

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: October 2, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

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

In recent weeks, we have continued to see a concerning rise in COVID-19 cases. This calls for our renewed efforts in following the public health measures we know have been successful in containing this virus. While we all may be feeling tired from the disruptions in our daily lives, it is even more important today to limit non-essential travel from communities, to practice physical distancing, to stay home when we aren't feeling well, wash our hands and to wear a mask when distancing is not possible. It is critical to stress again the importance of limiting social contacts and gatherings. To get through this pandemic, we all need to recommit to support each other in following these important measures to keep ourselves, our elders, our families and communities safe.

Status Update

Additional COVID-19 First Nations on-reserve data (Alberta) is provided at the end of this document (Appendix A).

Number of cases reported* as of Oct 2, 2020:

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

Alberta: There are **1,596 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	160,535	730	18,235
Deaths	9,319	12	269
Recovered	136,350	604	16,370

First Nations living on and off reserve (Alberta): There are **689** confirmed cases of COVID-19 to date and **11** deaths in First Nations living on and off reserve in Alberta; **169** in Calgary Zone; **155** in Edmonton Zone; **80** in South Zone; **263** in North Zone; **21** in Central zone and **1** 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	57	2	55
South Zone	50	-	49
Central Zone	9	4	5
Edmonton Zone	8	-	8
North Zone	171	30	138
TOTAL	295	36	255



Testing in Alberta – Update

- As of Oct 2, 2020, the total number of reported swab samples collected to date in First Nation communities in Alberta is **30,332**.
- **Testing continues to be a powerful tool to help limit the spread.**
- **[New]** The Government of Canada has [announced](#) an agreement to purchase COVID-19 rapid tests and analyzers, to support provinces in increasing their abilities in testing and getting rapid results. This includes the ID NOW rapid COVID-19 testing device that can produce results in 15 minutes. More information will be provided as it becomes available.
- In-community Rapid Testing has begun in Alberta and has initially been launched in one First Nation. **Note:** Rapid Testing is **only used in outbreak contexts**, with symptomatic individuals and contacts of confirmed cases. It is not used for routine screening purposes.
- **[New]** As of Oct 1, 2020, parents/guardians in Alberta can now access COVID-19 results for their children through *MyHealth Records*. Albertans aged 14 and up can also access results. [Join today](#).
- Testing in Alberta **continues to prioritize** those with symptoms and vulnerable groups at higher risk of getting or spreading COVID-19. Priority testing is available to any person exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, all close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases, workers and/or residents at specific outbreak sites and communities with active cases. This will reduce testing wait times and speed access to results.
- Asymptomatic testing in Alberta is also available to the following:
 - School teachers and staff
 - Health care workers
 - Those working or residing in group living facilities, including long-term care
 - Those experiencing homelessness
 - Travelers who require testing prior to departure
- ISC-AB continues to offer asymptomatic testing for **any First Nation community with active cases or outbreaks**.
- Communities desiring to expand their local testing capacity are encouraged to reach out to FNIHB-AB through local health staff or email: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca

Vaccine Watch

- **[New]** ISC-AB has developed [Influenza Immunization Recommendations during a Pandemic](#) with recommendations for First Nation communities on flu vaccinations during COVID-19.
-  ISC has created various **influenza awareness resources** that can be shared, including [posters](#) and [social media posts](#).
- **Reminder:** ISC-AB is working with First Nation health centers and communities to support the implementation of influenza and pneumococcal **immunization programs this fall** in the midst of COVID-19. Please contact your local health staff or FNIHB-AB for more information.
- ISC-AB MOH's are **actively monitoring** the national **COVID-19 vaccine trial** stages and results taking place and will provide updates as they become available.

Alberta's Relaunch- Update


- Alberta continues in stage two of the provincial relaunch strategy.
- **Reminder: AHS** remains the primary source for ordering PPE for **staff working in health care facilities and isolation centres** in First Nation communities. Continue ordering this PPE by completing and forwarding the AHS PPE order form to AHSECC.OperationsIH@albertahealthservices.ca. PPE required for other workers can be purchased through commercial vendors and cannot be obtained through AHS. PPE for essential workers is an eligible expense through the COVID-19 ISC health needs funding. For any questions please contact: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca.

