

Ontario Region Update

For more information:
Canada.ca/coronavirus

Information for Indigenous communities:
Canada.ca/coronavirus-info-indigenous



INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA – Ontario Region – November 3, 2022

Regional Director General Anne Scotton retiring

As you may be aware, Ontario Regional Director General Anne Scotton is retiring in May. She has taken on a six-month assignment in the Deputy Minister's office, effective this week, that will carry her through to her retirement from the public service. Her presence in Ontario Region will be greatly missed. Effective Monday, October 31, Michael O'Byrne stepped in to fill Anne's shoes as the Acting Regional Director General until a permanent replacement is hired. He looks forward to continuing to engage with you in his new role on the many issues and projects underway in Ontario Region.

Indigenous Veterans' Day

November 8 marks Indigenous Veterans' Day. It is estimated that more than 7,000 First Nations individuals and an unknown number of Inuit and Métis served in WWI, WWII and the Korean War. ISC joins you in recognizing, commemorating and remembering their sacrifices. On November 8, [we reflect on those who lost their lives and whose lives were forever changed](#). Let us not forget their service and sacrifice.



Poppy beaded by Algonquin Anishinabeg artist Mairi Brascoupe

2022 Ontario Region Joint Gathering

Last week, we had the pleasure of seeing many of you in person for the first time in two years at the 2022 Ontario Region Joint Gathering. We are delighted that those of you who could not be with us in person were able to join us virtually for important presentations and conversations. This year's Joint Gathering had the highest ever registration with approximately 450 attendees. We thank you for taking the time to join us and we hope you saw value in the event.

The Joint Gathering was a venue for open, honest and at times, difficult conversations. We are happy to have been able to hold space to have these conversations. We look forward to continuing to engage with you virtually and in person until the next Joint Gathering. Please do not hesitate to contact ISC staff to assist you as we continue to work together on critical issues affecting your communities.

Brian Indian of Onigaming First Nation announced as the 2022 National First Nations Water Leadership Award recipient

ISC is pleased to announce that [Brian Indian of Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation](#) is the recipient of the [2022 National First Nations Water Leadership Award](#). As one of the only certified water operators in his community, Brian Indian has worked tirelessly to ensure his community's water remains safe to drink. He is using his 17 years of experience to mentor two operators-in-training and organizes "Water Awareness" days to educate youth in his community by providing tours of the water plant. [Learn more about Brian](#) and [this year's nominees!](#)

Ontario COVID-19 Vaccines

**As of October 22, 2022*

- 80.6% completed a primary series
- 50.1% received a primary series at 1 booster dose
- 17.8% received a primary series and 2 booster doses

Ontario FN/I/M COVID-19 Cases

**Week of October 23-29, 2022*

- 219 active cases on reserve
- 15.4% decrease in cases this week
- 0 deaths
- 1 hospitalization

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 [@GCIndigenous](#) and [@GCIndigenousHealth](#).

Other Updates

Public health alert: fall respiratory viruses

ISC Ontario Region's Health Protection Unit has published a new public health alert about fall respiratory viruses. With the changing weather, the landscape of respiratory viruses is also changing. Flu season has started, COVID-19 cases continue, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is circulating more than usual in Canada. For more details, read the [full public health alert here](#), and learn more about RSV below.

Coming soon: emergency preparedness toolkit for respiratory illnesses

In the coming days, ISC Ontario Region's Health Protection Unit will be sharing with you a new emergency preparedness toolkit for respiratory illness. This kit will include guidance to help you prepare for and respond to COVID-19 and flu cases in your communities this fall.

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)

[Respiratory syncytial virus \(RSV\)](#) is circulating across Canada at higher-than-expected levels. Anyone can get RSV, but it is most dangerous for children and babies, for whom it can be life-threatening. The virus affects the respiratory tract, which includes the lungs and airways. Initial symptoms are typical of a cold and may include a runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, cough and fever.

While most people get better on their own – and may not even know they had RSV – the virus can cause more serious health issues like bronchitis or pneumonia. It is recommended to monitor your children for severe symptoms of RSV and seek medical attention if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- Wheezing
- Trouble breathing or faster-than-normal breathing
- Not eating or drinking
- Blue lips or fingernails
- Deeper or very frequent coughing
- Difficulty breastfeeding or bottle feeding (for infants only)

Practicing good public health measures, like frequent handwashing and wearing masks when attending large indoor gatherings can help to limit the spread of RSV and other respiratory viruses.

Flu shots available for individuals 6 months and older

Everyone in [Ontario aged 6 months and older can get a flu shot](#). Getting your influenza vaccine can help to prevent illness, and especially severe illness and death. Elders and children are particularly at risk of getting sicker from the flu than healthy adults. Flu shots are available at nursing stations and through some pharmacies, health units and other medical offices.

Call for applications: Indigenous Off-Diesel Initiative

Communities can now apply for funding through the second cohort of the [Indigenous Off-Diesel Initiative \(IODI\)](#). Delivered in collaboration with the [Indigenous Clean Energy Social Enterprise](#) and the federal government, the IODI is a successful clean energy training and funding program that supports Indigenous-led climate solutions in remote Indigenous communities currently using diesel for heat and power.

Individuals and teams from remote Indigenous communities in Canada who want to become Clean Energy Champions in their community are encouraged to [apply by the November 30, 2022](#) deadline. Please refer to the webpage for more [details on eligibility](#).

Government of Canada announces loan forgiveness to support economic recovery of Indigenous businesses

ISC, the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association and Métis Capital Corporations are supporting Indigenous small and medium-size enterprises by [forgiving up to 50 per cent of the COVID Indigenous Business Initiative loans](#), which provided much needed assistance during the pandemic.

These measures will benefit approximately 3,800 small and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurs across the country, and represent \$82.5 million in loan forgiveness. Implementation of the [Indigenous Business Initiative](#) loan forgiveness began mid-summer, and Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs are encouraged to contact their respective financial institutions and Métis Capital Corporations regarding their loans.

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.