

ONTARIO REGION UPDATE



IN THIS ISSUE

Health

- [Update on RSV protection](#) 2
- [Flu shot posters](#) 3
- [Mental health resources](#) 3
- [Winter fire safety](#) 3
- [Fall/winter blastomycosis](#) 4

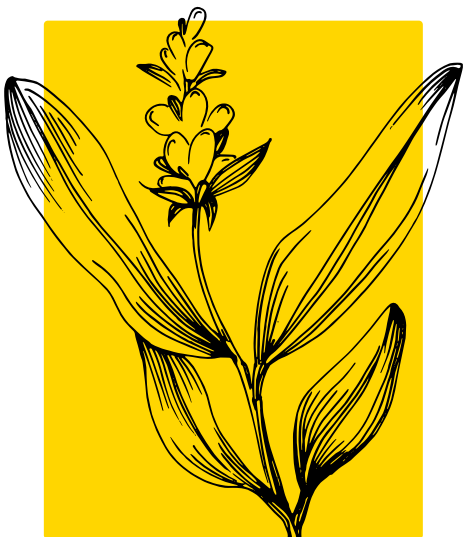
Funding & Operations

- [Apply: Emergency Treatment Fund](#) 5
- [Coming up: Joint Gathering](#) 5

Special Messaging

- [Indigenous Veterans Day](#) 6
- [In Remembrance](#) 7

*For newsletter questions, ou pour recevoir
une version française, please email
Ontario Region Communications:
ontario-communications@sac-isc.gc.ca*



Update on RSV protection: Vaccine and antibody availability

Respiratory syncytial virus – RSV – is a respiratory virus that can cause serious illness in infants, older individuals, and people who are immunocompromised. Like the flu, cases usually spike between the fall and early spring.

This RSV season, the [Province of Ontario is funding the RSV vaccine and an antibody](#) for some people who are at higher risk of severe illness, including:

- babies born in 2024
- babies born during the 2024-25 RSV season (approx. Nov. 2024-April 2025)
- high-risk children under 24 months old
- pregnant people who will deliver during RSV season
- high-risk adults age 60 and older, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis
- some pregnant people between 32 and 36 weeks gestation who expect to deliver during RSV season

Community members who may fit these criteria, or have children who do, are encouraged to speak to a health care professional or their local health unit about the RSV vaccine and antibody. [Click here for more information on the Province's RSV prevention program.](#)

Help is here whenever you need it

Support is available 24/7 for all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Please find a list of mental health helplines below that are able to provide culturally relevant support. To find more services and resources, [click here to go to the national Indigenous mental health page.](#)



Hope for Wellness Helpline

Phone: 1-855-242-3310

Online chat: www.hopeforwellness.ca

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Support Line

Phone: 1-844-413-6649

Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line

Phone: 1-866-925-4419

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Services

Phone: 9-8-8 (call or text)



Posters: Communicating about flu shots



The yearly influenza (flu) shot is now available in Ontario. Flu vaccines are still the most effective way to protect ourselves and reduce our risk of getting seriously ill from the flu.

[Click here to access seven posters](#) available for your use when talking about the flu with your community. They are unbranded and nursing station staff will also receive copies.

Available resources: mental wellness

The following resources are available to help you support your community's mental wellness:

- [List of Indigenous-led treatment centres and healing lodges in Ontario](#)
- [Thunderbird Partnership Foundation: Protocols for NNADAP Workers](#) for Intake, Referral, Discharge, and Aftercare Planning
- [Thunderbird Partnership Foundation: Free online courses](#) for NNADAP/NYSAP workers and First Nations community wellness workers



Winter fire safety

Winter is just around the corner and people are beginning to spend more time indoors. With the increase of indoor activities like cooking and cozying up to the fireplace, it's a great time to encourage community members to install smoke alarms, or if they already have them, to ensure they're in working order.

Please consider sharing the following quick tips with community members:

- Test smoke alarms monthly
- Change smoke alarm batteries according to the manufacturer's recommendation
- Replace smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old
- Choose the right spot for smoke alarms; install them on the ceiling rather than the wall

You can also share the following resources to promote other ways to stay fire-smart this winter:



- Shareable graphic: [Steps for Cooking Safely](#)
- Shareable graphic: [Burn Safety](#)
- Shareable graphic: [Tips for Winter Home Fire Safety](#)
- School resources: [Worksheets for kids and teens](#)
- Video – Cooking tips: [YouTube link](#) / [Facebook link](#) / [Instagram link](#)

All resources are courtesy of the First Nations' Emergency Services Society of British Columbia.

