

ISC Alberta Region-Update for Chiefs

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) develops and delivers holistic approaches to social, healthcare and infrastructure services to our Indigenous partners by working collaboratively to improve access to high quality services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

January 20, 2023

Health Information

Respiratory Illnesses - Current Situation

COVID-19 hospitalizations continue across the province of Alberta. There were 856 individuals hospitalized and 29 in the ICU as of January 16, 2023. There were also 27 COVID-related deaths reported since the previous update. Getting fully immunized for COVID-19 and influenza offers the best protection possible against both of these viruses.

Vaccines and Treatments

Both the influenza vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine are available at your community health centre, and can be safely administered to individuals ages 6 months and older. Both vaccines can be given at the same time.

- **COVID-19:** Vaccines remain the best form of protection for individuals, families and communities against serious outcomes of COVID-19. For information on current vaccine eligibility and availability in Alberta, please click [here](#).
- **Influenza:** The influenza vaccination is safe and is the best way to prevent influenza. Since launching the provincial influenza campaign on October 17, 2022, a total of 6,995 influenza vaccines have been administered on-reserve in Alberta. The Toolkit for Promoting Influenza Vaccinations in Communities is available on the OneHealth website and can support your community health team in promoting influenza vaccine uptake.

Save the Date - January 24 Telehealth Session

On January 24th there will be a telehealth session on Hepatitis C, with Dr. Lee a liver specialist. Click [here](#) to register.

MOH Rx

Hepatitis C is a virus that can infect the liver. People who are infected usually have no symptoms for a long time until the infection starts to damage their liver.

Hepatitis C virus ("Hep C") is a blood-borne virus meaning it spreads through contact with blood. This can happen if someone who has Hep C shares personal equipment like razors or toothbrushes; if they share equipment for injecting, snorting or smoking drugs; also through piercing or tattoo equipment that was not properly cleaned; and, less commonly, through having sex with someone that has Hep C.

Individuals might be at higher risk of getting Hepatitis C if they have tattoos done outside of a licensed tattoo business, have shared the drug equipment listed above, have received a blood transfusion before 1992, or have travelled to countries that have high rates of Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C medications are covered in Alberta and are very good at treating the virus. The medications for Hepatitis C are pills that are usually taken for a couple months. Hep C infections that go untreated can lead to serious liver problems like liver failure or liver cancer. Treating Hep C early can prevent these serious outcomes.

There is no vaccine for Hep C. (There are vaccines for Hepatitis A and B). Prevention for Hep C includes safer sex practices like using condoms, not sharing drug equipment with others, and getting testing for Hep C. A blood test is used to detect Hepatitis C. Contact your health centre or primary care provider about testing for Hepatitis C.

On January 24th there will be a telehealth session on Hepatitis C, with Dr. Sam Lee, a professor and hepatologist from the University of Calgary. Click [here](#) to register.

For more information on Hepatitis C, please click [here](#).

Question of the Day

What do I need to know about individuals with Post COVID-19 Condition (Long COVID) experiencing stigmatization?

Individuals with Post COVID-19 Condition experience non-infectious symptoms such as fatigue, cough, shortness of breath, brain fog, joint pain, headaches, diarrhea or rashes that persist for longer than three months following acute infection with SARS-CoV-2. High levels of stigma experienced by some COVID long-haulers are associated with more intense symptoms, reduced physical function and loss of employment due to disability, according to [newly published research](#) from The Lancet medical journal.

Stigma is considered to be a social determinant of health, a non-medical factor much like poverty, lack of educational opportunities or food insecurity that can have a major impact on physical well-being.

To prevent stigmatization of those suffering with Post COVID-19, showing empathy for those who are affected and speaking openly with them about their challenges assist them in feeling supported and not feeling alone.

For more information on recovering from Covid-19, Long Covid and Post-Covid Condition, please click [here](#).

Links and Resources

For Respiratory Illnesses:

- [Toolkit for Promoting Influenza Vaccinations in Communities](#)
- [COVID-19 communication resources for community health and safety](#)
- [AHS – Health Education and Learning \(HEAL\)](#)

Wastewater Monitoring

If you would like to observe current trends in wastewater data, please click [here](#). To view wastewater data from the University of Calgary, click [here](#).

