

AFN Alberta COVID-19 Bulletin



Thursday, June 11

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 transitioning to providing the daily bulletin every other business day in June as we begin our slow and phased transition back to regular operations. The next bulletin will be Monday, June 15. Critical or time sensitive information will still be provided in real time as needed. Thank you for your understanding.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

AB Testing Results	June 8	June 11	Change
Tests Completed	298,696	317,402	+18,706
Total Positive	7,202	7,316	+114
Active	355	379	+24
Fatalities	149	149	+0
Recoveries	6,698	6,788	+90
<u>COVID-19 Regional Data for Alberta</u> Calgary zone - 5,038 Edmonton zone - 662 Central zone - 89 South zone - 1,269 North zone - 246 Unidentified zone - 12		<u>COVID-19 in Alberta First Nations</u> Calgary Zone - 19 North Zone - 5 South Zone - 16 Unidentified zone - 15	

New Measures

- As of June 15, pharmacists can begin to give out larger quantities of prescriptions again, up to a 100-day supply.
- Alberta recommends that anyone that attended anti-racism demonstrations over the weekend be tested for COVID-19.
 - As a reminder, Alberta is now allowing anyone in the province to get tested for COVID-19, even if they don't have symptoms. Asymptomatic testing can be scheduled through the online AHS COVID-19 self-assessment tool [here](#).
- Stage two of the Alberta relaunch strategy will begin tomorrow, **June 12**, a week sooner than expected. Details and the list of businesses that will be able to re-open with restrictions is provided in the national and regional updates section of this bulletin.
- Alberta will now only supply PPE to critical service providers in publicly funded or contracted settings. Private organizations can continue to access PPE through the government until **June 30**, but will need to pay market price.
- Alberta Health has partnered with A&W, McDonalds, and Tim Hortons to distribute non-medical masks to Albertans at no cost.

First Nation-specific Updates .

- ***NEW*** Canada announced an additional \$133M in financial aid for Indigenous businesses and \$16M for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada.
- ***NEW*** Regional Chief Poitras was invited to present to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs tomorrow at 9 am. The committee is meeting to discuss the government's response to COVID-19. You can watch her testimony live on parlvu.parl.gc.ca
- The Alberta government will provide each First Nation individual in community 4 non-medical masks. Those who are in urban centers will be able to get the masks through the restaurant partnership program, or through a community service agency.
- A social media campaign is encouraging celebrating 2020 Indigenous graduates through the hashtag #IndigenousGrad2020. A virtual grad celebration is planned for all Indigenous graduates on June 26. Visit <https://indigenousgrad2020.ca/> for more info.
- The #ProtectOurElders social media campaign launched to encourage people to practice physical distancing and public health measures to keep Elders safe. Visit <https://www.protectourelders.ca/> for ways you can get involved on social media.

National and Regional Updates

- Alberta is issuing comprehensive guidance to schools on re-opening for the 2020/21 school year. This includes guidelines on hygiene and health requirements, student learning, transportation and diploma exams. It also addresses mental health and psychological supports for students and staff.
- Canada launched the P-O-S-T Promise campaign aimed at encouraging businesses to fill out a voluntary declaration to its customers and employees that they will be diligent in their combat of COVID-19. The details of the initiative can be found at postpromise.com
- Addressing the separation of family members, the Canadian government is offering a limited exemption allowing members of the immediate family of permanent residents or citizens to come into Canada, targeting husbands, wives and/or children.
- Canada announced funding to support Indigenous peoples during COVID-19:
 - An additional \$75 million in new funding for urban and off-reserve organizations.
 - An additional \$650 million for Indigenous communities' healthcare, income support programs, and emergency shelters.

INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS FOR FIRST NATIONS

****NEW* Millar Group Proposal for Getting PPE to Communities***

The Millar Group has struck a successful partnership with the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) in Saskatchewan to provide all First Nations in that province with PPE and hand sanitizer. The Millar Group has established global and domestic supply chains

and has built capacity to respond to a wide range of PPE needs. FSIN secured federal funding to provide urgently required PPE supplies, supply chain management and logistics services to First Nations through the Millar Group.