- *[New]* Alberta has released guidance for Halloween celebrations [here](#).
- *[New]* AHS has developed a [resource document](#) with advice and recommendations during COVID-19 for the handling of deceased persons in various settings, including professionals working in funeral services, non-professionals handling deceased persons, and operators of non-AHS and AHS care facilities.
- *[New]* Alberta Health has a new section, 'If a Student Shows Symptoms', on their K-12 school re-entry site identifying the required actions and recommendations to take if a student shows symptoms of COVID-19: <https://www.alberta.ca/k-to-12-school-re-entry-2020-21-school-year.aspx>
- *[New]* ISC-AB has developed several resources to support communities with in-person school programming including, [Public Health Considerations for School Bus Transportation](#) and [Returning to School During COVID-19 FAQ](#), which also includes the ISC-AB notification process when there is a confirmed case in a First Nations school. Additional resources 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 for school re-entry and general relaunch.
- More information on the phases of Alberta's relaunch and key public health measures can be found at [Alberta's relaunch strategy](#), [Alberta's Safely Staged COVID-19 Relaunch](#), and [Alberta Biz Connect](#).

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

- *[New]* ISC has [announced](#) 32 Indigenous organizations in Alberta that received approximately \$11.8M in funding through the Indigenous Community Support Fund's off-reserve and urban stream to address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Reminder:** ISC continues to provide funding to support [access to additional public health measures during COVID-19](#), including increased surge health staffing capacity required to support immunizations, testing etc. For more information on this funding and/or to submit a request for funding, please contact your Community Liaison Team member or email: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca
- The Government of Canada has launched a national [COVID-19 Tracing App and Self-Assessment Tool](#), as well as a new [COVID-19 Mobile Alert App](#).
- The next Alberta **COVID-19 First Nations Telehealth session** will be held in Oct [TBC]. Previous telehealth sessions are recorded and are available at: <https://fnfn.ca/>.

Mental Health and Wellness- Update

-  **Canadian Red Cross** *[New]* The Canadian Red Cross, with funding from ISC, has launched a [Help Desk](#) resource for Indigenous Community Leadership to provide support on planning for health emergencies, general health guidance, as well as community wellness and protection resources, such as **Psychological First Aid**.
- ISC has announced [\\$82.5 million in mental health and wellness funding to support Indigenous communities adapt and expand mental wellness services](#) to address growing demand in the context of the pandemic. Region-specific funding distribution will be shared as soon as this information becomes available.

Additional Updates

- The next version of this bulletin will be distributed on **Friday, October 16, 2020**.

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=IwAR1hzie9aLgDLr0K7Qi80mb9ozNby5dK6VZO3CFhhKqLrALUpo6_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 **Alberta Health Services - Indigenous Health Cultural Support Line** provides afterhours support Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 4-8PM. Call toll free at **1-855-735-6766**
- 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.

*Onset date is the earliest of the “date of onset of symptoms” and “specimen collection date”