Health Canada

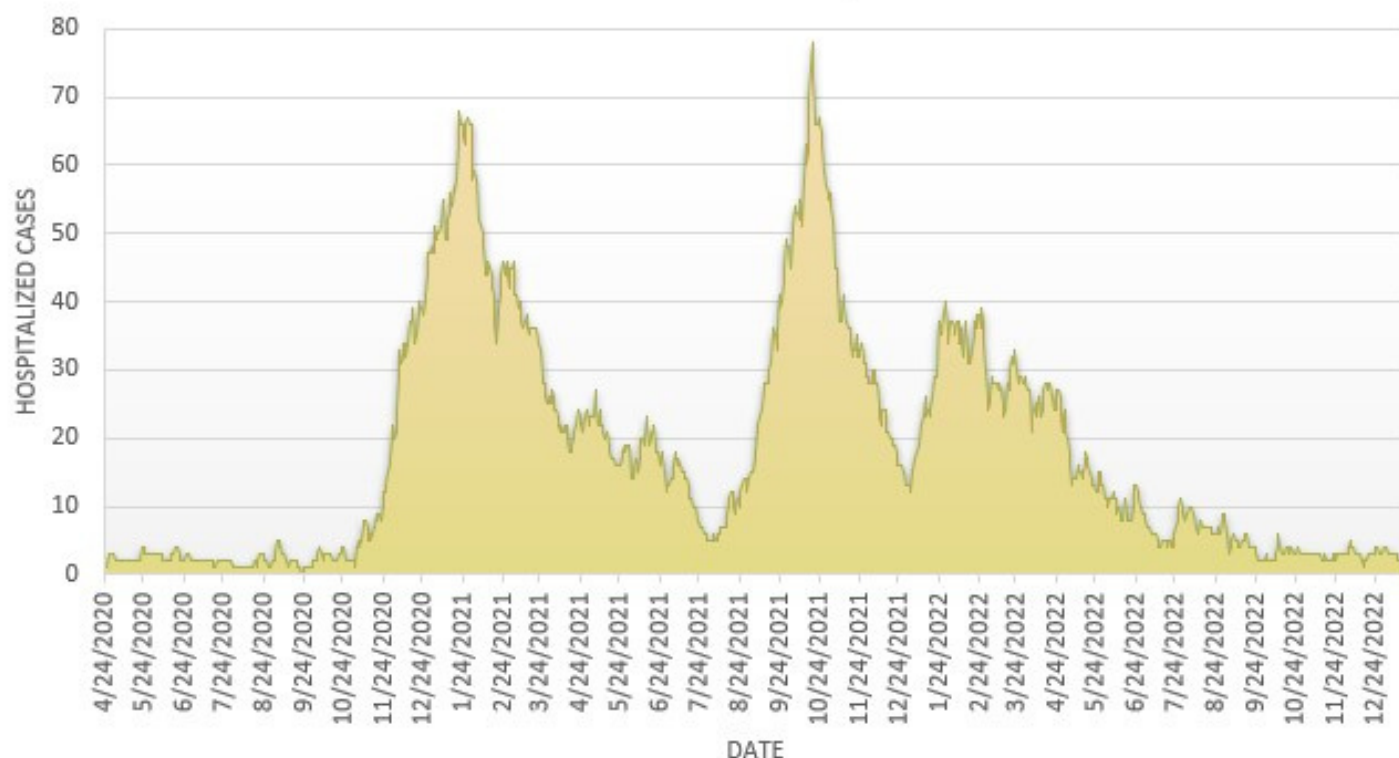
- Webpage link with downloadable poster: [COVID-19: Stay up to date with your vaccinations - Canada.ca](#)
- [Video: COVID-19 vaccines: Continue to take action \(canada.ca\)](#)

Reminder: Telehealth Session Recordings Available

Recordings of recent telehealth sessions, along with their resources and presentations, are available on First Nations Telehealth Network website for subsequent viewing. To view the library of recordings, click [here](#).

