

# COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #49 / June 5, 2020

Good Afternoon,

There is a lot going on at the moment, here in BC, Canada and elsewhere. Much of it is unsettling especially when we are all already feeling the strain of the global pandemic. Please know we see you, we hear you, and recognize the heightened challenges of these unprecedented times. As ever, we are here should you have any questions or concerns.

The Hope for Wellness Helpline provides immediate, culturally safe, telephone crisis intervention support for First Nations, Inuit and Métis, 24 hours a day, seven days a week (1-855-242-3310 or the online chat at [hopeforwellness.ca](https://www.hopeforwellness.ca)).

Additionally community members can call the First Nations Health Authority's 24/7 culturally safe KUU-US Crisis Response Services at 1-800-588-8717 (or 250-723-2040 for child and youth / 250-723-4050 for adult and Elder).

And we would like to share with you a video the **Tseshah First Nation**, a community recently in the news, posted about Culture Grounding and Simple Grounding from Quu'asa.



**Culture Grounding and Simple Grounding with Joe and Stan from Quu'asa** — The Quu'asa Program, offered by the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, uses traditional cultural and spiritual practices to support and promote mental and emotional healing.

## UPDATES

In case you missed it, this morning Minister Marc Miller participated in a weekly news conference to provide an update on coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Here is a transcript:

“Across the country, our attention has been on those who are especially at risk and many of our efforts have focused on providing relief to protect Indigenous groups that are uniquely vulnerable during this difficult time. The Government of Canada has introduced a national temporary measure to ensure that funding the First Nations Youth and Care will reach a majority during the pandemic continue to receive the supports they need.

This Wednesday marked the one-year anniversary of the final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It was an anniversary that brought to light a dark reality

that persists in our society, a reality of fear of abuse, of violence and of loss. We've heard the anguished voices of survivors and family and community members affected by this and during tragedy and remember and honour those daughters, mothers, grandmothers, aunties and LGBTQ and two-spirit people who were taken from us.

We've taken important and significant steps to address these concerns but we also recognize that there is much work ahead of us. We're committed to continuing this important work with provincial and territorial Indigenous partners toward an effective and comprehensive national action plan to help keep Indigenous women and girls, LGBTQ and two-spirit people safe and address the disempowering effects of colonization.”

**During the press conference, the Minister was asked the following question:**

*You talked just recently about safety and security and violence against Indigenous women, but in the last week alone we've had several incidents. You have the BC Independent Investigation Office recommend charges against five RCMP officers for the death of an Indigenous man. We have that Nunavut RCMP officer who had left the community after that video of the truck running into a man. And then yesterday, we had the death of a woman in New Brunswick at the hands of police. What do you say to Indigenous Canadians who don't feel safe when the police show up?*

**Minister Miller responded by saying** "I watched in disgust yesterday a number of these incidents. A car door is not a proper police tactic. It's a disgraceful dehumanizing and violent act. I don't understand how someone dies during a wellness check. When I first saw the report, I thought it was some morbid joke. And you look at it and you say, yes, there'll be an independent investigation but frankly along with many Canadians, Indigenous peoples living in Canada, politicians, I'm pissed. I'm outraged.

There needs to be a full accounting of what has gone on. This is a pattern that keeps repeating itself. I spoke with my team a couple of days ago as a number of them are Indigenous and are feeling the one-year anniversary of the report in a way that I'll never experience. And the issue of safety came up and this is something that touches Indigenous peoples in a way that I won't experience it. My team and I saw it. We saw the real fear that was experienced at Tananaga (sic) where I felt safe around police forces and they didn't.

I can't speak for them. I can't speak for Indigenous peoples but you can see it. It's palpable. It's painful. Police serve Canadians and Indigenous peoples of Canada. Not the opposite. And it's something that we need to recognize as a society as we look south to the disgraceful acts that are occurring down there. And these independent inquiries need to bring justice. That's my reaction. Next question."

## **National AccessAbility Week (NAAW)**

This is National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) in Canada (May 31-June 6, 2020), a time when accessibility and inclusion are promoted across communities and workplaces. It is an opportunity to highlight the contributions of Canadians with disabilities and recognize all efforts related to removing barriers and ensuring persons with disabilities participate fully in all aspects of Canadian society.

## **Supports for Canadians with Disabilities to Address Challenges from COVID-19**

Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced **support to help Canadians with disabilities deal with extra expenses during the pandemic**. This support includes a special one-time, tax-free payment to individuals who are certificate holders of the **Disability Tax Credit** as of June 1, 2020, as follows:

- \$600 for Canadians with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate.
- \$300 for Canadians with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate and who are eligible for the Old Age Security (OAS) pension.
- \$100 for Canadians with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate and who are eligible for the OAS pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS).

Combined with the special payments of \$300 for Canadians who are eligible for the OAS pension and the additional \$200 for those eligible for the GIS, all seniors with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate will receive a total of \$600 in special payments. People who are eligible for this special payment will receive it automatically.

