

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Weekly Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: June 19, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

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

Alberta is in stage two of its relaunch strategy. The state of public health emergency in Alberta was lifted on June 15. As more activities, gatherings and businesses resume, it is important to make informed decisions and follow public health guidance to prevent local outbreaks or a second wave.

Recent data shows that more young Albertans are testing positive for COVID-19, particularly those aged 20-29. Young Albertans may not be at risk for severe outcomes but their actions are critical in protecting those who are at higher risk. The **#ProtectOurElders** social media campaign, organized by the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, asks Indigenous youth to be there for their Elders and protect their Elders from COVID-19 by following public health recommendations. The success of stage 2 is anchored in everyone doing their part; the actions each one of us takes every day will help protect our friends, our families and our neighbours, especially those most at-risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19

Status Update

Number of cases reported*, as of June 19, 2020:

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

	Alberta (Alberta Health)	Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada)
Cases	7,579	100,220
Deaths	152	8,300
Recovered	6,938	62,496

- There are **489 active cases** of COVID 19 in Alberta.
- There are **71** cases of COVID-19 and **1** death recorded in First Nations people **living on reserve** in Alberta; **26** in Calgary Zone; **35** in South Zone; and **10** in North Zone. **44** cases have recovered and **26** cases are active. **4** individuals are hospitalized (**2** are in ICU).
- There are **215** confirmed cases of COVID-19 and **4** deaths in First Nations people **living on and off reserve** in Alberta; **80** in Calgary Zone; **30** in Edmonton Zone; **57** in South Zone; **46** in North Zone; **1** in Central zone and **1** unknown. Currently, there are **50 active cases** of COVID-19 off and on reserve in Alberta.
- Aggregate data on COVID-19 cases in Alberta is available at <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx>.

Testing in Alberta – update

- As of June 17, 2020, almost 16,000 First Nation individuals were tested in Alberta.
- Proactive testing is a cornerstone of Alberta's Relaunch Strategy. Testing helps to identify where cases occur, if additional measures are needed in an area or if changes to the relaunch strategy is needed.
- It is important to get tested even if you have no symptoms.
- **Testing is available to any person with or without symptoms who wants to be tested.**
- All individuals living on First Nation reserves are encouraged to get tested.



Alberta's Relaunch Strategy

- Stage two of Alberta's relaunch strategy has begun across the province.
- First Nations communities in Alberta will reopen or relaunch in different ways at different times, in accordance with decisions made by community leadership. ISC-AB is committed to supporting community relaunch plans by providing advice and considerations for lifting restrictions under the current public health guidance.
- The state of public health emergency in Alberta has ended, however **public health orders still remain in effect.**
- An updated list of businesses and sectors permitted to open or restricted from providing services at locations accessible to the public can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/restricted-and-non-restricted-services.aspx>
- It is up to business operators, sport and recreation services on the non-restricted services and permitted to reopen list to determine if they are ready to open and ensure all guidance has been met.
- Operators opening in stage two must:
 - Implement practices to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among persons working at or attending the place of worship, business, entity or school
 - Provide procedures for rapid response if a person develops symptoms of illness while working at or attending a place of worship, business, entity or school
 - Ensure that persons working or attending a place of worship, business, entity or school maintain high levels of sanitation and personal hygiene
 - Comply, to the extent possible, with any applicable Alberta Health guidance found at <https://www.alberta.ca/guidance-documents.aspx>
- The Province has released new sector-specific guidelines to prepare businesses and sectors reopening under stage two. These can be found at [Relaunch Guidance documents](#)
- More information on the phases of the Alberta's relaunch and key public health measures can be found at [Alberta's relaunch strategy](#) and [Alberta's Safely Staged COVID-19 Relaunch.](#)

What the Government of Alberta, Canada and ISC/FNIHB-AB are doing – an update

- The Government of Canada launched a new web [hub](#) to bring together available resources for organizations buying and selling PPE. The **Supply Hub** connects Canadian organizations from coast to coast to coast with federal, provincial, territorial and other resources and information about PPE, including consumer guidance. Buyers will find PPE supplier lists, in addition to guidance to help plan their PPE purchases. More information is available [here](#).
- On June 16, 2020, the Government of Canada announced that it will be extending the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) by eight weeks, to ensure Canadians have the help they need as they transition back to work. This extension will make the benefit available to eligible workers for up to a total of 24 weeks. More information is available [here](#)
- FNIHB-AB previous telehealth sessions were recorded and are available at <http://www.fntn.ca>. The next telehealth session will be held on **Thursday July 9, 2020**. Information on how to register will be sent shortly.

