

# Novel coronavirus (COVID-19): Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: July 10, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

Please email questions about COVID-19 to: [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca)

The COVID-19 pandemic is still with us, with the number of active cases in First Nations communities continuing to rise; however the spread remains relatively stable due to everyone's continued actions. It is even more important to stay vigilant, and follow public health guidelines as more businesses open, more enjoy outside activities and interact with one another. Staying strong in social distancing, regular handwashing and wearing a face mask all continue to be some of the best ways to keep yourself, elders and your communities safe.

## Status Update

Number of cases reported\*, as of July 10, 2020:

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

	Alberta (Alberta Health)	Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada)
Cases	8,519	106,805
Deaths	161	8,749
Recovered	7,774	70,574

- **Alberta:** There are **584 active cases** of COVID-19 in Alberta.
- **First Nations living on reserve:** Currently there are **43 active cases** of COVID-19 in First Nations living on reserve. There are **123 cases** and **1 death** recorded in First Nations people living on reserve in Alberta; **48** in Calgary Zone; **37** in South Zone; and **38** in North Zone. **79** cases have recovered and **2** cases are hospitalized.
- **First Nations living on and off reserve:** There are **281** confirmed cases of COVID-19 and **4** deaths in First Nations living on and off reserve; **107** in Calgary Zone; **38** in Edmonton Zone; **59** in South Zone; **73** in North Zone; **1** in Central zone and **3** 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>

## Testing in Alberta – Update

- As of July 10, 2020, **22,255** First Nation individuals living in Alberta have been tested.
- **Testing continues to be available to any person with or without symptoms who wants to be tested.**
- Testing for COVID-19 helps protect our elders and communities. Being tested will not put personal health information at risk.
- Stigma and discrimination can be barriers to prevent people from getting tested, or accessing the care and treatment needed. Showing support, kindness and empathy to those who have or are tested for COVID-19 are important actions. Sharing inspiring stories of those who have recovered from COVID-19, or community heroes supporting response efforts (health care workers, service providers, store employees etc.) can also help to combat stigma. For resources on addressing stigma related to testing, please see: [COVID-19: Reducing Stigma](#) (NEW)
- 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](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca)



### ***Alberta's Relaunch Strategy- Update***

- Alberta continues to move forward in stage two of the provincial relaunch strategy.
- It is important to acknowledge that many organizations, businesses and communities continue to be at different levels of readiness for relaunch based on the impact of COVID-19 in each unique area.
- As First Nation communities and leadership plan for relaunch, at their determined pace, ISC-AB Environmental Public Health Officers (EPHOs) continue to be available to provide support.
- Alberta's [Relaunch Status Map](#) is a useful tool to support planning by identifying the different **levels of risk** and information about outbreaks and local health measures based on the rate of COVID-19 active cases in each area. Note: Communities smaller than 10,000 such as most First Nations reserves are included in the surrounding municipal district.
- All regions in Alberta should continue to follow Alberta's public health measures and guidelines, regardless of relaunch status.
- More information on the phases of the 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 Alberta, Canada and ISC/FNIHB-AB Are Doing***

- As part of Alberta's Relaunch Strategy, the Government of Alberta will be launching its **2nd round of mask distribution** across the province, mid-July, 2020. ALL First Nations are to receive this additional distribution. Masks are to be double the amount of what was previously distributed and 8 masks will be packaged in a bag for each community member. Please contact 211 for further information or email: [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca)
- Indigenous Services Canada has recently updated its guide, [Accessing additional public health support for First Nations and Inuit communities during COVID-19](#), including eligible funding to support public health perimeter security. For further information, please email: [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca)
- The Government of Canada has also released a [Risk mitigation tool for gatherings and events operating during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). It contains useful guidelines to help keep any gathering as safe as possible. Alberta indoor gatherings are currently limited to 100 people and outdoor gatherings to 200. Provincial guidelines can be found [here](#).
- The Government of Canada has also released [Guidelines to Support Remote and Isolated](#) First Nations, Inuit and Métis responding to COVID-19.
- ISC-AB Environmental Public Health Officers (EPHOs) are available to help support your Nations in gathering planning.
- A 'COVID-19 Health Needs Funding Information' telehealth session will be held July 14, 2020. To access this session please visit <https://fntn.ca/>. FNIHB-AB previous telehealth sessions are recorded and are available on the same website.

