

ISC - Alberta Region COVID-19 Update for Chiefs: April 14th, 2021



Updates

Mental Wellness:

Lockdowns and limited travel options create mental health concerns. As such, we are continuing to leverage all funding opportunities possible to ensure that communities have the financial resources to provide mental health and addictions services. This fiscal year, every community will receive enhanced Land Based Healing funds to support the provision of critical services grounded in culture and tradition. Details to follow via a funding letter. The COVID-19 pandemic has demanded that programs and services evolve and adapt to virtual platforms as a way to genuinely meet clients where they are. In this spirit, Mark Amy Treatment Centre is launching a Virtual Intensive Day Treatment Program. This program is open to all First Nations persons in Alberta, and will work collaboratively with existing community supports for each individual client. More details available [here](#). We will communicate specifics on the next intake in a future Chief's Update. Additionally, the Mental Wellness Directorate launched an Addictions Continuum Telehealth series to support Nations in innovative and alternative service delivery. Our first session focused on Harm Reduction, and included presenters from the Virtual Opioid Dependency Program and Boyle Street Services. Watch the session [here](#). As a reminder, the Hope for Wellness Helpline provides immediate, culturally safe, telephone crisis intervention support for First Nations, Inuit and Métis, 24 hours a day, seven days a week (1-855-242-3310 or the online chat at www.hopeforwellness.ca).

Mixing Vaccines:

While several studies continue to be undertaken internationally, public Health Authorities in Canada recommend that you do **NOT** mix vaccines between first and second doses- if your first dose is a Moderna dose, your second dose should also be Moderna. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) still recommends a person's vaccine series "be completed with the same COVID-19 vaccine product." Research continues and recommendations regarding the mixing of doses may change as more evidence becomes available. More information can be found [here](#).

Question of the Day

Q: What other opportunities are there to learn more of the current COVID-19 status and ask questions of experts?

A: Starting TODAY, the First Nations Health Managers Association Virtual Town Halls return. These are live at 11:00am at www.ihtoday.ca/townhall and are also broadcasted Saturdays at 3:00pm on APTN. These are excellent resources for trusted COVID-19 information with health professionals both inside and outside the government. Have a question for our panelists? Email FNHMA@ihtoday.ca

This week will feature Dr. Adams as well as Indigenous Emergency Response specialists from the Canadian Red Cross.

National Info

[Epidemiological summary of COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities](#)

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Measures to reduce COVID-19 in your community](#)

Alberta Cases:

as of April 13th, 3:30 p.m. MST

AB Total Confirmed (Apr.12th – 1,081 new cases)	163,119
AB Recovered Cases	146,011
Confirmed First Nations On-reserve Cases	7,387
On-reserve Recovered Cases	7,104
On-Reserve Active Cases	207
Calgary Zone Confirmed	64,234
Central Zone Confirmed	12,890
Edmonton Zone Confirmed	60,679
North Zone Confirmed	16,020
South Zone Confirmed	9,027
Unknown Confirmed	269
Deaths due to COVID-19	2,021
On-reserve Deaths due to COVID-19	76
Variants of Concern Confirmed in Alberta	12,154

“Your Health, Our Strength”

Led by Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, this campaign was developed to provide Indigenous People with credible information about the COVID-19 vaccines. The site will include a toolkit, blog entries from Elders and Indigenous medical professionals on vaccines and vaccine hesitancy. This will also be coupled with a social media campaign and other outreach initiatives to ensure everyone knows the facts about the vaccines being offered in order to make the best decision for your health, and the health of your community. Your health is our strength! <https://yourhealthourstrength.ca/>

Regional Snapshot



More Alberta case data can be found [here](#)

Useful Links

COVID-19 Telehealth TOMORROW: Thursday April 15 from 1:30 – 3 pm.

- via Zoom, go to <https://fntn.zoom.us/join> and enter Meeting ID: 938 3251 0997 and Passcode: 224892
- from an audio line, dial 1-587-328-1099 and enter Meeting ID: 938 3251 0997 and Passcode: 224892
- from a videoconference-enabled room, go to www.fntn.ca to register Questions can be submitted in advance of or during the presentation to VChelp@FNTN.ca, or via Zoom during the presentation. This session will be recorded and posted to www.fntn.ca.

Topics to include updates on variants, vaccines, pandemic planning.

Facebook Video on Variants:

The presence of variants could lead to an increase in COVID-19 cases in Canada. Continuing to follow local health guidelines and be vaccinated are the best way to stop the spread. Here is a link to a [Facebook post](#) from Health Indigenous and Inuit about the variants.

Vaccine Update



Vaccine Rollout Expanding to Front-Line Health-Care Workers:

Currently, most First Nations communities are in the process of administering their Phase 2B vaccine for individuals over the age 18 with chronic conditions. FNIHB will be working with communities to identify those individuals 16 and 17 years of age with chronic conditions- these individuals will be able to receive Pfizer vaccine (only Pfizer vaccine is licensed for use in those 16 and 17 years of age, Moderna is only licensed for 18 years and above). Starting this past Monday, as part of Phase 2C of Alberta's rollout, nurses, doctors, dentists and any health-care workers in patient care facilities or providing direct patient care on reserve are now eligible to receive the vaccine. While many health workers on your Nations have been immunized, this further step will help prevent COVID-19 from spreading to patients and people at highest risk of severe outcomes.

Variants of Concerns – Considerations:

Current evidence suggests the variants of concern are more contagious and spread more easily than the original COVID-19 strain, but are not more deadly. In Alberta more than 50% of cases are now the U.K. variant and it is likely to become the dominant strain. While it is not yet clear if these new variants cause more severe illness, however, they are more contagious and increased spread can result in more illness, hospitalizations and deaths if they become common in our communities. Symptoms in variant cases are the same as the wildtype COVID-19 virus, including cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, and sore throat. To protect yourself and those around you, follow all public health guidance, including:

- reduce the number of close contacts
- wash your hands
- wear a mask
- practice physical distancing
- stay home when sick
- get tested if you have any symptoms of COVID-19
- follow all public health measures in effect
- know the isolation and quarantine requirements, and isolate outside of home when possible
- get immunized when it's your turn

These are all critical steps to preventing the spread of the virus, regardless of what strain it is.

Vaccine Snapshot

*as of April 13th



23,498 doses of vaccine have been administered in **46** Nations (bands) in Alberta.



At least **15,994** First Nations people have received their first dose.



At least **3,375** First Nations people aged 65 years and older living in reserve or crown land have received their first dose.



At least **2,839** First Nations people aged 65 years and older have received two doses of the vaccine.



At least **7,504** First Nations people have received two doses of the vaccine.