

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Weekly Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: June 26, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

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

The COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing. Active cases of COVID 19 in the province are on the rise again; however the spread remains relatively stable as we continue through stage two of the relaunch. It is important that everyone remains vigilant, acts responsibly and follows public health guidelines as more businesses open, more people go outside and individuals begin interacting with each other. Regular handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and wearing a face mask helps to protect those around you.

Status Update

Number of cases reported *, as of 9:00 am June 26, 2020:

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

	Alberta (Alberta Health)	Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada)
Cases	7,851	102,622
Deaths	154	8,504
Recovered	7,191	65,425

- There are **506 active cases** of COVID 19 in Alberta.
- There are **76 cases** of COVID-19 and **1 death** recorded in First Nations people **living on reserve** in Alberta; **29** in Calgary Zone; **36** in South Zone; and **11** in North Zone. **55** cases have recovered while **20** are active. **2** cases are hospitalized and are in ICU.
- There are **235** confirmed cases of COVID-19 and **4** deaths in First Nations people **living on and off reserve** in Alberta; **89** in Calgary Zone; **36** in Edmonton Zone; **56** in South Zone; **51** in North Zone; **1** in Central zone and **2** unknown. Currently there are **47 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 24, 2020, 18,533 First Nation individuals living in Alberta were tested.
- **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. It is important to get tested even if you have no symptoms. Proactive testing is a key pillar to a successful relaunch.

Mental Health and Wellness

- Many Albertans may be experiencing increased strain on their mental wellbeing as they deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some individuals may be feeling increased fear, anxiety and sadness especially those experiencing grief, illness, loss and financial hardships. We are concerned about an increase in opioid related overdoses, including deaths which may have been worsened by this crisis.
- Naloxone is a safe and effective intervention that saves lives. There are two formulations of naloxone available in Alberta for First Nations to freely access:



- **Province wide injectable program** – The naloxone injection is available for distribution to any organization that registers with 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>
Clients are able to access the Take Home Naloxone injection kits at any registered site including Health Centres, Treatment Centres, medical offices, and pharmacies.
- **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.
- Take Home Naloxone Kits should be given to a person at risk of an overdose, to a family member or friend of someone who is at risk of an overdose, or someone who may witness an overdose. Neither the province nor NIHB tracks individuals who have received a Take Home Naloxone Kit.
- Alberta Treatment Centers are in different operational planning stages to return to regular programming with each centre playing a different role in their Nation's COVID-19 response.
 - Kainai Healing Lodge has reopened the treatment centre to Nation members or clients in the south zone to limit external transmission of COVID-19. The centre, in consultation with Dr. Esther Tailfeathers, has developed a COVID-19 safety plan, with the help of FNIHB Environmental Public Health Officers, to accommodate or isolate clients who may be at risk of having COVID-19. Safety measures for staff have also been put into place.
 - Mark Amy has an adapted online treatment program called the Mark Amy Lite which provides psycho education, rather than in depth therapeutic intervention to clients. Participants are able to access individualized or group counselling via telephone/videoconferencing and obtain referrals to local service providers for those requiring more in depth therapeutic interventions. As a means of integrating a cultural component, pre-recorded Elder teachings are available to clients from across Alberta.
 - Kapown Rehabilitation Centre is actively involved in its Nation's COVID-19 response as an isolation centre; staff are providing limited mental health and addiction services from a makeshift call centre.
 - Beaver Lake Wah Pow, Footprints Healing Centre and Blood Tribe Youth Wellness are not currently operational but have a limited number of staff completing patient charts, fielding patient enquiries and preparing program curriculum for reopening.
 - Thunderbird Partnership Foundation also holds a weekly zoom videoconferencing meeting with treatment centres to provide support on remote programming, reporting and reopening.
- 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 other practices that can reduce anxiety.
- 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.