The group is keen to support Nations in Alberta with similar services to the ones they are providing in Saskatchewan. ***We will be seeking Chiefs' input on the Millar Group's proposal and request direction on whether AFN Alberta should proceed to work with them on initiating a similar initiative as the one developed by FSIN in Saskatchewan.***

Additional Funding for Indigenous Businesses

[News Release: Canada announces additional support for Indigenous businesses and the Indigenous tourism industry](#)

Today, Minister Miller announced \$133 million in new funding to support Indigenous business with economic recovery. Canada committed \$117 million of this new funding to more community-owned Indigenous businesses including microbusinesses, who are not eligible for existing business support measures.

To support the economic recovery of the Indigenous tourism sector, Canada is providing \$16M in funding to the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) to administer a stimulus fund. It's worth noting that Indigenous Tourism Alberta [signed an MOU](#) with ITAC last year to advance Indigenous tourism in the province. Previously, ITAC was not affiliated with any regional tourism industry association in Alberta.

****NEW* Regional Chief Poitras' Message of Solidarity with Black Lives Matter***

Yesterday, the Regional Chief issued an open letter to the public expressing her support for the Black Lives Matter movement, and condemning recent reports of police violence against Indigenous people, including Chief Allan Adam. Read her full message here: <http://www.afnab.ca/News-and-Events/blm-statement>.

Updates from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

****NEW* June 11 Bulletin:***

ISC Alberta Region is sending updates twice weekly to leadership on the current COVID-19 situation and response. Today's bulletin (June 9) is attached. It includes the following information:

- Alberta's Stage Two Relaunch Strategy
- Windspeaker Radio Mental Health Spots
- Economic Benefits related to COVID-19 (CRA)
- #ProtectOurElders social media campaign

****UPDATED* All-Chiefs Meeting with Dr. Hinshaw***

The All Chiefs Meeting took place yesterday, June 10th at 2:00pm MST. Outstanding questions should be sent to Dean Janvier with ISC-AB. Dr. Hinshaw has committed to trying to make herself available for future calls if there is interest.

Dr. Hinshaw and her team at Alberta Health are available at First Nations' request to support with creating public health guidelines for ceremonies. She emphasized that Alberta Health **is not** developing any recommendations around ceremonies, but are happy to collaborate with Nations, at their direction, to support the development of such guidance at either an individual community level, or more collectively.

Thursday, June 11th | 1:30 to 3:00 pm | Weekly COVID-19 Telehealth Call

A weekly telehealth call on COVID-19 was held for First Nation health centre staff to talk through possible scenarios and ask FNIHB staff questions. Outstanding questions can be submitted to VChelp@FNTN.ca

CALL & MEETING SUMMARIES

June 10 | All Chiefs Meeting with ISC-AB and Dr. Hinshaw

Yesterday, ISC-AB organized an all-Chiefs meeting with Alberta's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Deena Hinshaw. This was the second time Dr. Hinshaw addressed the Chiefs. She spoke about a new way Alberta will be responding to spikes in active cases of COVID-19 (through a more localized, rather than province-wide, response). As noted above, she also expressed that Alberta Health is willing to support Nations in developing guidance for ceremonies, **only if** First Nations seek that assistance. **Key Highlights:**

- More First Nations people have been tested for COVID-19, and less have contracted the disease, compared to Albertans.
- Alberta will continue providing PPE to FN health centres at no cost for the near term.
- Dr. Hinshaw said that Alberta Health is willing to support developing guidance documents around ceremonies, either at an individual Nation-level or at a more collective level. However, they will only do so at First Nation(s)' direction. FNs should contact Alberta Health if they want collaborative support on issuing public health recommendations for ceremonies.
- Dr. Hinshaw notified Chiefs about a new way Alberta will track "hot spots" where public health measures may need to be increased. The purpose for this is to provide a more focussed, regional response for new outbreaks, rather than having to make province-wide restrictions.
 - If a municipality reaches 50 active cases per 100,000 people, or a rural area reaches 10 active cases per 10,000 people, the area will go from beige to blue on the provincial COVID map. This will trigger a conversation between the province and local health authorities on possible public health measures that need to be put in place.
 - If these "blue areas" implement new restrictions following a discussion with the province, the area will turn purple to denote that there are more public health restrictions in that region than neighbouring areas.