## **Government of Canada Announces Funding for the Social And Economic Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities**

On Monday, the Government of Canada announced funding for the social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities. **Financial support of up to \$6.4 million over three years will be provided to 16 organizations across Canada** through the disability component of the Social Development Partnerships Program (SDPP-D) through Employment and Social Development Canada.

Organizations receiving funding include the **Assembly of First Nations, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples**, and the **Native Women's Association of Canada**.

## Newly modernized Enabling Accessibility Fund issues a call for proposals

Employment and Social Development Canada has launched a call for proposals under the newly modernized **Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) – small projects component**. The modernization of the program will help to better meet the needs of persons with disabilities in building more accessible communities and workplaces, and provide more flexibility to organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a **video message recognizing the efforts of the BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society**, Minister Marc Miller delivered an important message about the value of accessibility for Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons living with a disability. He says now more than ever, organizations such as BCANDS are called on to support those in need. "By bringing Canadians together to recognize the valuable contributions of persons with disabilities, we are strengthening the collaborative effort needed to create a country that is fully accessible and inclusive." He notes that "National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) provides a great opportunity to celebrate, highlight and promote inclusion and accessibility in communities and workplaces across the country. It is also an opportunity to recognize the efforts of Canadians who are actively removing barriers and ensuring persons with disabilities have an equal chance to participate in all aspects of Canadian society.

## Canadian seniors to receive special payment in early July

On Thursday, June 4, Prime Minister Trudeau, announced that **seniors eligible for the Old Age Security (OAS) pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) will receive their special one-time, tax-free payment during the week of July 6**. Through this measure and others, the government is providing nearly \$900 more for single seniors and more than \$1,500 for senior couples, on top of their existing benefits, to help these vulnerable Canadians with extra costs during the pandemic.

Seniors eligible for the OAS pension will receive a payment of \$300, and those also eligible for the GIS will receive an additional \$200, for a total of \$500. Allowance recipients will also receive \$500.

## 76<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day

As we look ahead to the weekend, we remember that June 6 marks the 76<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day which helped turn the tide of the Second World War.

**The First Nations, Métis and Inuit people of Canada have a long and proud tradition of military service to our country**. When the **Second World War** erupted in September 1939, many Indigenous people answered the call of duty and joined the military. By the end of the conflict in 1945, over 3,000 First Nations members, as well as an unknown number of Métis, Inuit and other Indigenous recruits, had served in uniform. While some did see action with the Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Air Force, most would serve in the Canadian Army.

Due to COVID-19, the Government of Canada will not be sending a delegation overseas and will not be hosting commemorative ceremonies. When it is safe to do so, Veterans Affairs Canada will work with partners in the Netherlands and in Canada to organize commemorative activities, including sending a delegation with Second World War Veterans to the Netherlands.

In these unprecedented times, we recognize and remember all those who served and sacrificed for our freedom.

## PARTNER INFORMATION

### Vulnerable youth get extra support for post-secondary studies

Extra support is being made available this fall for youth who have aged out of government care and are ready to pursue post-secondary education. The Province of British Columbia has announced an **additional \$250,000 from the Youth Futures Education Fund (YFEF) to help them with expenses beyond tuition, such as rent, utilities and groceries**. The fund is used for wraparound



financial supports that could also include text books or emergency situations. The funding complements the Provincial Tuition Waiver program, which ensures youth who have aged out of care can attend a post-secondary institution tuition-free. The average amount students receive from YFEF is approximately \$1,300.

## Improving outcomes for First Nations children in care

Additionally, on Thursday, June 4, the Province announced the May 26 signing of **The First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol**. It commits the Province and First Nations to work together to engage in dialogue and joint action on specific issues and initiatives, seeking to improve the educational outcomes and well-being of Indigenous children and youth in care, and former youth in care through legislative, policy and practice reform.

Work will include easing transitions into the school system, from grade to grade, and out of the school system to post-secondary or the workforce. The protocol is also intended to ensure supports and services are tailored to the needs of each child and their specific circumstances, in a way that connects them to their language and culture.

## New chairwoman for Advisory Council on Indigenous Women

Congratulations to Barb Ward-Burkitt who has been **appointed as the new chairwoman of the Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (ACIW)** for the Provincial Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. Ward-Burkitt is a member of the Fort McKay First Nation and originally joined the council in 2014. She has served as vice-chairwoman of ACIW since 2018 and is also the executive director of the Prince George Native Friendship Centre. Ward-Burkitt replaces Chastity Davis, a member of the Tla'amin Nation, who served as ACIW chairwoman since 2014.

