

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: October 16, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

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

There continues to be a troubling rise in COVID-19 cases in Alberta, both on and off reserve. COVID-19 cases in First Nations living on-reserve remains one third the rate among other Canadians, with cases largely linked to private gatherings, and exposure from those outside of communities. As we grapple with these increasing infection rates, we need to redouble our efforts to limit non-essential travel, physically distance with others, stay home when we aren't feeling well, wash our hands, and wear a mask when distancing is not possible. These times are challenging, but we were successful in preventing, responding and stopping the spread of COVID-19 during the first wave through actively following these measures. This continues to be our best line of defence to safely get through this pandemic together.

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 Oct 16, 2020:

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

Alberta: There are **2,738 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	191,732	954	21,443
Deaths	9,699	13	288
Recovered	161,490	727	18,417

First Nations living on and off reserve (Alberta): There are **854** confirmed cases of COVID-19 to date and **12** deaths in First Nations living on and off reserve in Alberta; **196** in Calgary Zone; **216** in Edmonton Zone; **85** in South Zone; **293** in North Zone; **62** 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	61	4	56
South Zone	50	-	49
Central Zone	43	31	12
Edmonton Zone	11	2	9
North Zone	185	15	168
TOTAL	350	52	294




Testing in Alberta – Update

- As of Oct 16, 2020, the total number of reported swab samples collected to date in First Nation communities in Alberta is **37,143**.
- **Testing continues to be a powerful tool to help limit the spread.**
- 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.
- **Reminder:** 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](#).
- Alberta continues with **targeted COVID-19 testing** to reduce testing wait times and speed access to results. 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.
- Asymptomatic testing in Alberta continues to be 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

- **Reminder:** Influenza immunizations for this flu season continue to be a priority in the midst of COVID-19. ISC-AB has developed [Influenza Immunization Recommendations during a Pandemic](#) with recommendations for First Nation communities. ISC has also created various **influenza awareness resources** that can be shared, including [posters](#) and [social media posts](#).
- ISC-AB is also 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.
- **[New]** To address potential increased demand for the influenza vaccine, First Nations might consider partnering with a local pharmacist to support vaccination clinics. If interested, please contact your local pharmacist.
- **[New]** A list of current COVID-19 treatment and vaccine trials in progress, as authorized by Health Canada, can be viewed [here](#). CBC is also providing an updated [vaccine tracker](#).
- 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.
-  **[New]** Alberta has released guidance for Halloween celebrations [here](#), including door hangings to let trick-or-treaters know if a house is actively participating or not due to COVID-19.
- **[New]** Effective October 8th, Alberta has implemented additional voluntary public health measures in the **Edmonton Zone** to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 due to the increase of cases in the city. For more information on these additional measures please [click here](#).

- **Reminder:** AHS remains the primary source for ordering PPE for staff working in health care facilities and isolation centres in First Nation communities. Order this PPE by completing and forwarding the AHS PPE order form located on [OneHealth](#). 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.
- **[New]** Alberta has updated guidance for school re-entry, which can be found [here](#). It also has developed information on [COVID-19 outbreaks in schools](#), [isolating students](#) and [fact sheets](#) for back to school.
- **[New]** Alberta has developed new [guidance for parents](#) of children attending school and/or childcare.
- ISC-AB has developed several resources to support communities with in-person school programming, 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 for school re-entry and general relaunch.

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

- **[New]** The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) has launched a new customizable [tool kit](#) resource to support workplaces across Canada operate safely, and prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- **[New]** The next Alberta **COVID-19 First Nations Telehealth session** will be held **Oct 22**, with an MOH COVID-19 update, school outbreaks and a data presentation by Blackfoot Confederacy. Previous telehealth sessions are recorded and are available at: <https://fntn.ca/>.
- **Reminder:** ISC continues to provide funding to [access additional public health measures during COVID-19](#), including increased surge health staffing capacity required to support immunizations, testing etc. For more information, please contact your Community Liaison Team member or email: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca

Mental Health and Wellness- Update

-  **[New]** [Jack.Org](#) is a Canadian organization focusing on youth mental health, with numerous COVID-19 specific online resources available, including a youth mental health hub.
- **[New]** 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](#)
- **[Reminder]** 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, such as **Psychological First Aid**.

Additional Updates

- **[New]** Blood Tribe, along with DerRic Starlight's *Nuppets*, has launched their first video in a series called "[Listen to Granny](#)", of COVID-19 safety outreach information. This premier video focuses on mask wearing for children.
- The next version of this bulletin will be distributed on **Friday, October 30, 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=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.

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

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”

