

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: November 27, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

Please email questions about COVID-19 to: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca

The number of active COVID-19 cases on reserve continues to be the highest they have been since the start of the pandemic and the situation is critical; this virus is highly contagious. On November 24, Alberta declared a state of public health emergency and has enacted new mandatory measures to prevent the growing number of cases, and to protect communities and the health system. New cases continue to be linked to social gatherings (e.g. birthday parties; social visitation; non-essential travel), community events (e.g. in-person band meetings; wakes), and congregate care settings (e.g. health centres, long term care centres). I know we have been working tirelessly to slow this spread. However, we are in a critical time and we must take even more action now, today, to protect our lives and health system. **Key public health measures include:** avoiding social gatherings; organizing virtual meetings; staying home and not going into work or out into the community when unwell; limiting non-essential travel; and using masks. It is only through our continued collective efforts that we can change this critical trend in cases.

Status Update

Additional First Nations on-reserve data (Alberta) is provided at the end of this document (*Appendix A*).

Number of Cases Reported* as of Nov 27, 2020:

**numbers are changing rapidly and may change after this bulletin is released*

Alberta: There are **14,052 Active Cases** of COVID-19 in Alberta.

	Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada)	First Nations On Reserve in Canada (Indigenous Services Canada)	Alberta (Alberta Health)
Confirmed Cases	353,097	3524	51,878
Deaths	11,799	30	510
Recovered	280,923	2102	37,316

First Nations living on and off reserve (Alberta): There are **2,520** confirmed cases of COVID-19 to date and **23** deaths in First Nations living on and off reserve in Alberta. Confirmed cases are: **567** in Calgary Zone; **715** in Edmonton Zone; **154** in South Zone; **687** in North Zone; **395** in Central zone and **2** unknown. *Further Information:* Aggregate data on COVID-19 First Nations cases in Alberta is available at: <http://www.afnigc.ca/main/index.php?id=home> and <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx>

First Nations living on reserve in Alberta:



Location (By Zone)	Confirmed Cases	Active Cases	Recovered
Calgary Zone	299	113	185
South Zone	76	10	64
Central Zone	272	143	128
Edmonton Zone	67	35	32
North Zone	426	75	349
TOTAL	1140	376	758



Testing in Alberta – Update

- As of Nov 27, 2020, the total number of reported swab samples collected to date in First Nation communities in Alberta is **50,605**.
- **Testing continues to be a powerful tool to help limit the spread.** If you have symptoms, please stay home and book a testing appointment.
- Alberta has revised its targeted COVID-19 testing to further reduce testing wait times and speed access to results. Priority testing continues to be available to:
 - Any person exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19
 - All close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases
 - Anyone linked to a known outbreak
- **Reminder:** Testing outside of the provincial testing criteria must be reviewed and supported by the ISC-AB MOH. Please send testing enquiries to the ISC-AB MOH by: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca
- Parents/guardians in Alberta can access COVID-19 results for their children through *MyHealth Records*. Albertans aged 14 and up can also access results. [Join today](#).

Vaccine Watch

- **[New]** ISC is working nationally with PHAC on the distribution of the COVID-19 treatments and vaccines once available. First Nations are a priority group for receiving approved vaccines.
- **[New]** ISC-AB is **actively working** with provincial colleagues to support a comprehensive distribution approach inclusive of First Nations as a priority population once implemented, and will provide updates as they become available.
- Government of Canada (PHAC) has released [‘What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine for Canada’](#) with information on a future COVID-19 vaccine.
- The current status of COVID-19 treatment and vaccine trials, as authorized by Health Canada, can be viewed [here](#).
- **Reminder:** Influenza immunizations for this flu season continue to be a priority in the midst of COVID-19. ISC-AB is working with First Nation health centers and communities to support influenza and pneumococcal **immunization programs**. Please contact your local health staff or FNIHB-AB for more information.