COVID-19 Epidemiological Data

Number of Current COVID-19 Cases from First Nations Communities in Hospital



Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in First Nations Communities in Alberta, January 18, 2023

Treaty Area	Total Cases	Hospitalizations* Ever (includes incidental hospitalizations)	ICU (includes incidental ICU admissions)	Currently in Hospital (includes incidental hospitalization)	Deaths
Total (First Nations Communities)	21,029	1,118	259	2	182
Treaty 6	9,448	460	102	1	72
Treaty 7	6,025	357	93	0	66
Treaty 8	5,556	310	64	1	44
Alberta^	625,948	33,434	4,593	856	5,470

*Each ICU admission is also included in the total number of hospitalizations

^Data are up-to-date as of end of day January 16, 2023

VACCINE SNAPSHOT



145,756 doses of vaccine have been administered in **46** Nations (bands) in Alberta.



At least **48.6%** of First Nations people aged 65 years and older living on-reserve or Crown land have received **three doses** of the vaccine.



At least **20.2%** of First Nations people aged 12+ living on-reserve or Crown land have received **three doses** of the vaccine.



At least **20.0%** of First Nations people aged 65 years and older living on-reserve or Crown land have received **four doses** of the vaccine.



At least **68.6%** of First Nations people aged 12+ living on-reserve or Crown land have received their **first dose** of the vaccine.

Additional Updates

From Indigenous Services Canada

REMINDER: Submit COVID-19 Operation and Capital Public Health Needs Funding Requests before February 17

In order to review all needs-based submissions and ensure receipt of funding prior to the fiscal year end, please submit any outstanding COVID-19 Operational and Capital Public Health Needs Funding as soon as possible, but no later than February 17th, 2023. For Capital requests (e.g. operational & maintenance costs for COVID isolation/surge support facilities), please ensure all invoices/receipts are included.

This funding is subject to the existing public health funding eligibility requirements and communities are requested to respect the guidance. For details on the Public Health funding, including eligible items, please click [here](#) for further information. If you have any questions regarding 2022-23 COVID-19 Public Health Needs Funding and how to submit a request, please email: cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab@sac-isc.gc.ca or connect with your COVID-19 Community Liaison.

Inflation top-up for Income Assistance Inflation Relief Funding

In fall 2022, ISC provided First Nations with one-time inflation relief funding for their Income Assistance clients to address hardships that Income Assistance clients are facing as disruptions related to the pandemic continue. ISC is happy to announce another round of inflation relief funding for Income Assistance clients, which will be flowed out in February 2023. Effective January 1, 2023 the Province of Alberta increased their Income Assistance (IA) rates by 6%. As ISC mirrors provincial policy, the ISC Income Assistance program has matched the new provincial rates, also effective January 1, 2023. This funding allows for full flexibility of the provision of funding to Income Assistance clients within the Income Assistance guidelines. Some options for eligible expenses include bulk food purchases, wage subsidies, purchase of appliances for Income Assistance clients and direct benefits to Income Assistance clients. Should you have any questions, please reach out to Social Development Manager Morgan Reid at 780-495-4370 or morgan.reid2@sac-isc.gc.ca

Call for Nominations – 2023 National First Nations Water Leadership Awards

The nomination period for the 2023 National First Nations Water Leadership Award is now open until March 31, 2023. Eligible candidates include First Nations individuals, community members or leaders, organizations or communities who have demonstrated leadership and made outstanding contributions to the advancement of clean and safe drinking water in First Nations communities through their extraordinary involvement in First Nations water-related issues by:

- **Providing leadership** during community drinking water emergencies or water infrastructure challenges, such as ending long-term drinking water advisories
- **Demonstrating innovation** in relation to drinking water such as the development of new practices
- **Inspiring others** through the creation, promotion or advancement of Indigenous community-based outreach or programs in support of clean and safe drinking water
- **Sharing knowledge** through their work and achievements that support clean and safe drinking water including water system operation, relationship building, training or mentoring
- **Demonstrating collaboration skills** through developing strong relationships and working in partnership with others to improve water outcomes

To learn more about the nomination process and to learn about last year's winners, please click [here](#).

More individuals entitled to register under the Indian Act

In 2019, Bill S-3 eliminated known sex-based inequities from the registration provisions in the Indian Act.

Before Bill S-3 eliminated known sex-based inequities from the registration provisions in the Indian Act in 2019, First Nations women could not pass on the right to registration to their descendants to the same extent as First Nations men.

