

AFN Alberta COVID-19 Bulletin



Wednesday, September 2

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, September 9.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

AB Testing Results	August 26	September 2	Change
Tests Completed	912,302	984,736	+72,434
Total Positive	13,210	14,180	+970
Active	1,176	1,403	+227
Fatalities	235	242	+7
Recoveries	11,799	12,535	+736
COVID-19 Regional Data for Alberta Calgary zone - 7,629 Edmonton zone - 3,210 Central zone - 597 South zone - 1,750 North zone - 962 Unidentified zone - 32		COVID-19 in Alberta First Nations (As of September 1) Calgary Zone - 56 North Zone - 65 South Zone - 49 Central Zone - 3 Total - 173 Recovered - 159 Deaths - 1	

New Measures

- Dr. Hinshaw issued a directive over the weekend that says schools in the province are no longer required to maintain 2 metres for physical distancing in classrooms. *Further details are provided in the national and regional updates section of the bulletin.* [Click here for full coverage.](#)
- Canada is moving to a national contact tracing app. Until it is available in Alberta, the province encourages use of the [ABTraceTogether](#).
- Some pharmacies in Alberta are offering asymptomatic COVID-19 testing. [Click here](#) for the list of participating pharmacies.
- Canada's Chief Public Health Officer says if you've been exposed to COVID, and are asymptomatic, it is best to get tested around 4 to 8 days after your known exposure. If you get tested before or after that window, the likelihood your test result is incorrect increases.

First Nation-specific Updates

- The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada announced a second intake for their COVID-19 Stimulus Funds.

- 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

- Clear Hills County, Mackenzie County, Vulcan Country, and a number of Calgary and Edmonton areas currently under a provincial COVID-19 watch. [click here](#) to view the interactive map updated by Alberta Health.
- Alberta has published a [re-entry tool kit](#) to prepare parents and students for back-to-school, which includes information on how it will respond to cases and symptoms of COVID-19 in schools.
- Canada announced plans to pre-purchase millions of potential vaccine doses. *Details are provided in the national and regional updates section of the bulletin.*
- A report released yesterday by Children First Canada found that the pandemic is making the health and mental wellbeing of children worse. The organization states this is because things like mental illness, food insecurity, physical inactivity and poverty may be increasing because of COVID-19. [Click here](#) for the findings.

INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS FOR FIRST NATIONS

COVID-19 Guidance for Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12)

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has updated their COVID-19 Guidance for Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12). [Click here](#) to access it.

Attached to the bulletin is a return to school checklist including COVID-19 public health consideration to assist First Nations communities in Alberta when planning for in-person school attendance. This was sent by ISC-AB and our office last week.

Updates from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Alberta

****NEW* September 2 Bulletin:***

ISC Alberta Region is sending updates weekly to leadership on the current COVID-19 situation and response. Today's bulletin (September 2) is attached. It includes the following information:

- COVID-19 Heading into the fall
- Education funding update
- Business supports in the fall
- Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada PSA
- Thermometers available through NIHB
- Online courses for returning to work safely during COVID-19
- Q&A

****NEW* Summary of All-Chiefs Call with Dr. Hinshaw***

ISC Alberta sent a summary of last week's all-Chiefs call with Alberta's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Deena Hinshaw. You can find this summary attached to the bulletin.

****RECAP* Recent Funding Announcements for First Nations***

Over the last several weeks, the Government of Canada has made several funding announcements to support Indigenous communities, organizations, and businesses respond to COVID 19:

- [\\$305 million](#) in additional funds for the COVID-19 [Indigenous Community Support Fund](#). New funds will flow directly to bands, and a new call for proposals will be set up for a secondary funding pot.
 - \$112.5M will be made available directly to bands based on a similar formula to last time (slightly adjusted to address concerns about landless bands).
 - An additional \$160M made available through calls for proposal or application – bands, tribal councils, urban and off-reserve (details are still being fleshed out on this pot)
- [\\$112 million](#) in funding for First Nations' return to school plans.
- [\\$82.5 million](#) in mental health and wellness supports to help Indigenous communities adapt and expand mental wellness services.
 - The First Nations envelope will be allocated based on discussions among regional partnership tables.
- The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada announced a second intake for their COVID-19 Stimulus Funds. Indigenous tourism businesses are eligible for up to \$25,000 in support. [Click here](#) for more details.
- An additional [\\$40 million](#) to support Indigenous businesses through the pandemic. According to the [Globe & Mail](#), the funding is separate from previous announcements like the \$300+ million given to Indigenous businesses for COVID-19 relief.
 - There are 73 projects that will receive funding from this investment through federal economic development agencies.

CALL & MEETING SUMMARIES

AFN Chiefs Committee on Health Meeting | September 1

Yesterday, the AFN Chiefs Committee on Health (CCoH) received a briefing on efforts to develop a COVID-19 vaccine and their regular briefing on updates and issues from ISC-FNIHB headquarters. Please find attached the respective presentations provided to the CCoH. **Key**

Highlights:

- Dr. Scott Halperin briefed the CCoH on the process of developing vaccines, and how that is being accelerated to develop the COVID-19 vaccine.