Alberta’s Relaunch- Update

- Alberta remains in stage two of the provincial relaunch strategy.
- **[New]** Alberta has implemented new mandatory targeted public health measures (all existing measures and legal orders remain in place). The following measures apply to all [communities on the enhanced list \(purple zones\)](#). For more information on these new measures please [click here](#).
Mandatory Measures
 - No indoor social gatherings in any setting; outdoor gatherings are a maximum of 10 people.
 - Weddings/funerals are a maximum of 10 people, no receptions permitted
 - No festivals or events
 - Grades 7-12 are moved to at-home learning (Nov 30-Jan11); K-Grade 6 are moved to at-home learning after break until Jan 11.
 - Working from home where possible
 - Places of worship are permitted at 1/3 normal attendance, with mandatory masking
 - Restricted access to services & businesses. For details [see here](#).
 - Wear a mask in all indoor work settings, except when alone in a workspace or an appropriate barrier is in place.
- **[New]** Alberta has revised its [contact tracing process](#) given the significant increase in cases. AHS will endeavour to directly notifying contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases in three priority groups: Health care workers; Children; and individuals living or working within congregate or communal facilities. Albertans who have tested positive, and who are outside the 3 priority groups are **asked to identify their own close contacts of exposure and provide to AHS** by visiting www.ahs.ca/closecontacts. Using a text messaging notification system, AHS will notify close


contacts whose phone numbers were provided by the individual. **Note:** ISC-AB MOH's will continue to **support existing contact tracing notification processes for First Nations** on-reserve. For more information please contact sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca.

- **[New]** AHS has provided public health guidance during COVID-19 for congregate care settings, such as long-term care, include: [Outbreak Guidelines in Congregate Living](#); [Continuous Masking Updates](#); and [Care Setting Influenza Guidance](#)
- **[New]** The Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic (AIVCC) will be hosting a **public launch/information** session in partnership with the First Nation Telehealth Network on Dec 1, 11am-12pm. Register at: <https://fntn.ca/>. For more information on the AIVCC please see: <https://aivcc.ca/>, [facebook page](#) or email: info@aivcc.ca
- **Reminder:** ISC-AB has developed several resources to support communities during COVID-19, which are available on [OneHealth](#). ISC-AB Medical Officers of Health (MOHs) and Environmental Public Health Officers (EPHOs) continue to be available to provide public health support.


What the Government of Canada and ISC/FNIHB-AB Are Doing

- **[New]** The Government of Canada is providing **immediate funding assistance** (\$52.15M) to Indigenous communities/organizations in Alberta to directly support Nation-driven, on the ground **pandemic response efforts**. This new funding is in addition to other recent funding allocations (COVID-19 Mental Wellness Funding; ICSF 2). Please contact your Community Liaison Team members or email: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca for more information.
- **Reminder:** Applications for the **needs-based funding** for the Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF) 2nd round are **due Nov 30**, with funding to be disbursed by ISC Dec, 31, 2020. For details on how to apply, including selection criteria, please see [here](#). For additional questions please contact your Community Liaison Team member or email: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca
- The next ISC-Alberta COVID-19 First Nations MOH **Telehealth** session is to be confirmed for early in the New Year. Previous telehealth sessions are recorded and are available at: <https://fntn.ca/>

Mental Health and Wellness- Update

-  **[New]** Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)'s, Alberta Division is in Year 3 of its [Rural Mental Health Project](#) to **strengthen remote and rural** community mental health capacity through training and building connections. Indigenous communities are encouraged to apply. For more information please contact: rmh@cmha.ab.ca
- **[New]** Individuals and front-line workers can access mental health and substance use support, resources, and counselling during COVID-19 through **Wellness Together Canada**. [Click here](#) for more information.
- **Reminder:** AHS, in partnership with Togetherall, has launched a free, anonymous, [virtual mental health network](#), offering various mental health services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [Register Here](#)

Additional Updates

-  **[New]** The Canadian Red Cross, with funding from ISC, has launched an online Toolkit and [Help Desk](#) resource for Indigenous Leadership, providing support for **managing the impacts of COVID-19** that best meets the needs of their communities. The Help desk is available from 7am to 7pm, seven days a week, and can be reached at 1-833-937-1597. Additional information can be found in their video: ['How Red Cross is Working with Indigenous Leadership to Manage COVID-19'](#).