Blastomycosis reminder: Fall and winter diagnoses

[Blastomycosis](#) is a fungal infection most commonly diagnosed during the fall and winter (though it can be diagnosed at any time of the year). While blastomycosis is relatively rare, it can cause severe health outcomes and even death. Deaths from blastomycosis can be prevented through early diagnosis and treatment. Below are some key points to know.



Pictured above: one of the habitats where blastomycosis-causing fungus can be found

- Between 2018 and August 2024, cases were reported in 32 First Nations across Ontario.
- The fungus causing blastomycosis is found across Ontario, with the highest rate of infection in the north. It can grow in moist soil, or damp and rotting organic matter, like wood or leaves. It is often found close to bodies of water.
- Community education is one of the best ways to prevent serious health outcomes. Blastomycosis is treatable and [knowing the symptoms](#) can encourage people to seek treatment if their symptoms become concerning.
- Symptoms of blastomycosis can look similar to other respiratory infections. Community members should quickly see a healthcare provider and ask about blastomycosis if any of the following applies to them:
 - o Their symptoms do not go away in a few weeks
 - o Their symptoms worsen significantly, such as finding it difficult to breathe
 - o Their symptoms do not improve with prescribed antibiotics

Please consider using the **following resources** to help remind people about the potential for blastomycosis. They are unbranded for your use on social media and in your community.

- Infographic: Fast Facts for Social Media, parts [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)
- Infographic: Blastomycosis in winter [JPEG](#) / [PDF](#)
- Image: [Don't let blasto keep you inside!](#)
- Image: [Should I wear a mask?](#)
- Infographic: [Should I be worried about blastomycosis?](#)

Funding opportunity: Emergency Treatment Fund

Applications are now being accepted until November 8, 2024, for funding under Health Canada's [Emergency Treatment Fund](#). This funding is intended to support urgencies related to the overdose crisis. Indigenous communities and entities, including First Nations and national and regional Indigenous organizations meeting certain criteria, are eligible for funding. [Please click here to view the eligibility criteria](#).



Projects must show that they are responding to urgent needs to be considered. Some examples of activities that may be funded include:

- Harm reduction and overdose prevention supports, including training, drug checking and naloxone distribution
- Cultural and community programming, such as on-the-land healing
- Related capital costs (ex: building upgrades, vehicle purchases).
- Outreach activities, including support for mobile response teams, crisis counsellors, knowledge keepers, or other Indigenous professionals
- Recovery support

Please visit the [Emergency Treatment Fund](#) webpage for more information about applying, such as the [application guidelines](#), the [process](#), and details about upcoming [information sessions](#).

Coming up: ISC Ontario Joint Gathering



Indigenous Services Canada, Ontario Region is pleased to invite you to this year's Joint Gathering from November 5 to 7, 2024 at the Sheraton Toronto Airport Hotel. A welcome reception will be held on the evening of Monday, November 4.

The Joint Gathering brings together leadership from First Nations, Canada, and Ontario to strengthen relationships and define joint priorities. This year's agenda will feature panels on Mental Health and Addictions, Emergency Management, Long Term Care, Infrastructure, Child and Family Services and more. Join us to enjoy Drumming by All Nations Juniors, a Fashion Show featuring designer Leslie Hampton, and a performance from Kaha:wi Dance Theatre. ISC will sponsor First Nations Chiefs (or a proxy) and a plus one. Sponsorship is also extended to Indigenous Representative Organization leadership, Executive Directors of Tribal Councils and Health Directors.

Please visit the 2024 Joint Gathering [website](#) to review the agenda and [register here](#). Please note that the Sheraton Hotel is now fully booked, but the Crowne Plaza Hotel is a short walk from the venue, and offers a shuttle service directly to the Joint Gathering. [Click here](#) to book your room online or call 1-416-675-1234 and reference "Joint Gathering 2024". The full draft agenda can be viewed at [this link](#).

We also welcome registered delegates to schedule meetings with Regional Director General Michael O'Byrne and/or Regional Executive Lisa Westaway via [Faye Horne](#) on the days bordering the Joint Gathering, Monday November 4th and Friday November 8th.

We look forward to seeing you in November!