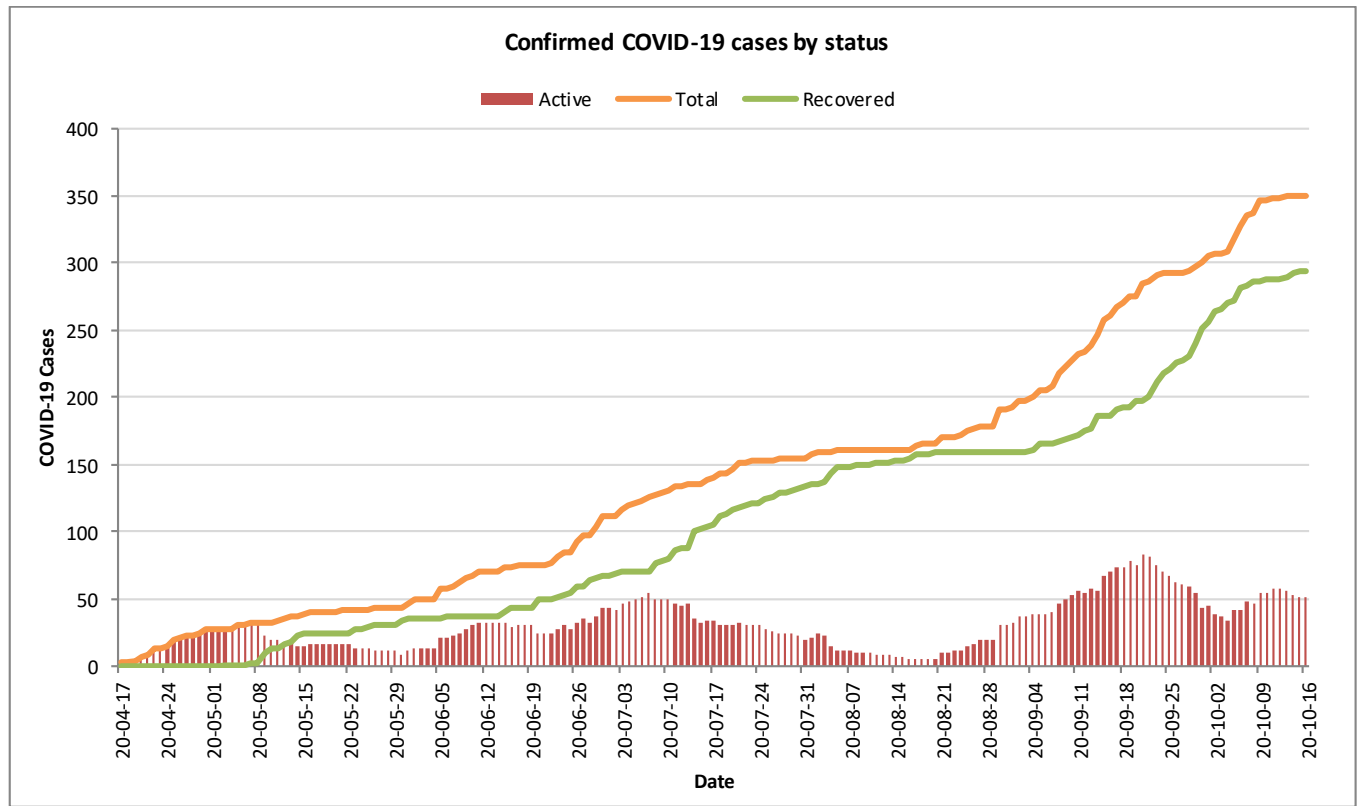


Fig 2.

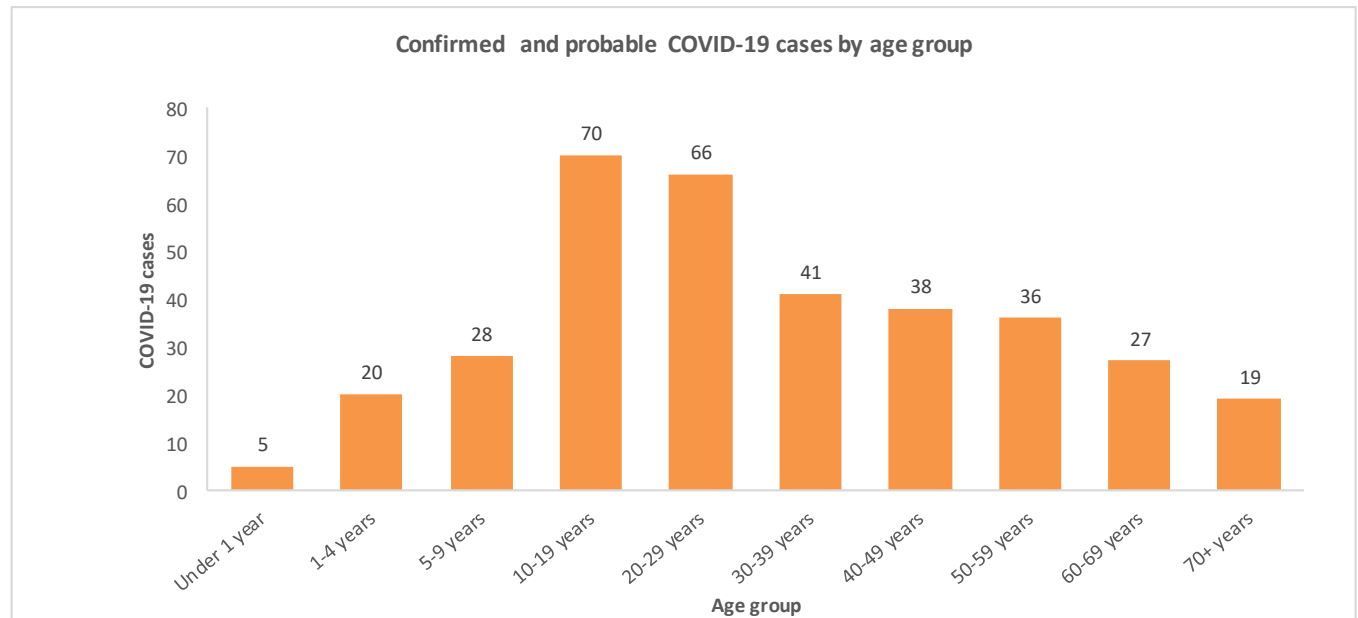


Fig 3.