- He concluded that the prospects for a COVID-19 vaccine are overall good, but not a sure thing.
- Researchers believe it is likely they will be able to create a vaccine for this virus because it is more like the flu than a complicated virus like HIV. However, there are concerns that people will need frequent boosters to remain immune to the coronavirus.
- August 12: Canada announced an additional \$305 million for the Indigenous Community Support Fund. This funding will be available to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, as well as Indigenous communities and organizations serving Indigenous peoples, including First Nations living off-reserve as well as Inuit and Metis living in urban centres.
- This fund provides Indigenous leadership with the flexibility needed to design and implement community-based solutions to prepare for and react to the spread of COVID-19 within their communities. These funds could be used for measures including, but not limited to:
 - support for Elders and vulnerable community members
 - measures to address food insecurity
 - educational and other support for children
 - mental health assistance and emergency response services
 - preparedness measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- **Security costs related to COVID-19 are eligible expenses, but DM Val Gideon recommends talking to the regional office before First Nations expense these to their budget so they are able to maximize their resources.**
- August 25: Canada announced \$82.5 million in mental health and wellness support to help Indigenous communities adapt and expand mental wellness services, improving access and addressing growing demand, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- FNIHB has identified four pillars that will be used to guide decision making processes moving forward on funding surge health infrastructure response:
 - High priority items -- stockpile or bulk orders
 - Medium-high priority items -- retool existing spaces that are not reopening
 - Medium priority -- mobile structures for communities
 - Low priority -- hotel or rental spaces

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL UPDATES

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

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

Government of Canada Updates

[News Release: New measures to ensure the supply of future vaccines and therapies against COVID-19](#)

Dr. Teresa Tam and Dr. Howard Njoo gave a live update on Canada's COVID-19 response on September 1. On August 31, Canada announced plans to pre-purchase millions of potential vaccine doses.

Key Highlights:

- Dr. Tam and Dr. Njoo said widespread COVID-19 vaccination will be the best way to return to normal life. It's not clear what threshold of people need to be vaccinated to achieve broad immunity, but the more people that get vaccinated, the better.
 - International recommendations say a country should aim for around 50% of the population, but that is a 'moving target.'
- International evidence also indicates that immunity to COVID-19 remains very low around the world.
- Dr. Njoo said the vaccine may be available as early as spring 2021.
- Agreements-in-Principle have been reached with two US companies to procure millions of potential COVID-19 vaccines, adding to similar agreements in place with two other pharmaceutical companies.
 - These agreements were recommended by the federal COVID-19 task force.
- Federal funds are being provided to the Human Health Therapeutics Research Centre in Montreal to build a new facility that will increase vaccine manufacturing to up to 2 million doses per month by next year.

Government of Alberta Updates

Dr. Deena Hinshaw provided a live update on Alberta's COVID-19 response on [August 27th](#) and [31st](#). Her next live update will be on September 3. Education Minister Arianna Lefrancis announced today that they will allow schools to decide how best to spend most of \$262 million in federal funding to help with COVID-19 related costs.

Key Highlights:

- Dr. Hinshaw recommends parents read [Alberta's guide](#) to prepare children for the new school year. She also said there's been a "small number" of schools with COVID-19 cases or exposures in staff, but she did not elaborate.
- Dr. Hinshaw issued a directive over the weekend that says schools in the province are no longer required to maintain 2 metres for physical distancing in classrooms. Where 2m is not possible between desks, the greatest possible spacing is recommended. If 2m cannot be attained, students should be arranged so they are not facing each other.
- Dr. Hinshaw also announced that Alberta isn't "pre-determining specific triggers for school closure," but AHS, Alberta Health, and Alberta Education will be in close contact with schools and examining things like absenteeism, school outbreaks, and community transmission rates to determine closures on a case-by-case basis.
 - If a student, teacher, or school staff tests positive for COVID-19, only close contacts of that particular case are required to isolate.

- A child in close contact would need to stay home for 14 days, and should not be in close contact with other family members. If the family can stay properly distanced, they do not need to go home.
- A parent can be assigned to provide the child close care, and should also stay distanced during this time.
- Anyone who has been within 2 metres of a case for a total of more than 15 minutes in a day is considered a close contact.
- 2 or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or two or more confirmed cases linked to a school will be considered an outbreak, and will be actively reported.
- The Calgary zone has now surpassed the Edmonton zone for the highest total number of active cases in the province.
- Current outbreaks:
 - Calgary Kidanemhret Ethiopian Orthodox: 57 cases. People attending the church in the last two weeks are asked to get tested, and children attending this church should not go to school for a week.
 - Edmonton Walmart (South) Supercentre: 7 Cases
 - Calgary Lilydale Chicken Plant: 24 cases, 3 recoveries
- Alberta is receiving \$262 million in federal funding to help with COVID-19 related costs. \$250 million of this funding will be given to schools based on a per-student model to support COVID-19 costs like staffing, adapting learning spaces, personal protective equipment, cleaning, supports for special needs students and online learning and teacher training.
 - The remaining \$12 million will be used to support schools seeing a large influx in enrolment due to increased demand for their online learning programs.

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.
- Applications for the [Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance \(CECRA\)](#) are available through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The CECRA consists of forgivable loans for landlords to subsidize lost rent from small businesses, nonprofits and charitable organizations.
- 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
- Community-owned businesses can apply to the Aboriginal Business Investment fund (ABIF) for initiatives that “demonstrate social and economic benefits for their communities.” Alberta is providing up to \$500,000 in investments through this call for proposals. [Click here](#) for more information. The closing date for applications is September 30.
- 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.