

Ontario Region Update

Information on COVID-19:
Canada.ca/coronavirus

Information for Indigenous communities on
COVID-19: www.sac-isc.gc.ca



INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA – August 18, 2022

COVID-19 Antiviral Treatments

Antiviral treatments like Paxlovid can be effective at preventing serious illness in individuals infected with COVID-19. Antiviral treatments are recommended for those at a higher risk of complications, including adults who are unvaccinated, over 60 years old, and/or have underlying health conditions. Community members can access free COVID-19 antivirals at pharmacies with a prescription from a healthcare provider. In remote and isolated communities, antivirals can be accessed through the nursing station via consultation with the community physician. If someone symptomatic wants to pursue antiviral treatment, it is important for them to speak to a healthcare provider as soon as possible. Antivirals work best when given early, usually within the first few days of symptoms. To check their eligibility, community members can visit [COVID-19 treatments in Ontario](#).

COVID-19 Funding Opportunities

On August 2, 2022, Canada increased financial support through the [Indigenous Community Support Fund](#) (ICSF). As provinces ease pandemic protocols and focus on economic recovery, the fund will support Indigenous organizations and communities as they transition their COVID-19 programming. The [ICSF supports](#) COVID-19 prevention and response activities. This includes \$31.8M available nationally for Indigenous organizations serving Indigenous Peoples, including those living in urban centers and First Nations living off-reserve, through the [needs-based request process](#). In Ontario, \$20.4M is flowed through direct formula allocations to communities. An ICSF [application template](#) and more information can be found on the [OneHealth Portal](#). Ontario has also been allocated \$23M in public health support funding for needs-based requests related to COVID-19 preparedness, response and recovery. First Nations and organizations delivering community-based services can apply via ISC Ontario Region through sac.covid-19fnihbontario.isc@canada.ca. An application email template can be found [here](#).

Ontario COVID-19 Cases

*As of August 12, 2022 at 8:00 A.M. EST

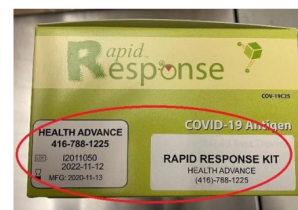
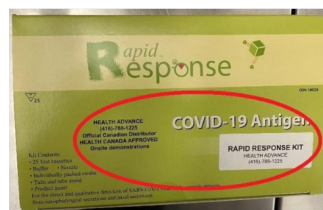
- **23,176 cases** confirmed in-community
- **403** active cases on reserve
- **66** deaths
- **22,707** resolved (97.9%)

Counterfeit COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests in Ontario

The Public Health Agency of Canada is [warning consumers about counterfeit BTNX Rapid Response COVID-19 antigen rapid test kits](#) found in Ontario. The counterfeit devices were sold online by distributor "Healthful Plus," who does not have the required licence to import, distribute or sell medical devices in Canada. The packaging of the counterfeit kits resembles authentic, licensed BTNX Inc. products and uses the BTNX Inc. device identifier "COV-19C25." However, the counterfeit kits:

- are labelled as manufactured by "Health Advance Inc." instead of BTNX Inc.;
- list Health Advance as an "Official Canadian Distributor," and
- include the text "Health Canada Approved." Claims of endorsement by government authorities, such as Health Canada, are not permitted.

If community members suspect they have a counterfeit kit, they should not use it and dispose of it in household garbage. They can also [report suspected counterfeit medical devices to Health Canada](#) online; toll-free by telephone at 1-888-339-9964; or by email at covid19@btx.com with the subject line "Suspected Counterfeit BTNX Tests."



Ontario COVID-19 Vaccines

*As of August 1, 2022

- **50.5%** of Ontario has received a primary series and 1 booster dose.
- **82.5%** of Ontario has completed a primary series.

For the most up-to-date national information on COVID-19, visit the [Indigenous Services Canada](#) website or the Government of Canada's Twitter and Facebook pages at @GCIIndigenous and @GCIIndigenousHealth.



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Canada

Other Updates

HIV Testing in Canada

Despite ongoing efforts to encourage HIV testing, systemic barriers to accessing HIV testing in Canada remain, including stigma and discrimination in healthcare settings.

On August 1, 2022, the [Minister of Health announced](#) a total of \$17.9 million for the distribution of HIV self-testing kits and other methods of HIV testing. This will improve access for populations most affected by HIV across the country, including people living in northern, remote, or isolated communities.

HIV medications and treatments are available through [Non-Insured Health Benefits](#) for eligible First Nations and Inuit, regardless of where they live. Community members can also visit [Canada.ca](#) for further information [about HIV and AIDS](#), and [how to get tested](#).

New Approach to Indigenous Tax Policy

After recent assessment and consideration of its existing federal tax policy, the Government of Canada will change its approach to phasing out section 87 of the *Indian Act*. Feedback from First Nations has made it clear that Modern Treaty beneficiaries should not have to exchange a tax exemption for their Modern Treaty rights, and that Indigenous governments should not be compelled to exercise their tax jurisdiction on a random timeline.

As a result, Minister Marc Miller (Crown-Indigenous Relations) has announced that the tax exemption will be available for continuation on the former reserves of Indigenous governments. This continuation will also be available on other First Nations reserves in Canada for prospective and existing Modern Treaty beneficiaries who are registered pursuant to the *Indian Act*.

To read Minister Miller's full statement and a general brief about the new policy, please visit [Canada's new approach to Indigenous tax policy](#).

Global Health Emergency: Monkeypox

On July 21, 2022, the Director General of the World Health Organization declared that the global monkeypox outbreak represents a [public health emergency of international concern](#). The Government of Canada will continue working closely with international, provincial, and territorial health partners to respond to the monkeypox outbreak in Ontario and across Canada.

At this time, **the risk of monkeypox infection to the overall Ontario population is low**. Most Ontario monkeypox cases (~75%) have been found in the [Greater Toronto Area](#) and have spread through close [person-to-person contact with someone infected](#). Although cases have mostly been identified among men who reported intimate or sexual contact with other men, anyone can get monkeypox.

For up to date, accurate information about the virus and infection, visit the dedicated monkeypox webpages from the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#), [Ministry of Health](#), and [Public Health Ontario](#).

These pages include frequently updated resources, including straight-forward explanations about what the illness actually is and how it spreads. For example, monkeypox symptoms, risk factors, prevention methods, and available treatment. New announcements about monkeypox can also be found through the [Ontario Newsroom](#).

Help is available whenever you need it.

Immediate support is available 24/7
for all Indigenous people in Canada.

Hope for Wellness Help Line and Chat
1-855-242-3310 or www.hopeforwellness.ca

Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line
1-866-925-4419

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
and Girls Support Line
1-844-413-6649



Please feel free to contact the FNIHB Ontario COVID-19 generic inbox: sac.covid-19fnihbontario.isc@canada.ca
if you or your community members have any information needs.