

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 – September 1, 2022

New resources: Responding to a COVID-19 outbreak

As fall approaches, people will gather indoors more often, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. ISC Ontario Region has developed three resource packages to support communities in the event that the fall and winter bring more COVID-19 cases and outbreaks. These packages are intended for community leadership and staff to provide information about how to get support, and to provide resources that can be shared with community members. They are:

- [How to activate government support and resources](#)
 - Includes information on how to access federal support during a COVID-19 outbreak; how to get rapid tests and personal protective equipment; and how to request additional funding support.
- [Communications resources for communities](#)
 - Provides a variety of communications products that can be used during a breakout of COVID-19. These include key messages for leadership; social media posts; posters; radio scripts; NIHB information; and activities for kids.
- [Mental wellness resources for communities](#)
 - Includes communications resources about mental wellness, such as social media posts; posters; brochures; and radio scripts.

The packages are available on the [OneHealth.ca Portal](#). Please feel free to share the link to the Portal with community staff who may wish to access these packages or any of the other resources available.

Ontario COVID-19 Cases

*As of August 26, 2022 at 8:30 A.M. EST

- **24, 178 cases** confirmed in-community
- **542** active cases on reserve
- **67** deaths
- **23, 569** resolved (97.4%)

Health Canada authorizes pediatric boosters

As of September 1, 2022, [Ontario children 5 to 11 years old](#) are eligible to receive their first COVID-19 booster dose. This recent approval follows Health Canada's own [authorization](#) of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for use as a booster dose in children 5 to 11 years old. This is the first COVID-19 vaccine authorized as a booster dose in this age group. Ontario, the provincial government and Ministry of Health will review the pediatric booster recommendations and authorization made by Health Canada and the National Advisory Committee on Immunizations (NACI).

NACI continues to recommend that a [two-dose primary series](#) of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine should be offered to eligible children 5 to 11 years old. For eligible children who are moderately to severely immunocompromised, NACI recommends a primary series of three doses of an mRNA vaccine. [Click here](#) to read NACI's recommendations in detail.

Promoting Vaccines

The 2022-2023 school year is here, and along with it, more indoor gatherings in community spaces. In addition to the new resources about responding to a COVID-19 outbreak, ISC has developed [these new communication resources](#) that encourage COVID-19 vaccination for the fall season. Consider incorporating these into your vaccination outreach plan this autumn.

Ontario COVID-19 Vaccines

*As of [August 14, 2022](#)

- **50.7%** 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](#).

Other Updates

New recruitment and retention allowances for nurses in remote and isolated communities

Nurses working in remote and isolated communities are some of the most resourceful and resilient health care professionals across Canada. In acknowledgement of their efforts and the current challenges in staffing, the Government of Canada and the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada have reached an agreement to increase the existing recruitment and retention allowances for ISC nurses working in these locations.

This increase will take effect starting September 1, 2022, and continue through to March 31, 2025. If a new collective agreement is reached before the end of March 2025, the eligibility period for the increase will be adjusted accordingly. The current terms ensure that the increase to recruitment and retention allowances will be provided to both full-time and part-time ISC nurses delivering critical services in remote and isolated First Nation communities.

Moving forward, the agreement provides the following:

- Triple the initial recruitment allowance, from \$2,250 to \$6,750
- Triple the allowance provided after twelve months of employment, from \$3,250 to \$9,750
- Triple the annual retention allowance, from \$5,500 to \$16,500

This agreement applies to the 50 remote and isolated communities where ISC nurses are located: Ontario (24), Manitoba (21), Alberta (4), and Quebec (1).

For more information from the [news release](#), as well as applications for nursing positions in communities across the province, interested individuals can visit ISC's webpage on Canada.ca, [Apply for nursing jobs in First Nation communities](#).

Canada to provide inflation relief through Income Assistance benefits

Inflation, the rising cost of living, and ongoing disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic have placed additional stress on First Nation families and communities. Given the rising cost of living, ISC recognizes that current income assistance rates may not be sufficient to address needs.

To help ensure that First Nations individuals and families who rely on income assistance will be able to cover their essential living expenses, the Government of Canada has committed an additional \$128.6 million to supplement the [On-Reserve Income Assistance Program](#). ISC is working on the final administrative details for this supplemental funding.

As with previous supplemental payments, First Nations will have the flexibility to allocate the supplemental funding through alternate means to better respond to the Income Assistance clients' needs. This includes initiatives such as community food pantries. Administrators from the On-Reserve Income Assistance Program should start receiving the supplemental funding by the end of August 2022. For more information, On-Reserve Income Assistance Program administrators can contact the [ISC Ontario regional office](#).

For interested individuals living on-reserve, there is no deadline for applying to the Income Assistance Program. Application methods vary, but can be accessed through each individual's/family's respective band office.

First Nations individuals and families living off reserve will continue to receive their benefits through provincial and territorial programs. For more information, First Nations individuals and families living off reserve should contact their province or authority.

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.