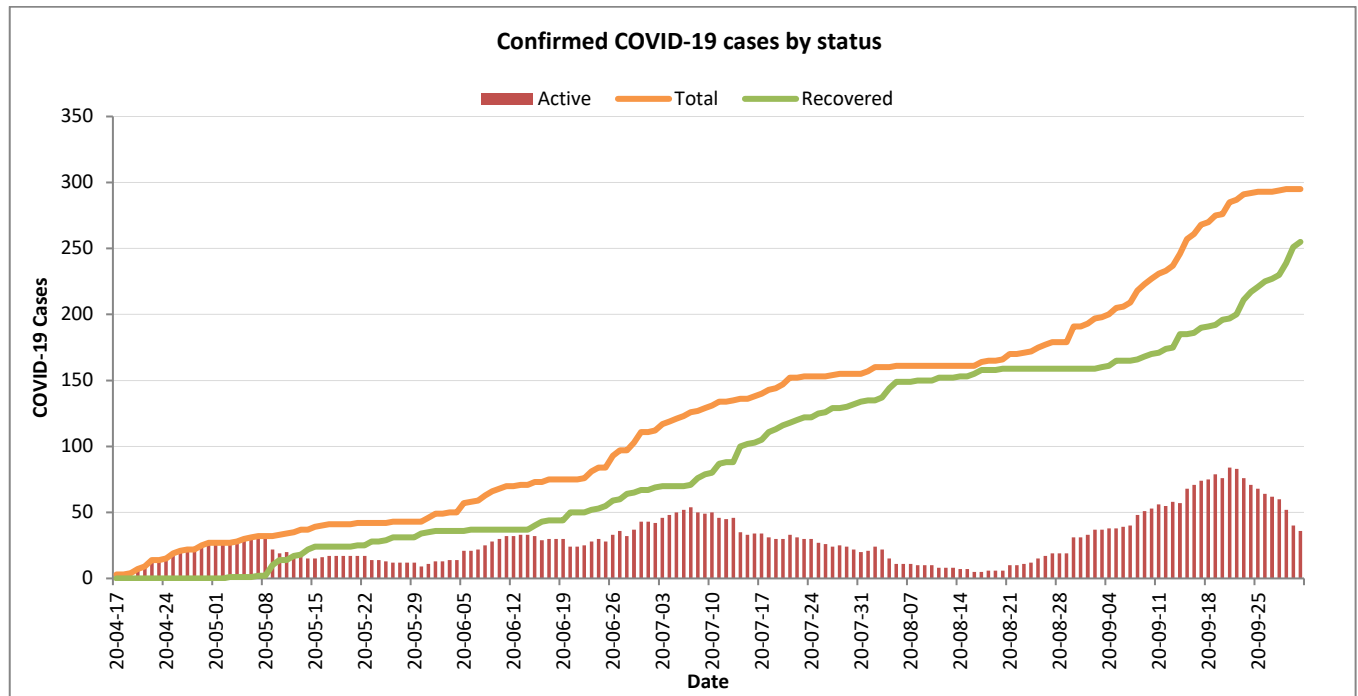


Fig 2.

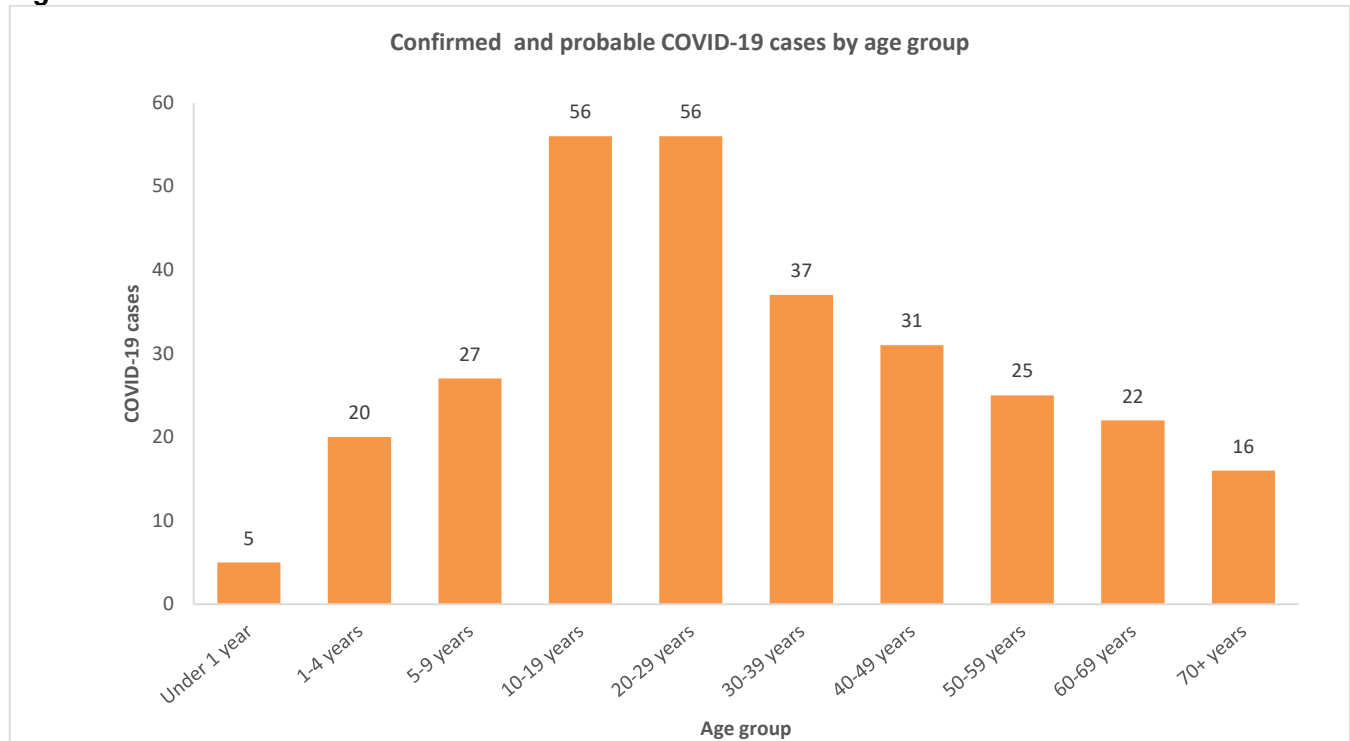


Fig 3.

