

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Weekly Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta, February 14, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

Status Update

Confirmed cases reported, as of February 13, 2020:

	Alberta (Alberta Health)	Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada)	Globally (World Health Organization)
Cases	0	7 (ON = 3, BC = 4)	60,372
Deaths	-	0	1,369

- A pneumonia outbreak, now known to be caused by a novel (new) coronavirus, was identified in Wuhan, China on December 31, 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the virus a public health emergency.
- **There are no confirmed or probable cases in Alberta.** Seven confirmed or probable cases have been announced in Canada.
- The current overall risk to Albertans is still considered low by medical experts.
- The World Health Organization has formally named the disease caused by this new coronavirus COVID-19 (**CO**rona**VI**rus **D**isease 2019).

COVID-19

- Symptoms for COVID-19 infection are similar to those of influenza or other respiratory illnesses. They can range from mild to severe and include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.
- While COVID-19 can cause serious illness, many patients have reported only mild symptoms.
- There is evidence of **person-to-person spread**. COVID-19 is believed to be spread mainly by coughing, sneezing or direct contact with a sick person or with surfaces they have **recently** touched. There is no evidence that it's capable of being transmitted by imported goods.

Current Public Health Actions

Alberta's public health officials are carefully monitoring the situation in Canada, China and around the world, and are ready to respond should there be any cases in Alberta. They are:

- working closely with federal, provincial and territorial partners to share information and assess potential health risks
- ensuring our health system is ready to respond effectively if needed
- ensuring front-line health professionals have information about the virus so they can take recommended actions and promptly report suspected cases to public health officials

Although travel-related cases may be identified in the future, the risk for Albertans is still considered low. Public health measures are in place to quickly identify potential cases and prevent the infection from spreading.



Actions First Nation communities are encouraged to take

- Update and inform your community members of the evolving situation.
- Review and update the pandemic annex of your All-Hazards Emergency Response Plan.
- Be aware of current public health measures.
- Educate community members on the steps they can take to protect themselves against respiratory illnesses (below).

Actions individuals and families can take

To help protect against all respiratory illnesses, including the flu and COVID-19, you should:

- Wash your hands often and well.
- Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched.
- Stay at home and away from others if you are feeling ill.
- When sick, cover your cough and sneezes and then wash your hands.

Wearing Medical Masks

- If you are healthy, medical masks are not recommended.
- When sick, wearing a mask helps prevent illnesses from being passed on to other people. This is why people who have a cough or respiratory symptoms are asked to wear a mask and wash their hands when visiting the clinic.

Upcoming events

- In-person, train-the trainer, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) sessions in six locations around the province during the first two weeks of March. Community Health Nurses (2-3 from each community) will receive a review of infection prevention and control practices. Nurses who attend the training can then train others in the community.

Updates and additional information

For current information on novel coronavirus (COVID-19), refer to the following websites, which are being regularly maintained and updated.

Alberta Health – [Coronavirus info for Albertans](#)

Alberta Health Services – [novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Public Health Agency of Canada – [2019 novel coronavirus: Outbreak update](#)

World Health Organization – [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Additional information and resources for Health Staff can be found at [OneHealth.ca](#)

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

This Bulletin was prepared by the Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Region. Should you have questions about this document, please do not hesitate to email: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca