

AFN Alberta COVID-19 Bulletin



Wednesday, September 30

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 7.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

| AB Testing Results | September 22 | September 29 | Change |
|--|--------------|--|----------|
| Tests Completed | 1,242,263 | 1,350,800 | +108,537 |
| Total Positive | 17,032 | 18,062 | +1,030 |
| Active | 1,520 | 1,582 | +62 |
| Fatalities | 260 | 267 | +7 |
| Recoveries | 15,252 | 16,213 | +961 |
| <u>COVID-19 Regional Data for Alberta</u> Calgary zone - 8,909 Edmonton zone - 5,187 Central zone - 669 South zone - 1,829 North zone - 1,430 Unidentified zone - 38 | | <u>COVID-19 in Alberta First Nations (As of September 21)</u> Total - 291 Recovered - 239 Deaths - 4 <u>FN Active Cases</u> North zone - 43 Central zone - 4 Calgary zone - 1 | |

New Measures

- ***NEW* Legislative Updates:** AFN Alberta will be adding a legislative update to its weekly bulletin, found below the regional and National COVID updates. While not explicitly COVID related, this will capture progress and developments in relations with the Federal and Provincial crown.
- The current number of active cases in Alberta is the highest it's been since May.
- Restrictions have loosened to allow long-term care residents to attend low- and medium-risk activities outside of their care facility without having to isolate for 14 days when they return.
- In light of rising daily case numbers, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer says anyone thinking of attending an event or gathering, especially indoors, should assess their own personal risk, the risk of those in their household, and the location of the event before agreeing to attend.
- Alberta has now observed three cases of in school transmission

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:) County of Forty Mile No.8, City of Edmonton, Smoky Lake County, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Mackenzie County 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.
- Canada is conducting an independent review of the Global Public Health Network, which helps officials detect the spread of diseases in Canada.
- Dr. Hinshaw wrote an open letter to parents. It includes info on public health guidance for schools, clarifications on masks/physical distancing, suggestions for preparing children for in-school learning, and more. The letter can be found on Alberta's school [re-entry tool kit](#) website.

INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS FOR FIRST NATIONS

Updates from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Alberta

****NEW* September 30 Bulletin:***

ISC Alberta Region is sending updates weekly to leadership on the current COVID-19 situation and response. Today's bulletin (September 30) is attached. It includes the following information:

- Update to testing Criteria (end of general asymptomatic testing)
- Bill C-2: Changes to CERB
- Speech from the Throne
- Are we in a second wave?

CALL & MEETING SUMMARIES

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.

Chiefs Committee on Health | Tuesday September 29

On Tuesday the Chiefs Committee on Health met with Canada's CMO Dr. Tam, FNIHB and ISC to receive updates on response to the Coronavirus pandemic. As was mentioned in the Executive Summary, Val Gideon is assuming the role of ADM for Indigenous Services Canada, in her former role, Keith Conn will be the Acting Assistant Deputy Minister for FNIHB. **While there are no other specific highlights to share from this meeting, please see the two presentations attached to this bulletin.**

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.

[Federal Ministers Discuss COVID-19 Economic Aid Legislation - Sept. 24, 2020](#)

[PM Trudeau Delivers Remarks at UN Event on COVID-19 - Sept. 30, 2020](#)

[Federal Briefing on COVID-19 - Sept. 29, 2020](#)

On Parliament Hill, Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer, and Dr. Howard Njoo, the deputy chief public health officer, join ministers Patty Hajdu (health), Anita Anand (public services and procurement), and Dominic LeBlanc (intergovernmental affairs and chair of the cabinet COVID-19 committee) for an update on the federal response to COVID-19 (coronavirus disease). **Key Highlights:**

- Labs across Canada tested an average of 71,000 daily over the past week, with about 1.7% returning positive. Daily case counts have now reached the same peak we saw in April.
 - Though the counts are the same, the epidemiology has changed, now infecting younger people at a far greater pace than previously seen.

- Public health officials maintain that testing and tracing COVID-19 is the best way to manage increasing case counts in the country.
 - According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, there are over 155,000 cases and more than 9,200 people have died to date from COVID-19 in Canada.
- The federal government has signed a deal with pharmaceutical firm Sanofi to obtain 72 million doses of its protein-based COVID-19 vaccine candidate.

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, Sept. 28, 2020](#)

[Alberta Announces Funding for COVID-19 Research, Sept. 28, 2020](#)

Prior Alberta COVID-19 Updates: [September 24](#)

In Edmonton, Tyler Shandro, the Alberta minister of health, and Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Alberta's chief medical officer of health, provide an update on their province's response to the ongoing COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. **Key Highlights:**

- Working from home due to flu like Symptoms, Dr.Hinshaw emphasized that we must all do our part when feeling unwell and stay home when sick, even if it is not COVID-19 related (as Dr.Hinshaw's illness isn't, having received a negative result)
 - There are active alerts or outbreaks in 113 schools (5%), with around 210 cases total in schools. (2 confirmed cases in a school qualifies as an outbreak). Only 9 schools have seen in school transmission so far. Regardless, extra precautions are always taken.
 - Due to the outbreak at the foothills medical centre, additional precautions have been taken, including rescheduling of surgeries, and limiting visitation to patients as necessary.
- The Health Minister maintained testing was crucial in combating COVID-19, and to date, over 1,000,000 individual Albertans have been tested for COVID-19 to date.
 - Capacity has increased from a few hundred to multiple thousand tests a day in Alberta laboratories.
- Receiving comments about herd immunity, Dr.Hinshaw stated that 50-70% of individuals would need to be infected to achieve herd immunity, while serology tests suggest we have only seen about 1% of the population infected.
 - The suggestion of using uncontrolled spread to achieve this is not the right approach, as it would have a serious and deadly impact on huge swaths of the population, leading to many more deaths across the province.
 - Additionally, death from COVID-19 is not the only outcome, there are additional complications and care needed in many cases, not to mention the overload of the health system to address other needs (babies being born, car crashes occurring.)

- Finally, we still don't know if infection actually results in any sort of robust immunity.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

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

- ***Speech from the Throne (September 23)***
- ***AFN National Chief Reacts to Throne Speech (September 23)***
- ****NEW* Alberta Premier Responds to Throne Speech (September 24)***

Speech from the Throne

[CPAC video link](#)

A pdf transcript of the throne speech is attached to the bulletin.

The Trudeau government has begun a new session of Parliament by arguing “this is not the time for austerity ... Canadians should not have to choose between health and their job, just like Canadians should not have to take on debt that their government can better shoulder.”

In putting forward an agenda that will eventually face a confidence vote, the government has committed to national child care, extending COVID-19 support, and taxing global web giants as part of today's speech from the throne.

Key Promises:

On COVID-19 and the economy

- a federal “Testing Assistance Response Team to quickly meet surge testing needs, including in remote and isolated communities”
- targeted financial support to businesses that must close because of local public health directives
- a campaign “to create over one million jobs,” including an extension of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy through next summer
- expansion of the Canada Emergency Business Account to “help businesses with fixed costs”
- “further support” for hard-hit sectors such as travel and tourism, hospitality, and arts and culture
- “significant scaling up” of the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy
- an “Action Plan for Women in the Economy”
- a “significant, long-term, sustained investment to create a Canada-wide early learning and childcare system”
- a “resiliency agenda for the middle class and people working hard to join it. This will include addressing the gaps in our social systems, investing in health care, and creating jobs. It will also include fighting climate change, and maintaining a commitment to fiscal sustainability and economic growth as the foundation of a strong and vibrant society.”