Additional updates

- On June 10, 2020, the Government of Alberta announced its plan to have children return to school in the fall. The Province has developed a comprehensive **re-entry plan** for the upcoming school year which allows schools and parents to prepare for learning while putting student and staff safety first. The plan offers guidance on a wide range of operational issues including hygiene and health requirements, transportation, student learning and diploma exams. It also addresses mental health and psychological supports for students and staff. School authorities will plan for three scenarios for September:
 - In-school classes resume (near normal operations with health measures)
 - In-school classes partially resume with additional health measures

- At home learning continues (in-school classes are cancelled)

The government will share its final decision by August 1 on which scenario will be in place at the beginning of the school year. Return to in-class learning may vary across the province and depends on the number of COVID-19 cases in a local area. School authorities are asked to prepare for implementing any of the three possibilities during the upcoming school year, including on short notice.

- Many Albertans may have concerns about sending kids to school when it resumes in September. This is normal. Public health officials will be monitoring the situation closely and be ready with a plan that enables a rapid response to cases of COVID-19 in a school. This response plan will include rapid identification of cases through easily accessible and expedient testing, rapid close contact identification, isolation (and testing where applicable). Medical Officers of Health (MOH) will collaborate with school authority/school administration to identify risks and mitigation strategies which may include temporarily suspending in-person class for a group of students. More information on K to12 re-entry can be found [here](#).
- The ISC-AB Education Unit is currently reaching out to First Nation Education Directors to obtain information on school re-entry plans for the fall. More information on re-entry plans, including public health guidance and considerations will be forthcoming.
- For those Nations currently using their schools as isolation facilities for COVID-19, please contact the CD Emergency Inbox at sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca regarding your planning options for isolation facilities.

Mental Health and Wellness

- A national survey carried out by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health found that one in five Canadians reported feeling moderate to severe anxiety in the last several weeks, due to factors such as job loss or fear of the virus. It is important that we take care of our physical, mental and emotional health. Sleeping well, connecting safely with loved ones, exercising and meditating are all practices that can reduce anxiety.
- Psychosocial, peer and community supports, are currently available through the toll-free caregiver advisor line at [1-877-453-5088](tel:1-877-453-5088) and online at caregiversalberta.ca for all caregivers, including those caring for someone with COVID-19 or in self-isolation.
- Care providers working in healthcare, continuing care and other fields focused on caring for others can be vulnerable to burnout and compassion fatigue. For more information on how to prevent compassion fatigue and burnout, go to [Mental Health Moments](#).
- Other resources are also available if you, or someone you know, is struggling or needs a little extra support. Supports and resources are also available for children. These resources can be found through the **OneHealth** website at <https://www.onehealth.ca/ab/ABCovid-19> or in weekly bulletins
- **Text4Hope-Addiction Support** is designed to help Albertans dealing with psychological issues related to addiction.
 - Text “Open2Change” to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe to the addiction program.
 - Text “COVID19HOPE” to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe to supports for mental health and wellness in a time of stress and isolation.
 - Text “CancerCare” to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe to the cancer program.

Updates and 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.

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>

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

Alberta Health Services – [novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx)
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>

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>

World Health Organization – [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) outbreak](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Indigenous Services Canada COVID-19 Updates available in several Indigenous languages -
<https://www.gotoinfo.ca/ISCInfo>
<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1581964230816/1581964277298>

InfoPoint, launched by the First Nations Health Managers Association, is designed for First Nations health managers across Canada to access credible sources of information and ask questions related to COVID-19. In order to access this service, simply call the toll-free number at **1-855-446-2719**, or email InfoPoint@fnhma.ca

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>

Previous information bulletins and additional information and resources for health staff can be found at <https://www.onehealth.ca/ab/ABCovid-19>

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.
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17019.aspx>

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

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