Additional information

If you have general questions about COVID-19 or require current information, please refer to the following websites which are trusted information sources and are being regularly maintained and updated. **Should you have questions about COVID-19, please do not hesitate to email: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca**

OneHealth - <https://www.onehealth.ca/ab/ABCovid-19>

InfoPoint (First Nations Health Manager Association)- This site is designed for First Nation health managers to access credible sources of information related to COVID-19. To access this service, call the toll-free number at **1-855-446-2719**, or email InfoPoint@fnhma.ca

Alberta Health

- Coronavirus info for Albertans: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

Alberta Health Services

- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>
- Indigenous Peoples & Communities (COVID-19):
https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17101.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1hzie9aLgDLr0K7Qi80mb9ozNby5dK6VZO3CFhhKgLrALUpo6_wGmSxUc

Indigenous Services Canada COVID-19 (Updates available in several Indigenous languages)

- COVID-19 & Indigenous Communities: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1581964230816/1581964277298>

Mental health and coping resources are available for individuals who are struggling or need a little extra support.

- The Mental Health Help Line [1-877-303-2642](tel:1-877-303-2642) is available 24/7 to provide advice and referrals to community supports near you.
- Hope for Wellness Help Line [1-855-242-3310](tel:1-855-242-3310), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Kids and teens can call the Kids Help Phone: [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868).
- Text COVID19HOPE to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe to a free service supporting mental health and wellness in a time of stress and isolation.
- Family Violence Resources: <https://www.alberta.ca/family-violence-prevention-resources.aspx>
- **Text4Hope-Addiction Support** is designed to help Albertans dealing with psychological issues related to addiction. Text "Open2Change" to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe.

<p>Anyone with specific questions or concerns about their health is encouraged to call Health Link at 811 for health advice.</p>

APPENDIX A: Additional COVID-19 Data in First Nations On-Reserve in Alberta

Fig 1.