- Criminal Code amendments to target “those who neglect seniors under their care, putting them in danger”
- with more Canadians working at home, faster timelines to ensure universal broadband access
- help to protect regional airline routes cancelled because of the COVID-19 shutdown

On climate change and the environment

- an “immediate” plan to exceed Canada’s 2030 targets for reducing emissions, and legislation to bind the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050
- support for “manufacturing, natural resource, and energy sectors as they work to transform to meet a net zero future” and “recognize farmers, foresters, and ranchers as key partners in the fight against climate change, supporting their efforts to reduce emissions and build resilience”
- creation of a new “Canada Water Agency”
- a new fund to “attract investments in making zero-emissions products and cut the corporate tax rate in half for these companies”

Also in the Speech From the Throne

- “Things must change, and will change” for web giants “taking Canadians’ money while imposing their own priorities ... “The Government will act to ensure their revenue is shared more fairly with our creators and media, and will also require them to contribute to the creation, production, and distribution of our stories, on screen, in lyrics, in music, and in writing”
- more money for “rapid housing in the short term, and partnering with not-for-profits and co-ops in the mid- to long-term”
- “enhancements” to the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive
- a “Disability Inclusion Plan” that includes a new benefit, employment strategy, and improved eligibility process
- free and automatic filing for simple tax returns
- major investments in federal IT systems to modernize the provision of services
- legislation by the end of 2020 to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- a number of pledges on police reform and systemic racism, including a “whole-of-federal-government approach around better collection of disaggregated data”
- to protect the French language, strengthening the Official Languages Act, “among other things”

The speech also highlights a focus on the commitment to Indigenous Peoples in the throne speech of 2019, adding distinction based health legislation and Mental Health Strategy. Accelerating action plans on MMIWG and TRC calls to action; accelerating funding to address infrastructure gaps. Investments in resiliency and water infrastructure including capacity building; addressing systemic racism in the criminal justice systems, civilian oversight of policing, modernizing police training and RCMP reform, and policing as an essential service.

AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde Reacts to Throne Speech

[CPAC video link](#)

Linked in the video above, National Chief Bellegarde gave brief remarks to the Throne Speech by the Trudeau government. **Key Highlights:**

- Sticking out for the National Chief was the reaffirmation of their commitment to the priorities identified for Indigenous People in the 2019 Speech from the Throne, and adding
 - Two new pieces of legislation, one to implement the United Nations Declaration before the new year, and policing as an essential service, both of which were advocated for by the AFN.
 - Accelerating action on closing Infrastructure and water gaps, as well as the MMIWG National Action plan and the TRC Calls to Action.
- Throne speech gives the high level priorities, and AFN's next steps are to ensure these priorities are reflected in the next federal budget, The work continues.

Alberta Premier Jason Kenney Reacts to Throne Speech

[CPAC video link](#)

On Thursday, Premier Kenney took a media address to respond to the Trudeau government's throne speech. **Key Highlights:**

- Expressing overall displeasure with the tone and content of the speech, Premier Kenney said "I regret the federal government so spectacularly failed the mark yesterday." In further harsh words, he called Wednesday's speech from the throne a "fantasy plan for a mythical country."
- Among the issues raised, key to the premier was policies that would invade provincial jurisdiction, and accusation of pursuing policies that would require constitutional amendments.
 - Anticipating that other premiers share the concerns, he announced his intention to speak with colleagues and fellow premiers across the country.
- The premier also expressed displeasure that the throne speech failed to acknowledge the Canadian oil and gas sector and included policies that would damage the industry.
 - Federal tax incentives promised for Canadian companies developing net-zero technologies unfairly exclude the oil and gas sector Kenney stated.
- "There was space for every bright shiny object, every possibly political distraction. Kooky academic theories like intersectionality found their way into yesterday's throne speech, but not one word about health transfers for the provinces that are carrying 80 per cent of the costs as our population ages and we cope with a pandemic"
 - The Premier also stated that Alberta would attempt to opt out of a promised federal pharmacare program, saying the province already has its own.

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.