- Chiefs asked a wide range of questions to Dr. Hinshaw. Most questions focussed on the possibility of a second wave of the pandemic, and how Alberta plans to respond to outbreaks and spikes in confirmed cases as it moves to re-open.
 - Some Chiefs sought guidance on how to respond to returning community members that may have come into contact with COVID-19.
 - Others asked for more detail on the new method of responding to localized/regional COVID-19 outbreaks, and how the province would work with First Nations if their communities are in a regional “blue zone.”
- Dr. Hinshaw said the type of advice leaders give to the community on testing will depend on the priorities of the Nation and the specific situation they are in -- ie: are there active cases in the community, outbreaks nearby, etc. The highest priority is to test anyone with symptoms, close contact of a known case. Identifying these cases fast helps stop the chain of transmission. She recognizes the reluctance some may have of getting tested for fear of receiving a positive result, and encourages strong public health messaging to combat this stigma.
- Dr. Hinshaw also clarified that once a region or municipality exceeds the threshold of 50 active cases per 100,000 people, or 10 active cases per 10,000 people in rural areas, a conversation takes place with the province on local health authorities and leaders on how to minimize the risk. No restrictions are put in place when that happens. If First Nations are in these areas, Alberta Health will reach out and collaborate with them.
- It's likely that the risk of a second wave will get higher in the fall when people spend more time indoors. Subsequent waves of the virus depend on our collective behaviour.
- Alberta Health can provide First Nations with the 14-day quarantine plan template they provide int'l travellers, should it be helpful to adapt when responding to returning community members that may have come in contact with COVID.
- Response to outbreaks and spikes in cases will be targeted regionally. Depending on the severity and scope of the future spread of COVID-19, they may consider going back to province-wide measures. Alberta health hopes that they can prevent this by putting in restrictions locally and earlier.
- Bingo halls and casinos are expected to follow similar guidelines as groceries stores and malls during re-opening. A hard limit on the number of people allowed in a facility will not be implemented, rather the operator will be required to ensure people keep a 2 m distance at all times, visitors are screened, increased sanitation happens, etc. Table games will not be allowed.

***RECAP* June 9 | AFN National Executive Meeting**

The National Executive met today with Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities and David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. **Key highlights:**

Meeting with Minister McKenna

- National Chief Bellegarde called for progress on the government's commitment to close the infrastructure gaps on First Nations. He spoke to needs on housing, clean drinking water, broadband, and for McKenna's department to accelerate collaboration with ISC to get 'shovel-worthy' projects on First Nations off the ground.
- Minister McKenna outlined her current approach to addressing the infrastructure gap in First nations communities.

- 1) Look at existing programs and try to get provinces/territories to prioritize Indigenous projects and programs (through bilateral infrastructure agreements and other channels)
- 2) Exploring new opportunities through COVID-19 stimulus spending.
- 3) Work with First Nations to get provinces and territories to fund “shovel-ready” projects.
- Regional Chiefs pressed for dedicated streams in the infrastructure department for First Nations. Several, including RC Poitras, cited that the Treaty relationship is nation-to-nation. First Nations should not have to deal with provincial barriers to access infrastructure dollars outside of ISC.
- **RC Poitras advocated for the following.**
 - **Changes to the Clean Power Fund so First Nations in Alberta can access funding to build renewable energy infrastructure, in light of the Alberta government’s cancellation of renewable energy programming.**
 - **Chiefs are wondering what is happening with critical infrastructure projects. Progress on these infrastructure gaps is needed before another wave of COVID hits. She asked the Minister for a list of funding sources in Alberta for infrastructure, and investments made.**
 - **She pressed for increased cross-government collaboration and response on infrastructure, citing broadly challenges the ISC-AB regional office has faced in advancing broadband in communities with Infrastructure Canada.**
 - **First Nations who are repeatedly impacted by annual flooding want to build longer term mitigation strategies. Request made for a dedicated funding stream be created out of the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund so First Nations can build long-term solutions for dealing with what are now regular natural disasters.**
- Minister McKenna committed to having a conversation with her Deputy Minister and Minister Miller to discuss how to reconfigure funding pathways from her department because, currently, she doesn’t have the tools to flow money into ISC except through some small programs. She also commits to providing the RCs a breakdown by province of infrastructure money First Nations can presently access.

Meeting with Minister Lametti

- The National Chief pressed for progress on establishing restorative justice models, establishing First Nations policing as an essential service, reforming policing nationally to root out racism. He also raised the delay of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) action plan, and the legislation to adopt UNDRIP as Canadian law.
- Minister Lametti noted the timelines for the MMIWG action plan and UNDRIP legislation were delayed because of COVID. He is committed to having UNDRIP as law by the end of 2020. Minister Bennett continues her work with the provinces/territories in finalizing the MMIWG plan.
 - He encouraged the RCs and First Nation leaders to be loud in the coming days and weeks about the necessity of restorative justice programs, as well as other alternative solutions to the criminal justice issues. In particular, he talked about how work is needed to treat addictions as a public health issue and not a criminal issue.