### ***Mental Health and Wellness***

- Alberta Health Services has recently issued an alert due to a higher than average number of opioid-related EMS responses in **the South Zone, particularly Cardston-Kainai areas**. At this time, there is no specific information available on the substance.
- Alberta Health Services operates a Drug Alert System for health professionals, providing up to date alerts on drug activity based on each health zone. For more information or to register for your area please contact [harm.reduction@ahs.ca](mailto:harm.reduction@ahs.ca)
- We continue to be concerned with an increase in opioid related overdoses, including deaths which may have been worsened by this crisis. Resources are available to support those affected.
  - Naloxone is a safe and effective intervention that saves lives:
    - **Province wide injectable program** – Clients are able to access the Take Home Naloxone injection kits at any registered site, including Health Centres, Treatment Centres, medical offices, and pharmacies through Alberta Health Services' Community

Based Naloxone (CBN) Program. Information about registration can be found at: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/hrs/if-hrs-cbn-program-distribution-site-manual.pdf>

- **Narcan® nasal spray** – In Alberta, Narcan® is not covered by the province; however, it is covered through Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB). Only pharmacies are able to bill NIHB for this product for individual clients, therefore clients are only able to access it through a pharmacy. No prescription is required.
- The **AHS Harm Reduction Services Team** has developed printable handouts that may be useful to provide to clients: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-harm-reduction-handouts.pdf>
- National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP) Treatment Centers have largely remained closed across the country during the pandemic, however referrals to provincially funded treatment centres continue. NNADAP centres are beginning to enter into different planning stages of service delivery. Please contact the regional NNADAP office directly at 780-495-2345 for more information or assistance with the referral process.
- Alberta First Nation Mental Wellness Crisis Response Teams are providing telehealth support as requested to communities experiencing mental health crisis. On-site support may be provided on a case by case basis. Please contact the regional Crisis Response Coordinator at 780-495-0577 for more information.
- Other resources (including for children) are also available if you, or someone you know, is struggling or needs a little extra support. Please see a list of available resources at the end of this document.

### **Additional Updates**

- Alberta government announced they will invest \$10 million into targeted serology testing that will help track the spread of COVID-19 across the province. Note: This testing is **NOT** meant to replace swab testing and does not tell someone if they're currently sick or contagious. These tests are designed to help understand more of how the virus behaves and what proportion of the population has been exposed to COVID-19, *they are not a part of the usual clinical care of patients*. This announcement should not change your Nations approach to current testing procedures.
- Alberta Health Services is featuring a daily series "PPE Tip of The Day" offering quick and simple reminders on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to take into daily practice: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17119.aspx>
- The frequency of this weekly bulletin has moved to bi-weekly. As a result, you will receive the next bulletin on **Friday July 24<sup>th</sup>**.

### **First Nations Community/Organization COVID-19 Response Spotlight**



#### **Siksika Health Services**

Siksika Health Services has developed the 'Protect your Family, Protect your Nation' [awareness video](#) demonstrating how personal actions not only have an impact on your health, but those around you. A quote from the video: "*the biggest work you can do is to open your hearts and your minds to see yourself as part of the solution.*" Everyone is encouraged to view and share this excellent awareness tool.

### **New/Featured COVID-19 Resources**

The following resources are some of the new/featured resources available on [OneHealth](#):

- [ISC-AB Public Health Guidance on Indoor and Outdoor Gatherings](#) (New)
- [COVID-19 Testing and Reducing Stigma](#) (New)
- [Advice for People Tested for COVID-19](#) (New)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Wastewater Workers](#) (New)
- [ISC-AB Guidance for Funerals, Wakes or Memorials](#)
- [ISC-AB Guidance on Re-opening Facilities](#)

### **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](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca)**

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

**InfoPoint**- By the First Nations Health Managers Association, site is designed for First Nations health managers in Canada to access credible sources of information and ask questions related to COVID-19. To access this service, call the toll-free number at **1-855-446-2719**, or email [InfoPoint@fnhma.ca](mailto:InfoPoint@fnhma.ca)

### **Alberta Health**

- [Coronavirus info for Albertans](https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx) <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>
- [COVID-19 Data for Alberta](https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx) <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx>

### **Alberta Health Services**

- [novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx) <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>
- [https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17101.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1hzie9aLgDLr0K7Qi80mb9ozNby5dK6VZO3CFhhKgLrALUp06\\_wGmSxUc](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17101.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1hzie9aLgDLr0K7Qi80mb9ozNby5dK6VZO3CFhhKgLrALUp06_wGmSxUc)

### **Public Health Agency of Canada**

- [2019 novel coronavirus: Outbreak update](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html) <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

### **Indigenous Services Canada COVID-19 Updates available in several Indigenous languages**

- <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1581964230816/1581964277298>
- <https://indigenous.link/indigenous-services-canada/>

### **For helpful advice on handling stressful situations and ways to talk to children please visit**

- [Mental health and coping with COVID-19](#) (CDC)
- [Talking with children about COVID-19](#) (CDC)
- [Help in Tough Times](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/Page16759.aspx) (AHS) <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/Page16759.aspx>

### **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.

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