Now, with the removal of sex-based inequities, more individuals are entitled to register under the Indian Act.

Additional Updates

Please share with your community the "Are you entitled to register under the Indian Act?" poster below to help increase awareness of the changes:

- [colour poster](#)
- [black and white poster](#)

Winter Home Fire Safety Campaign - from the First Nations' Emergency Services Society and Indigenous Services Canada

The National Winter Home Fire Safety Campaign is being delivered to First Nation communities across Canada. The intent of the campaign is to create community-based awareness of home fire hazards encountered during the winter months and learn how to mitigate them during the winter months. Click [here](#) to learn more and access printable materials.

From the Government of Canada

Call for proposals to address gender-based violence through promising practices and community-based research

Women and Gender Equality Canada has launched a [call for proposals to address gender-based violence through promising practices and community-based research](#). This funding opportunity aims to fund projects that will develop, put in place, and evaluate or scale up promising practices to strengthen the gender-based violence sector. It will also fund research projects that build knowledge to help address the needs of specific groups that are at risk of gender-based violence or are underserved when they experience it.

The deadline to submit applications is February 3, 2023. For more information on how to submit an application, visit [Call for Proposals to Address Gender-Based Violence Through Promising Practices and Community-Based Research](#).

Upcoming Consultations -- Canada introduces Bill C-38 to further address inequities in the registration and band membership provisions of the Indian Act

On December 14, 2022, **Canada introduced Bill C-38, which seeks to address some of the remaining inequities in the registration and band membership provisions of the Indian Act.** These legislative amendments to the Indian Act seek to address 4 areas, including enfranchisement, individual deregistration, natal band reaffiliation and membership, as well as outdated and offensive language related to dependent persons. It is expected that approximately 3,500 individuals could be newly eligible for registration as a result of the proposed legislation. The Government of Canada has also committed to co-develop and launch a collaborative consultation process on broader issues related to registration and band membership under the Indian Act, including the second-generation cut-off. **These consultations are expected to start in early 2023.**

Government of Canada strengthens food security in Indigenous, remote and Northern communities across the country

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada **announced support for up to 79 new projects across Canada that promote food security in Indigenous, remote and Northern communities under the fourth phase of the Local Food Infrastructure Fund (LFIF).** These community-led projects aim to have an immediate and long-lasting impact on food systems in communities that are experiencing the highest food insecurity, by improving processing, production and distribution capacity at the local level.

The December 16, 2023, announcement of up to 79 approved projects follows the **official launch of the fourth phase of LFIF on March 23, 2022.** In this phase, funding for each project ranges from \$100,000 to \$500,000 to support larger initiatives that will have a long-term impact in communities.

Additional Updates

Bill S-219, An Act Respecting a National Ribbon Skirt Day, receives Royal Assent

Bill S-219, An Act Respecting a National Ribbon Skirt Day, [received Royal Assent on December 15, 2022](#), and is now an Act of Parliament. This Bill was passed thanks to the commitment and leadership of Isabella Kulak, her family, Chief George Cote of the Cote First Nation, Treaty 4 Territory in Saskatchewan, Senator Mary Jane McCallum, and Jenica Atwin, Member of Parliament for Fredericton, who began advocating for this day after Isabella was shamed for wearing her ribbon skirt to school.

Every year on January 4, National Ribbon Skirt Day will provide an opportunity for everyone in Canada to recognize, learn about, and celebrate the importance of Indigenous traditions and expressions of culture.

Library and Archives Canada launches new Listen, Hear Our Voices funding cycle for 2023–2024, in support of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation documentary heritage

Library and Archives Canada (LAC) has [launched the 2023–2024 funding cycle of its Listen, Hear Our Voices initiative](#). Listen, Hear Our Voices provides funding to support First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation organizations throughout Canada in their efforts to digitize and preserve language and culture materials, and build digitization and preservation capacity for their communities. [Twenty-five Indigenous organizations across the country received funding](#) totalling \$1.7 million for 2022–2023 as part of the initiative's third funding cycle.

Interested organizations should consult the [Listen, Hear Our Voices](#) section of the LAC website for information on [how to apply](#). Program staff are available for advice and support with funding applications.

The deadline for applications is January 31, 2023.