said they are reviewing some of their strategic priorities in light of COVID-19, including housing. While their overall goals in the area will not change, Edmonton will need to respond to changes in the homelessness situation, including new numbers.
- The City is interested in exploring the urban reserve model and partnering with local First Nations to develop off-reserve housing, including releasing City land to develop affordable housing units.
  - One of the biggest challenges in moving forward initiatives like this is finding the right access to federal or provincial money, since funding from both governments have to go together, and investment priorities can vary greatly.
- The Mayor highlighted that there may be an opportunity to secure more direct federal funds for affordable housing after COVID-19 -- the province may be too cash-strapped to continue significant investments in housing and development projects would support stimulating the economy.
- The Mayor committed to continuing dialogue on these issues with AFN Alberta on a regular basis.

## **REGIONAL AND NATIONAL UPDATES**

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

- ***Canada's April 20 COVID-19 Update***
- ***Alberta's April 17 COVID-19 Update***

### ***Canada's April 20 Update***

Relevant Links: [PM's daily briefing \(9:15 am MT\)](#)

### [Ministers' and Health Officials briefing \(10:00 am MT\)](#)

Prime minister began his Monday address by mourning the victims of the Nova Scotia Shooting that occurred over the weekend resulting in the loss of at least 18 lives. After this, he answered questions on the reopening of Parliament. There were no COVID related updates from the Prime Minister today. Following, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Tam provided their daily update on COVID-19 statistics in the country. No ministers were present (as Parliament resumes) and there were no additional announcements today. **Key Highlights:**

- Canada now has 36,216 confirmed cases of COVID-19 including 1,611 deaths. Testing 20,000/day over the last few days for a total of over 550,000 tested to date.
- On the reopening of Parliament, the elected government is working with all parties to protect and uphold democracy and ensure proper accountability in a responsible manner.

### **Alberta's April 20 COVID-19 Update**

*Relevant Links:* [CMO Provincial Update \(3:30 pm MT\)](#)

[News Release: Relief coming for continuing care pressures](#)

[News Release: Moving natural resource projects forward safely](#)

Premier Kenney began as Prime Minister Trudeau did by acknowledging the tragedy in Nova Scotia that occurred over the weekend. Flags at legislature have been lowered to half mast in response. Premier is willing to help Canadian in Nova Scotia as they can. Today's update included announcements to support continuing care facilities in addition to the regular COVID-19 updates. **Key Highlights:**

- 105 new cases of COVID-19 were diagnosed in the province within the last 24 hours, for a total of 2,908, of which 1,203 have recovered and over 100,000 Albertans Tested. Unfortunately, today's news also brings 4 additional deaths.
- There are active outbreaks at 29 continuing care facilities, with 339 active cases and 34 fatalities. Stronger measures such as single site service and staff mask usage have been put into place. Recognizing the additional strain on these facilities, Health Minister Tyler Shandro announced new measures to address the increased pressures on continuing care facilities.
  - Increased funding for facilities to hire additional staff so that 1,000 additional full-time staff can be hired to prevent infections and respond to outbreaks.
  - A wage top-up of an additional \$2 per hour for health-care aides.
  - Up to 1,000 paid student practicum positions to fast-track certification and get more staff into our continuing care facilities.
- Today, energy prices are trading at negative values with Western Canadian Select below \$0. The province reiterated its appreciation for federal government support thus far but stated that much more action is needed.

### *Additional Information*

- Health Minister Shandro addressed concerns that have been raised over procedural masks and their distribution. He affirmed that domestically produced masks are prioritized for Albertan and that all masks, regardless of origin are all safe to use, all are tested to meet required safety standards
  - Procurement lead for AHS Jitendra Prasad supplemented this information, stating that all masks meet ASTM or EN14683 standards, and that he understands the concerns with the comfort and familiarity of these new masks, given the standard masks that healthcare professionals are used to have been within the system for 20+ years.
- PPE levels in Alberta continue to be adequate and Alberta is comfortable with their stock levels and ongoing orders. There is a 30-60 day supply available at any time.
  - In regular time (before the pandemic), approximately 200,000 masks a day
- This upcoming weekend Alberta will begin posting the location of outbreaks in Alberta. Using a phased approach, tomorrow a list of continuing and acute care facility outbreaks will be published. Over the next two weeks, other settings will be included on that list and will become a regular part of the daily update.