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We believe we are better when we share our knowledge. We are pleased to share resources and updates being offered by communities:

- **Skeetchestn Indian Band** shared COVID-19 phrases in Secwepemctsin translated by their elders and knowledge keepers while physically distancing.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DEVELOPED BY SECWPEPMC ELDERS &amp; KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS:</b></p> <p><b>Daniel Calhoun &amp; Leona Calhoun</b> (Skeetchestn)</p> <p><b>Christine Simon</b> (Skeetchestn)</p> <p><b>Mona Jules</b> (Skeetchestn &amp; Simpcw)</p> <p><b>Mariann Ignace &amp; Ron Ignace</b> (Skeetchestn)</p> <p><b>Charli Fortier</b> (Simpcw)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Covid-19 Phrases in Secwepemctsin</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Taking care of one another. Me7 yecwmentwécw-kt.</li> <li>2. Taking care of ourselves. Me7 yecwmenstú-kt, kwemtus yerí7 re syecwmenstú-kt.</li> <li>3. Cleaning our workplaces, homes, tikwemtús me7 sctéwellcw-kt ne c7elksté-kt ell ne tsetsítcw-kt!</li> <li>4. Social distancing or staying apart - Ta7 me7 smimeyentwécw-kt.</li> <li>5. Small gatherings. Ta7 put k scwete7úys tek qelmúcw me7 melkwilic-et. Ta7 me7 stéwenmentwécw-kt pyin.</li> <li>6. Protecting our elders or knowledge keepers from sickness. Me7 yecwemintem re stéx7ém-kt es ta7s es k7eps.</li> <li>7. A time of illness. Tsqéntém re qelmúcw te ticwell te xexé7 te sk7ep.</li> <li>8. Washing our hands. Ta7 me7 slépentem es tšéwkstem-kt tikwemtús. Ta7 us k slépentp re tšéwsten m-tšéwkstemep. Me7 xwúsentp re kelkélc-emp.</li> <li>9. Connecting with people so we don't feel alone. Me7 wektwécw-kt ne ctsemqíiten, ell me7 qwel7éyentwécw-kt ne cqweltékweten es ta7s es cmup-kt (literally: Let's see one another on our computing devices, and let's talk by phone so we will not be lonely).</li> <li>10. Be safe, be calm, be kind. Me7 yecwwestú-kt, me7 qemqém-kt, me7 le7stwécw-kt!</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Additional phrases, as suggested:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Ta7us k stsgéyús-kp, (stspíyús = ready to cry) me7 kwemtusés ke7 sqwíts.s. – don't be angry-faced, always have a smile!</li> <li>12. Ta7 us ke7 smimúytnem (don't yourself cry – in other words, put a brave face on it)</li> <li>13. Tsúntéls es yecwmenstwécw-kt es ta7s es k7ep-kt nek slwélsten – we need to look after one another so we will not get sick this fall!</li> </ol>
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- **Takla Nation** posted videos about how to properly wash and sanitize your hands, and how to put on and take off gloves and a face mask.
- **Lower Similkameen Indian Band** rescinded the evacuation alert and State of Local Emergency for properties located on Lower Similkameen Indian Reserves. They also shared information about non-medical masks, and a list of free resources to learn, support and self-manage mild to moderate mental health concerns.
- **Tahltan** shared more photos of rose pins handcrafted by their members for essential workers.
- **Yale First Nation** shared a COVID-19 update and information about job opportunities for a Fisheries Field Technician and the Doulas for Aboriginal Families Grant Program.

## NATIONAL INFORMATION

- **Accessing student financial benefits and support during the COVID-19 outbreak** (NEW)
- **Accessing financial benefits and support during the COVID-19 outbreak** (NEW)
- **On-line Resources for Indigenous Communities – Food and COVID-19** (NEW)
- **Service Canada Programs and Services – for youth** (NEW)
- **Service Canada Programs and Services – for seniors** (NEW)
- **Service Canada Programs and Services – for businesses** (NEW)
- **Practical advice, articles and information to help you #GetReal about how you really feel**
- **Taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Prevention and risks**
- The Government of Canada has made announcements regarding financial assistance for those who will be impacted during these unprecedented times – these individuals and business are encouraged to apply for assistance. You can find further information on how to apply for financial or economic support at: [Canada.ca/coronavirus](https://Canada.ca/coronavirus) and **Questions and Answers on the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.**
- **Public Health Agency of Canada**
- **Resources for Canadian Businesses**
- **Transport Canada – COVID-19 measures, updates, and guidance issued by Transport Canada**

## USEFUL LINKS

- For information about economic measures to help stabilize the economy, please visit the **federal** and **provincial financial supports** websites often for the latest information.
- First Nations Health Authority – **Information for community leaders**
- **COVID-19 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool**  
The app will let you receive the latest updates, trusted resources, and alerts. The Self-Assessment Tool is built in.
- With the help of BCFC, the First Nations Public Service Secretariat has posted a **COVID-19 Resources for All BC Individuals.**

## REGIONAL CONTACTS

We've set up a dedicated email for any non-health COVID-19-related questions and requests: [aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca](mailto:aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca).

