

# COVID-19 Update

For more information:  
Canada.ca/coronavirus

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



## INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA – Ontario Region – June 24, 2021

Today is an extremely difficult day. Once again, we are faced with horrific news that another unmarked gravesite has been discovered, this time, at the Marieval Indian Residential School. Our thoughts are with Cowessess First Nation, Survivors, their families and all Indigenous communities across Canada as we grieve the loss of 751 Indigenous people, including children. It is a cruel injustice that we will never know who they may have become, and we will never get to see their potential fulfilled.

On Monday, we marked the 25th National Indigenous Peoples Day. On this important day, Bill C-15, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Act received Royal Assent, enshrining UNDRIP into Canadian law. This tragedy is a reminder of Canada's shameful history of colonialism and that we must address and correct injustices against Indigenous peoples before we can achieve true reconciliation. The passage of UNDRIP is an important step towards defining concrete measures to move forward on reconciliation, combating prejudice and eliminating all forms of violence, racism and discrimination, including systemic racism and discrimination. We must continue this work together in honour of those who never got the chance.

Resources are available to support the emotional and psychological needs of First Nations communities. The Hope for Wellness Help Line is available 24/7 at 1-855-242-3310 or via [online chat](#). The National Indian Residential School Crisis Line is also available 24 hours a day at 1-866-925-4419. We stand with all Indigenous people during this painful time.

*Garry Best, Regional Executive and Anne Scotton, Regional Director General*

### Update on Operation Remote Immunity (ORI) 2.0

Between February and April, Operation Remote Immunity (ORI) – a partnership between Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) and Ornge, Ontario's provider of air ambulance and critical care transport services, and the Government of Ontario – was responsible for the administration of more than 25,000 doses to 31 remote First Nations communities in Northern Ontario, as well as the municipality of Moosonee.

On May 31, ORI 2.0 was launched to deliver Pfizer vaccine doses to youth aged 12 to 17 to the same communities.

Weeneebayko Area Health Authority (WAHA) is leading the vaccination teams for the northeast communities it serves, while Ornge is leading teams for NAN communities in the northwest. This initiative is being supported by community coordinators, who have been instrumental in logistical planning and setup in advance of the arrival of the vaccination teams.

As of June 20, more than 2,000 doses had been delivered. While most doses are being given to youth, adults who have not yet received their vaccinations are still invited to attend the clinic to receive their shot.

### Former Residential Schools: Accessing Funding

ISC Ontario Region is setting up a cross-directorate team to help coordinate and support requests from communities and survivor groups related to former Residential School sites. The Region has also taken steps to set up an interdepartmental group, including Infrastructure Canada, FedNor and Heritage Canada and others, to share information on programs and funding sources that will support investigation, commemoration, education, language and culture and infrastructure activities.

In addition, ISC Ontario Region is working with the team at Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada who is accepting funding applications for activities related to site investigations, commemoration and community and survivor gatherings. Additional information on the funding available through CIRNAC [here](#).

### COVID-19 Vaccines for Ontario

\*All data reflects totals from 8 p.m. the previous day

- **225,188** Daily doses administered
- **13,321,816** Total doses administered
- **3,542,439** People fully vaccinated

On June 21, the Government of Canada [announced](#) the first phase of easing border measures for eligible travellers entering Canada beginning on July 5, 2021. More details can be found [here](#). Although public health measures are starting to ease across the province and country, [variants of concern](#) continue to spread rapidly. To keep your community safe, it is important that all those eligible become fully vaccinated by getting both doses of the vaccine. Even after vaccination, and as society begins to reopen, it is important that residents continue to follow public health measures to protect those who may not yet be vaccinated.

### New COVID-19 Communications Resources

The [OneHealth Portal](#) is routinely updated with new resources. Notably, you can now find the following new items on the Portal:

- Nine [public service announcements](#) produced by ISC. These are available as audio clips for radio and video clips.
- The latest version of the [ISC Vaccines Toolkit \(Update 5\)](#), which includes key messages on COVID-19 and vaccines for youth; new awareness resources for kids; and more.
- An updated version of the [Regional COVID-19 Communications Resources List](#).

### Government of Canada launches Ask the Experts campaign to encourage vaccine

Across Canada, more and more people are getting vaccinated. To build on this momentum, the Government of Canada is launching an [Ask the Experts campaign](#) to reduce barriers to vaccinations and close the gap among populations with lower vaccine uptake. The campaign features short videos of trusted healthcare professionals and other experts who answer some of the most common questions about what vaccinations mean and do. They are designed to help Canadians make informed decisions about the COVID-19 vaccinations and their health.

### New Guidelines on Mixing mRNA Vaccine Doses

On June 17, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) [updated its advice](#) on receiving a different mRNA vaccine as a second dose than what was given for the first dose. NACI's guidance has changed due to the growing availability of both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines.

NACI's new guidance says that individuals who received a first dose of an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) should ideally be offered the same mRNA vaccine for their second dose. However, if the same vaccine is not readily available, or the vaccine used for the first dose is unknown, another mRNA vaccine is considered safe and interchangeable and should be used to complete the series.

### Call for Applications for Own-Source Revenue in Indigenous Communities Initiative Now Open

To support communities that have experienced a reduction in own-source revenue because of the COVID-19 pandemic and, as a result, have struggled to continue providing core community programs and important services to community members, the Government of Canada has created the Own-Source Revenue in Indigenous Communities Initiative (OSRICI). The call for applications is now open and communities can apply to access funding.

To be eligible, communities must be able to demonstrate a decline in own-source revenue. Support is available to assist with the preparation of applications and financial statements. For more information and for details on how to apply and access application supports, please visit the [OSRICI webpage](#).

### Recognizing and Managing Anxiety and Depression During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been stressful for many individuals, families, and communities. As the pandemic continues, learning how to cope with stress can help minimize its effects on health and well-being. The Government of Canada supports Indigenous organizations and communities in developing mental wellness resources. Links to more information can be found on ISC's [mental health information page](#). The Hope for Wellness Helpline offers immediate, toll-free telephone and online-chat based support and crisis intervention to all Indigenous people across Canada. Help is available in English and French, and upon request in Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut. Call the Helpline at 1-855-242-3310 or chat online at [hopeforwellness.ca](#).

### COVID-19 Cases

\*As of June 23, 2021, @ 4:30 p.m.

- **2,305** confirmed in-community
- **115** active cases on reserve
- **24** deaths
- **2,281** resolved (99%)



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