- The Regional Chiefs all touched on the need to redesign the way justice is administered and enforced in Canada, especially for First Nations communities. Many echoed calls to move with restorative justice models. Some supported calls by Black activists to reallocate funding from the criminal justice and enforcement system to create better crisis response services for Indigenous, Black, and other racialized people.
- **RC Poitras addressed the following.**
 - **The Regional Chief recalled the news of Chief Allan Adam and her fierce condemnation of unjust use of force against Indigenous peoples.**
 - **Citing issues the First Nations have faced during the pandemic over the enforceability of their laws, she pressed for a commitment from Minister Lametti to expand their funding mandates for First Nations so they can access funding to build capacity in the area of law development and enforcement?**
 - **First Nations in Alberta are concerned about how Alberta's *Critical Infrastructure Defence Act*, which became law last week, will impact their freedoms of assembly and speech if they protest near "critical infrastructure" on their lands. She asked what Canada's response will be to this law, which undermines First Nation's constitutionally protected human and Treaty rights.**
 - **Regarding Treaties, she reminded Minister Lametti that Treaty was never an agreement by First Nations to give up their sovereignty, laws, forms of governance or right to self determination over their lands and their people. Going forward, First Nation laws must be implemented, and be seen at least equal to common law and civil law. She asked what Canada is doing to ensure First Nation laws are as enforceable as provincial and federal laws.**
- Minister Lametti was unable to provide a substantial response to the Executive as he had to attend the House of Commons. He agreed there are major, fundamental changes needed because the system we have in place is inherently racist, and it is working in that regard. Minister Lametti committed his staff to following-up with responses to all the questions asked by the Regional Chiefs.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL UPDATES

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

- ***Canada's COVID-19 Update - June 10 & 11***
- ***Alberta's COVID-19 Update - June 10***
- ****RECAP* Alberta outlines plan for Stage 2 of reopening***

Canada's COVID-19 Update - June 11

[Prime Minister's briefing](#)

[Federal health officials' and ministers' briefing](#)

[News Release: Canada announces additional support for Indigenous businesses and the Indigenous tourism industry](#)

The Prime Minister provided his regular COVID-19 briefing from a company based in Ottawa to share some updates on the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). Federal health officials and ministers also held their daily briefings, where Minister Marc Miller announced new funding to support Indigenous businesses. **Key Highlights:**

- 97,000+ cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Canada. There are 32,000 active cases, and 57,000 recoveries. Close to 8,000 people have died from COVID-19.
 - 1.9 million people have been tested for COVID-19, for an average of 33,000 people a day nationwide.
- Minister Miller announced \$133 million in new funding to support Indigenous business with economic recovery. Canada committed \$117 million of this new funding to more community-owned Indigenous businesses including microbusinesses, who are not eligible for existing business support measures.
 - To support the economic recovery of the Indigenous tourism sector, Canada is providing \$16M in funding to the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) to administer a stimulus fund.
- The number of businesses applying to the wage subsidy has been lower than anticipated. Since June 8, Canada received 209,370 unique applications for the CEWS. The program has spent \$10.5 billion so far.
- The government reminded the media about their initiative called “POST Promise,” which stands for people outside safely together. It calls on businesses to commit to public health recommendations when they reopen.
- The Premier will meet today to talk about economic recovery and re-opening plans. They’ll touch on daycare funding, PPE purchasing, and paid sick leave.

Canada’s COVID-19 Update - June 10

Relevant Link: [Federal Ministers Daily COVID-19 Update](#)

Yesterday, the Prime Minister was at Carleton University where he virtually addressed all 2020 graduates. As such, he did not provide his daily briefing. Federal ministers gave their regular COVID-19 update. **Key Highlights:**

- As of Tuesday, there were 96,653 confirmed cases of COVID-19 including 7,987 deaths. 55,572 have now recovered, or 58%. To date labs have tested 1,955,719 cases, at an average rate of 33,000 daily over the last week with about 2% returning positive.
- The federal update otherwise recapped prior support provided by the Canadian government and reminded Canadians to be vigilant in combating the disease with hygiene and social distancing measures.
- The Federal government also announced the P-O-S-T Promise campaign. The POST Promise is a training & education platform which results in a voluntary declaration from businesses to its customers and employees that they will be diligent in their combat of COVID-19. The details of the initiative can be found at postpromise.com

Alberta's COVID-19 Update - June 10

[Alberta Chief Medical Officer's COVID-19 Update - June 10](#)

[News Release: Getting ready for 2020-21 school year](#)

Yesterday, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Deena Hinshaw attended regular media availability. Education Minister LeGrange also participated to discuss the government's plan for the upcoming school year. Dr. Hinshaw's next availability will be tomorrow, June 12.