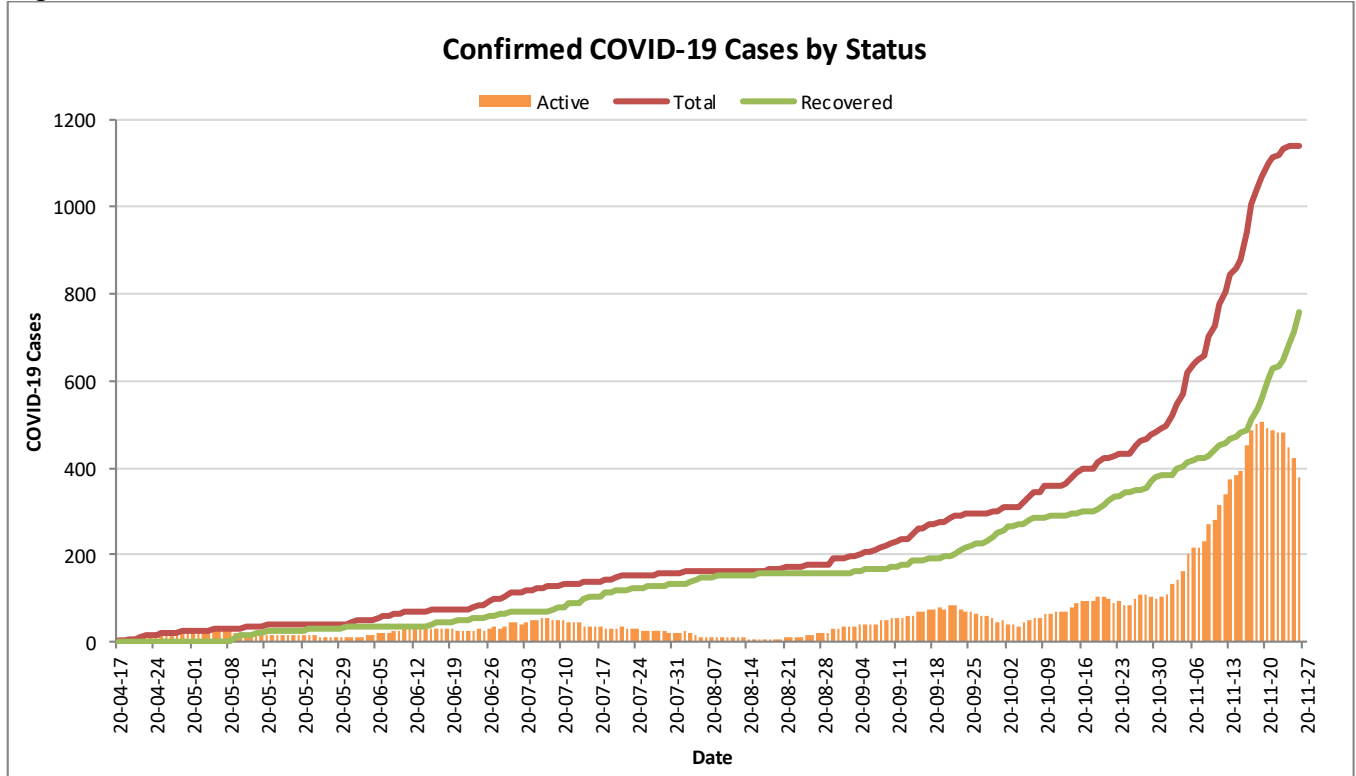
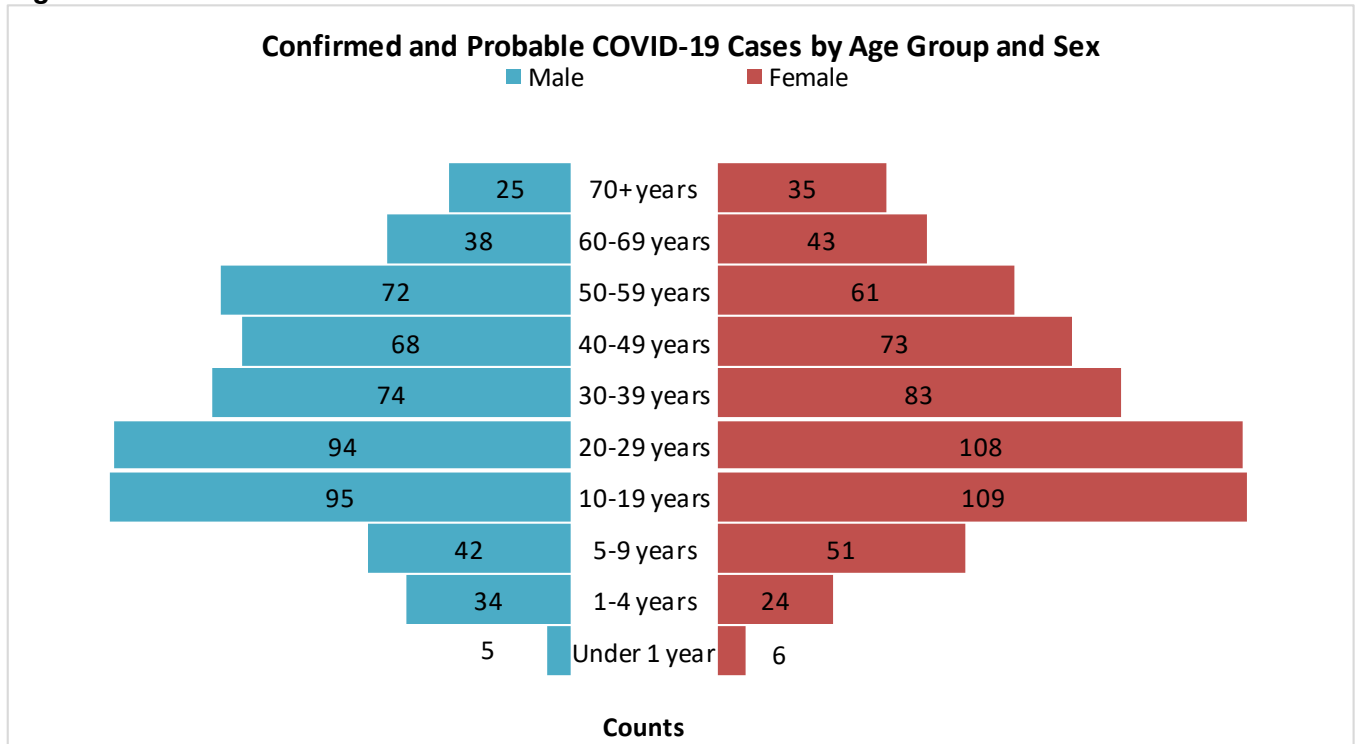


Fig 2.



Among the 1140 COVID-19 cases, almost half (49.4%) of all cases occurred among individuals between the ages of 10-39 years. Females accounted for 53.3% of cases in this age group.