

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19): Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: July 24, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

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

We continue to see a significant number of new COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities rise as relaunch continues. There is a shift in the age of those being impacted, with more cases being identified in those aged 20-29. Cases continue to be linked to social gatherings, and/or non-essential off-reserve travel. As of July 21, 2020 active cases on-reserve in Alberta made up over 75% of the active cases on-reserve nationally. Working individually, and together, as we take the necessary precautions throughout our daily lives, such as washing hands, social distancing, wearing a mask, and staying home when sick remains the best measures to keep ourselves, elders and communities safe.

Status Update

Number of cases reported *, as of July 24, 2020:

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

Alberta: There are **1,293 active cases** of COVID-19 in Alberta.

	Alberta (Alberta Health)	Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada)
Confirmed Cases	9,975	112,672
Deaths	176	8,874
Recovered	8,506	98,1519

First Nations living on reserve in Alberta:

Location (By Zone)	Confirmed Cases	Active Cases	In Hospital	In ICU	Deaths	Recovered
Calgary Zone	51	4	1	-	-	47
South Zone	47	10	-	-	-	37
Central Zone	3	3	-	-	-	-
North Zone	42	4	1	1	1	38
TOTAL	143	21	2	1	1	122

First Nations living on and off reserve (Alberta): There are **337** confirmed cases of COVID-19 and **5** deaths in First Nations living on and off reserve in Alberta; **129** in Calgary Zone; **47** in Edmonton Zone; **72** in South Zone; **81** in North Zone; **7** 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>

Testing in Alberta – Update

- As of July 24, 2020, **27,396** 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 continues to be an important measure to protect our elders and communities. Being tested will not put personal health information at risk.
- 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



Alberta's Relaunch Strategy- Update

- Alberta continues to move forward in stage two of the provincial relaunch strategy
- **Edmonton** has **mandated mask/face covering use** for indoor city-run facilities and public transportation **as of August 1, 2020**.
- **Calgary** has passed a temporary bylaw **mandating mask/face covering use** for all indoor public spaces and public transportation **as of August 1, 2020**.
- Alberta has announced that **students will return to learning in classrooms** for the 2020-21 school year with near-normal daily operations and public health measures in place. A [re-entry tool kit](#) has been developed by the province to prepare parents and students for what to expect in the new school year. For more information: <https://www.alberta.ca/k-to-12-school-re-entry-2020-21-school-year.aspx>
- As First Nation communities and leadership plan for relaunch, at their determined pace, ISC-AB Medical Officers of Health (MOHs) and Environmental Public Health Officers (EPHOs) continue to be available to provide public health 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

- In relation to the above provincial announcement of students returning to school in for the 2020-2021 school year, ISC-AB is continuing to work with regional education and First Nations representatives to identify and understand the needs and challenges facing First Nations with respect to the delivery of educational programming and services during the pandemic. Regular updates on this support will continue to be provided in the coming weeks.
- The Government of Canada has announced a **\$19 billion agreement** with provinces and territories **to address economic and public health needs over the next 6-8 months**, including areas such as testing, PPE for front-line workers, child care, mental health, and protecting seniors. Details on the distribution of this funding are still underway; updates will be provided as soon as details become available.
- The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), and Crown-Indigenous Relations & Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) have **launched an Expression of Interest (EOI) for a [Shelter Initiative for Indigenous Women and Children](#)** to support Indigenous women and children escaping family violence. This includes 10 First Nations on-reserve shelters across the country and 2 in the territories. The deadline to submit applications is January 15, 2021.
- Indigenous Services Canada has recently updated its [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 on a new regional community guide and this funding, please email: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca
- The next COVID-19 First Nations Telehealth session will be held in August, 2020 (date to be confirmed). Previous telehealth sessions are recorded and are available at: <https://fntn.ca/>.

Mental Health and Wellness

- Thunderbird Partnership Foundation has produced a [Fact Sheet: Online Resources for Substance Use Disorders during Covid-19](#), as well as a [Fact Sheet: Managing Withdrawal during COVID-19](#) to provide culturally-grounded/strength-based supports during the pandemic.

- 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
- 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>
- 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.
- Please see a list of other available resources at the end of this document.

Additional Updates

- **Reminder:** Any Indigenous-led organization or Indigenous-serving organization working to foster resilience in Inuit, Metis and First Nations communities in Canada can apply for funding through the Community Foundation of Canada's [Indigenous People's Resilience Fund](#). **The deadline to apply for this opportunity is July 31, 2020.**
- Alberta Health Services is featuring a series "[PPE Question of the Week](#)" offering quick and simple reminders on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to take into daily practice.
- The frequency of this bulletin has moved to bi-weekly. As a result, you will receive the next bulletin on **Friday, August 7th, 2020.**

First Nations Community/Organization COVID-19 Response Spotlight



The First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group (TSAG), in partnership with ISC-AB, has been hosting a [COVID-19 Telehealth Series](#) specific to Alberta to share up to date information during the pandemic. Sessions include featured presentations by First Nations communities/organizations across Alberta, highlighting unique and innovative response efforts. **If you are interested in highlighting** the work of your Nation or organization please contact VCHelp@fntn.ca or sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca

New/Featured COVID-19 Resources

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

- [ISC-AB Mental Health Supports and Resource Guide \(New\)](#)
- [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) and Non-medical Masks for Non-Health Care Settings \(New\)](#)

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- 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

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

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.