Key Highlights:

- 47 new cases were identified bringing the number of total active cases to 371
- Alberta is issuing comprehensive guidance to schools on re-opening for the 2020/21 school year. This includes guidelines on hygiene and health requirements, student learning, transportation and diploma exams. It also addresses mental health and psychological supports for students and staff.
- Albertans were reminded that stage two of the province's re-opening begins on Friday, June 12. Stage three depends on the success of stage two. Factors are: active cases, infection rates, health-care system capacity, cases in hospital and intensive care.
- As of June 15, pharmacists can begin to give out larger quantities of prescriptions again, up to a 100-day supply.
 - Pharmacists should use their judgment to dispense a 30-day supply for drugs that still have shortages or supply chain issues.

****RECAP* Alberta moves to stage two of relaunch***

Press Conference: [Alberta Premier Jason Kenney to Announce Next Phase of Reopening Plan](#)

News Release: [June 09, 2020 - Alberta moves to stage two](#)

Alberta's Premier Jason Kenney held a press conference today, June 9, 2020 to outline its strategy for moving towards stage two of its relaunch strategy, the full news release and press conference are linked above, and below are some **Key Highlights:**

- Strong testing data shows active COVID-19 cases in Alberta are lower than expected, meaning stage two of the relaunch strategy can safely begin on **June 12**, a week sooner than expected.
- A list of openings, with restrictions, follows:
 - K-12 schools, for requested diploma exams and summer school, following guidance.
 - Libraries
 - More surgeries and wellness services such as massage, acupuncture and reflexology.
 - Personal services (esthetics, cosmetic skin and body treatments, manicures, pedicures, waxing, facial treatment, and artificial tanning)
 - Indoor recreation, fitness, and sports, including gyms and arenas. Pools for leisure swimming.
 - Movie theaters and community halls, Instrumental concerts.
 - VLTs in restaurants and bars, casinos and bingo halls (but not table games).

- Additionally, the 50 per cent capacity limit for provincial campgrounds is being lifted. Over the coming days, the online reservation system will be updated and sites will come online in phases with all sites open by July 1.
- Events and gatherings can now also be larger, 50 person limits for indoor social gatherings, and 100 person limits for outdoor events and indoor seated events
 - There is no limit on people in worship gatherings, restaurants, cafes, lounges and bars, casinos and bingo halls - but public health measures and physical distancing requirements remain.
- Regular in-school classes will resume in September 2020. Major festivals and concerts as well as large conferences, trade shows and similar events are still prohibited.
- Nightclubs, Amusement parks, major sporting events will continue to be prohibited until Stage 3.
- Non-essential travel outside the province is still not recommended.

IMPORTANT/USEFUL LINKS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Alberta is providing \$25 million for projects and services that will improve community mental health and addiction recovery supports and services. **First Nations are eligible and encouraged to apply.** The second call for proposals closes on August 21, 2020. [Click here](#) for more information.
- The Red Cross is operating a help desk for First Nations to get dedicated, personalized support on pandemic planning. It is available 7 days a week from 7 am to 7 pm MT. Call 1-833-937-1597.
- First Nation health directors, leaders, and technicians can contact “[InfoPoint](#)” to request information about their COVID-19-related questions at 1-855-446-2719 or InfoPoint@fnhma.ca from Monday to Friday, 6 am to 6 pm MT
- 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.
- Service Canada has a dedicated toll-free phone line for First Nations members needing help with their CERB applications. Call 1-877-631-2657
- 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.
- The [Business Resilience Services Hotline](#) is available to small businesses for the next month to provide free, customized financial guidance from navigating tax regulations and government support to planning a path to recovery.
- 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.
- The UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous rights is calling for input into a global report about how COVID-19 is impacting Indigenous peoples. [Click here](#) for the full details of the request. **Deadline for submissions is June 15.**