Alberta's Relaunch Strategy

- Stage two of Alberta's relaunch strategy is underway. **Relaunch guidance documents are available at** <https://www.alberta.ca/guidance-documents.aspx>.
- As Alberta reopens, some regions may need to put additional measures in place to address local outbreaks. A [Relaunch Status Map](#) shows the **level of risk** in regions and information about local

health measures. It also shows the rate of COVID-19 cases and the number of active cases. Regions are defined by municipal boundaries. Each region is either:

- A municipality of 10,000 or greater population: a city, town or municipal district (or county).
- Communities smaller than 10,000 such as First Nations reserves are included in the surrounding municipal district.
- Regions are designated as open, watch or enhanced relaunch status.
 - **Open**
 - Low level of risk, no additional restrictions in place.
 - Less than 50 active cases per 100,000.
 - **Watch**

The province is monitoring the risk and discussing with local government(s) and other community leaders the possible need for additional health measures.

 - At least 10 active cases and more than 50 active cases per 100,000.
 - **Enhanced**
 - Risk levels require enhanced public health measures to control the spread.
 - Informed by local context.
- All regions must 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](#) and [Alberta's Safely Staged COVID-19 Relaunch](#).
- As many First Nation communities and leadership plan their relaunch, ISC-AB Environmental Public Health Officers (EPHOs) continue to be available to assist communities to provide public health guidance, education, risk assessments, inspections, and recommendations to First Nations.

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

- The Government of Canada has announced the launch of the Canada Student Service Grant (CSSG), to support post-secondary students and recent graduates as they volunteer to serve in their communities' COVID-19 response and gain valuable experience at the same time. The CSSG will provide these volunteers with a one-time payment of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 based on the number of hours they serve between June 25 and October 31. To find not-for-profit organizations looking for help during the pandemic, post-secondary students and recent graduates can visit the [Want to Help](#) platform. More information on this funding can be found at <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2020/06/25/canada-student-service-grant>
- The Government of Canada also announced additional funding and a series of measures to help young Canadians find paid work placements and get the skills they need to start their careers. These include:
 - A new investment of \$186 million in the Student Work Placement Program to support an additional 20,000 job placements for post-secondary students in high demand sectors. This funding is in addition to the \$80 million that was announced on April 22, 2020.
 - New funding of over \$60 million to help expand the current work placement target from 70,000 to 80,000, creating 10,000 more placements for young people aged 15 to 30.
 - Creating 5,000 new internships through Mitacs for college and university students across Canada with small and medium-sized businesses. Funding of \$40 million will also help develop partnerships with new industries, and offer internships to students in more areas of study.
 - Increasing funding to the Digital Skills for Youth (DS4Y) program by \$40 million to help post-secondary graduates gain professional work experience.
 - New funding of \$34 million to create over 3,500 new job placements and internships through the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy.
 - \$6.7 million for the Computers for Schools Plus (CFS+) program. The partnership-based program refurbishes donated surplus computers and electronic devices, and provides them to schools, libraries, not-for-profit organizations, Indigenous communities, and low-income Canadians. It also offers paid, practical work internships for young people.

- Creating 5,000 to 10,000 more work-integrated learning opportunities through the Business + Higher Education Roundtable (BHER).
- FNIHB-AB previous telehealth sessions are 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

- Alberta government announced they will invest \$10 million into targeted serology testing that will help track the spread of COVID-19 across the province. Serology testing is used to detect the presence of antibodies in a person's blood, indicating that a person has been exposed to the COVID-19 virus in the past. This 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 epidemiologists 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.
- Beginning next week, we are amending the frequency of the weekly bulletin to bi-weekly. As a result, you will receive the next bulletin on **Friday July 10th**.

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](https://www.mentalhealthhelp.ca) is available 24/7 to provide advice and referrals to community supports near you.
- Hope for Wellness Help Line [1-855-242-3310](https://www.hopewellness.ca), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Kids and teens can call the Kids Help Phone: [1-800-668-6868](https://www.kidshelp.ca).
- Text COVID19HOPE to [393939](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17019.aspx) 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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