Indigenous Veterans Day

Friday, November 8 is National Indigenous Veterans Day. It dates back to 1994, when Indigenous veterans were finally recognized for the unique hardships and sacrifices they faced in military service. For many, this recognition is deeply personal, as they remember their loved ones who were deployed by the same governments that refused them equal treatment at home. The weight of their service is only made heavier by the knowledge that reconciliation has barely begun, centuries after Indigenous fighters first allied with Canadian settlers during conflict. There is no recognition significant enough to account for this complexity and their sacrifices, but we hold space to try. For those doing the same, the texts, images and references on this page are available for your use, be it for an event on November 8 or any other time throughout the year.



Communication resources:

- 🌸 Veterans Affairs Canada: [Classroom activities and lesson plans](#)
 - 🌸 Example: [Remembrance Dog Tags](#)
- 🌸 Veterans Affairs Canada: [People and stories](#)
- 🌸 National Screen Institute: [Cree Code Talker](#) documentary
- 🌸 Anishinaabemowin@home: [National Aboriginal Veterans Day and Remembrance Day](#)
- 🌸 Cree Literacy Network: [Remembrance Day](#)



Pictured left: National Aboriginal Veterans Monument in October 2024

Sculptor and painter Lloyd Pinay (Peepeekisis First Nation) designed the statue. It was unveiled on June 21, 2001 in Odawa/Ottawa, after much work by the National Aboriginal Veterans Association (now replaced by [AVA Vets](#)) and the [Congress of Aboriginal Peoples](#).

When viewing its full 360 degrees, the Monument shows four warriors, two men and two women, flanked by four animal figures. They each face one of the four cardinal directions. Below them, there is a plaque, describing the statue as “...in sacred and everlasting honour of the contributions of all Aboriginal Canadians in war and peacekeeping operations.”

A full transcript of the Monument’s inscription can be found [online here](#), alongside its history and more photos.



In Remembrance... Flander's Gitigaaning / Flanders yikwahaskānihk / In Flanders Fields

Ngoji gitigaaning, me'gwe waaskonenh,
Naami jiibyaatig, niinwi zhimaagnishag
Nda zhigishnami.
Gaawii geyaabi ka noondziinad'aan
Baashkziganan ji debwe'ig.

Manidook noonggwa ndaawmi.
Ngii-bmaadzimi,
Ngii waamdaanaa
Biidaabang miinwaa bigishmok.
Ngii zaagiwe' mi miinwaa
Ngii zaagigoomi.
Noonggwa dash maampii
bekaa nda zhigishnami.

Ngii-nkweshkaanaa miigaadwin.
Kiinwaa dash noonggwa,
We'eni ginaagdwenjigek,
We'eni ni-bmaadizik.

Giishpin dash naagdwenjigesik,
Niinwi zhimaagnishak gaa nimaajaajig,
Gaawii nga-mnwenziimi,
Naami jiibyaatig, me'gwe waaskonenh
Zhigishnaang Flander's gitigaaning.

Translation: Wiikwemkoong Anishinaabemowin
Kinoomaagewin (Anishinaabemowin)

Flanders yikwahaskānihk wāh-wēpāstanwa
wāpikwaniya
tastawāyihk pimitāskwahikana kā-nāh-
nīpitēstēki
ta-kiskinawācihtāhk ita kā-pimisiniyāhk;
ēkwa kīsikohk
aniki ē-sōhkē-nikamocik piyēsīsak ē-
pimihācik
ētataw pēhtākosiwak iyikohk ē-māh-
matwēwēhk askīhk.

onakataskēwak niyanān. namōya māka kayās
nikī-pimātisinān, nikī-mōsihtānān kā-
sākāstēk, nikī-wāpahtēnān kā-pahkisimok.

nikī-sākihiwānān mīna nikī-sākihikawinān, māka
ēkwa nipimisininān
ōta Flanders yikwahaskānihk.

kiyawāw ēkwa naskwāhihkok kinōtinākaniminawak
ē-kī-sākōcihikoyāhkik, kitāsōnamātinān
iskotēw; ohpinamok ēkwa kiyawāw.
kīspin ānwēhtawiyāhki niyanān kā-nakataskēyāhk,
namwāc nika-aywēpinān, āta ē-ohpikiki
wāpikwaniya
ōta Flanders yikwahaskānihk.

Translation: Jean Okimāsis and Arok Wolvengrey
(Plains Cree, based on Woods Cree translation)

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead: Short days ago,
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved: and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe

To you, from failing hands, we throw
The torch: be yours to hold it high
If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields

Author: John McRae (English)